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# The Prejudice Paradox (Or Discrimination Is Not Dead): Systematic Discrimination In Forced Choice Employment Decisions

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree  
in Psychology

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THE PREJUDICE PARADOX (OR DISCRIMINATION IS NOT DEAD):  
SYSTEMATIC DISCRIMINATION IN FORCED CHOICE EMPLOYMENT  
DECISIONS

(Spine title: Discrimination Is Not Dead)

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Paula M. Brochu

Graduate Program in Psychology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

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entitled:

**The Prejudice Paradox (or Discrimination is Not Dead):  
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## **Abstract**

This research examined discriminatory responding in a forced choice employment decision paradigm, using a justification-suppression perspective to interpret the findings. In this paradigm, participants play the role of employers and make employment choices between two excellent and similarly qualified individuals that differ only on one dimension. In the first three studies, participants chose between two individuals who were described as differing only in ethnicity (European vs. Middle Eastern), gender (Male vs. Female), religion (Christian vs. Muslim), age (Young vs. Old), height (Tall vs. Short), weight (Average Weight vs. Overweight), nationality (Canadian vs. Immigrant), or sexual orientation (Heterosexual vs. Homosexual). Patterns of systematic discrimination were observed, such that members of nonstigmatized groups were favoured over members of stigmatized groups, with the exception that female candidates were supported more than male candidates. These patterns held for both hiring and firing decisions, and regardless of job status, instructions from one's boss to not be biased, and information regarding workplace diversity. In the fourth study, the stigmatized group categories were strategically selected based on the reported social acceptability of prejudice (acceptable targets: overweight, homosexual, Muslim, immigrant, Native; unacceptable targets: female, black, Jewish, old, disabled). Overall, participants were less likely to promote stigmatized than nonstigmatized employees, with the exceptions that Jewish and black employees were as likely to be promoted as their nonstigmatized counterparts, and female employees were promoted more frequently than male employees. Stigmatized individuals who belonged to social groups perceived as socially unacceptable targets of prejudice were selected for promotion more than stigmatized

individuals who belonged to social groups perceived as socially acceptable targets of prejudice, however. This pattern held regardless of equality salience. The selection of stigmatized employees for promotion was predicted by the favourability of attitudes toward these groups, a weaker belief in the justifiability of discrimination, and negative feelings toward others elicited by the task. Using an innovative methodology, this research demonstrates that systematic discrimination is prevalent in forced choice decisions, and that manipulations used previously to attenuate discrimination were ineffective in this context. Theoretical and methodological implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** age, disability, discrimination, diversity, employment, equality, ethnicity, forced choice, gender, height, job status, justification, nationality, prejudice, race, religion, sexual orientation, social norms, stigma, suppression, weight.

## **Dedication**

For Alexei. You opened my eyes to the path of academe; now see how far I've come.

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My dissertation is the culmination of years of work and thought of many individuals to whom I am indebted for their assistance and support. Vicki Esses is more than my supervisor; I consider her to be a mentor and a role model for how to achieve success in the world of academia yet remain grounded and accessible to the real world. Sincere thanks to my supervisory committee and examiners, Drs. Lynne Jackson, Chris Roney, Lorne Campbell, Belinda Dodson, and Richard Lalonde, for your thoughtful contributions. Your input has made my dissertation a better piece of work.

This research was greatly assisted by the Esses lab coordinators and research assistants over the years, particularly Lisa Bitacola, Carolyn Camman, Jean Kim, and Xiyu Shi; thanks so much for your hard work and dedication. Thanks also to Dr. Greg Maio for sharing your forced choice research and encouraging me to pursue it further.

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Now on to the next chapter: a postdoctoral fellowship at Yale!

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## **The Prejudice Paradox (or Discrimination is not Dead):**

### **Systematic Discrimination in Forced Choice Employment Decisions**

In 2001, a woman named Jennifer Portnick was denied opportunity to work as an aerobics instructor for the company Jazzercise (Fernandez, 2002). At the time, she was five feet eight inches tall, 38 years of age, vegetarian, exercised six days a week, had 15 years of high-impact aerobics experience – and weighed 240 pounds. Jazzercise Inc. viewed her as too heavy to be a fitness role model, and rejected her application on the grounds that she lacked a fit appearance. In 2004, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher in New York named Michael Frank, who happened to be six feet four inches tall and weigh 325 pounds, was fired because of his size (Paul, 2006). Although having received positive evaluations during his four years at the school, he was abruptly fired and told that he was “too big and sloppy” to be a schoolteacher and that his “obesity was not conducive to learning.”

These experiences with employment-based weight discrimination are not isolated incidents. Research indicates that perceptions of employment-based weight discrimination among overweight and obese individuals are relatively common (see Puhl & Heuer, 2009 for a review). For example, in a large-scale survey study, Puhl and Brownell (2006) found that 25% of overweight and obese respondents reported experiencing job discrimination because of their weight. Using a national database representing Americans aged 25-74 years, Roehling, Roehling, and Pichler (2007) found that overweight respondents were 12 times more likely to report having experienced employment discrimination than normal weight respondents, obese respondents 37 times more likely, and morbidly obese respondents 100 times more likely.



The experience and perception of employment discrimination is not limited to overweight and obese individuals. Other stigmatized social groups, such as visible minorities, people with disabilities, immigrants, and women also experience higher rates of unemployment and underemployment in North American society (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Gilmore, 2009; Jensen & Slack, 2003; Snyder, Carmichael, Blackwell, Cleveland, & Thornton, 2010). Thus, although people overwhelmingly value equality and egalitarianism and disapprove of prejudiced beliefs and values (Bobo, 2001; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004), there are real disadvantages in employment outcomes for some social groups. A number of explanations at the individual and societal level have been proposed for employment inequality, including lack of motivation, smaller networks and fewer opportunities, lack of experience, deficiencies in ability or skill, lack of mentorship, and different value priorities (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2010). Another explanation for employment inequality, which certainly is not mutually exclusive from the rest, is that of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination.

At this point, basic understanding of the concepts of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination are critical. Prejudice is defined as an attitude, or a negative evaluation, of a social group and its members (Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993; Zanna & Rempel, 1988). Prejudice includes elements of outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism, and can be understood in terms of direct antipathy toward outgroups as well as relative preference for ingroups. Stereotypes are conceptualized as a set of beliefs about the personal attributes and traits of a social group and its members (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981); they are assumptions or generalizations about social groups that are typically based on dimensions of warmth and competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002).

Discrimination refers to any negative, unfair, or unequal behaviour or treatment accorded to others based on group membership (Dion, 2001).

Much of prejudice research and the theoretical literature in this area have focused on racism and sexism; thus predominantly blacks and women have been examined as targets of prejudice and discrimination. In recent years, however, increased focus has been placed on other targets of prejudice, including those stigmatized on the basis of weight, age, religion, citizenship status, and sexual orientation. A person who is stigmatized in some way is almost always a target of prejudice (Dovidio, Major, & Crocker, 2000). Stigma is an attribute, behaviour, or reputation that is socially discredited or devalued in some way, causing a stigmatized individual to be viewed as undesirable or deviant rather than acceptable or normal (Goffman, 1963). Crocker, Major, and Steele (1998) describe stigmatization as a challenge to one's humanity: "a person who is stigmatized is a person whose social identity, or membership in some social category, calls into question his or her full humanity" (p. 504). According to Crocker and colleagues (1998), visibility and controllability are the two most important dimensions of stigma because stigmatizing characteristics that are not concealable and that are believed to be under personal control are more readily apparent and blameworthy. In fact, the expression of prejudice toward some social groups is perceived as more socially acceptable and justifiable than the expression of prejudice toward other groups (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002). In short, stigmatization involves the "depersonalization of others into stereotypic caricatures" (Dovidio et al., 2000, p. 1).

The purpose of this research is to examine responses to forced choice employment decisions in which the options differ only in terms of social group membership, such that

participants must decide between stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals who differ on only one dimension (e.g., male vs. female, average weight vs. overweight, Canadian vs. immigrant). Employers and other decision makers often must choose between two or more qualified individuals and the question under investigation here is the influence of social group category information on such decisions. Under forced choice conditions, bias due to prejudicial attitudes and stereotyped beliefs may be suppressed as people do not want to appear prejudiced to themselves or to others and generally believe that discrimination is wrong; in this case, the motivation to be nonprejudiced is tantamount. On the other hand, bias due to prejudicial attitudes and stereotyped beliefs may be especially likely to operate under forced choice conditions. Although people often feel discomfort over appearing prejudiced and acting in a discriminatory manner, such biases are often learned early in life via socialization and become automatic, and may be justified in ways that maintain an egalitarian image. This research is important because it disentangles these two possibilities and offers insight into how group information is understood and forced choice decisions are justified, with implications for how social inequality is maintained. In setting the stage for the studies that follow, the prejudice paradox will be elaborated, as will theories explaining the expression of prejudice.

### **The Prejudice Paradox**

Although over the past several decades the endorsement of prejudiced attitudes and stereotyped beliefs toward many social groups has decreased, discriminatory behaviours against these groups have not followed a similar pattern of reduction (Brown, 1995). This prejudice paradox is most evident in whites' increasingly positive attitudes toward blacks and belief in equality as a fundamental social value, but evidence of

significant racial disparity and discrimination across almost every life domain (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; McConahay, 1986). For example, Dovidio and Fazio (1992) compiled comparative historical data demonstrating declining endorsement of negative racial stereotypes over time; whereas in 1933 84% of American university students indicated that they believed that blacks were superstitious and 75% that blacks were lazy, in 1990 only 3% indicated that they believed that blacks were superstitious and 4% that blacks were lazy. In addition, Bobo (2001) compiled comparative historical data demonstrating declining endorsement of prejudicial attitudinal statements; whereas 68% of white Americans indicated support for school segregation of black and white children in the early 1940s, by 1995 96% fully agreed that black and white children should go to the same schools. Consideration of the economic and social inequality faced by blacks suggests that racial discrimination remains, however. As discussed by Dovidio and Gaertner (2004), there are noticeable racial gaps in median family income, on measures of health and wellbeing such as lifespan and infant mortality, and in a variety of career dynamics such as initial wage level, opportunities for training, and layoff decisions. For example, blacks earn approximately 66% of that earned by whites, and the poverty rate of blacks is about three times that of whites in the United States (Blank, 2001). In addition, the infant mortality rate among blacks is almost three times that of whites, a difference that continues throughout the lifespan (Penner, Albrecht, Coleman, & Norton, 2007). This is the prejudice paradox in a nutshell: even though people disavow prejudice, inequality (and discrimination) remains.

This prejudice paradox of discordance between prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviour is further complicated when considering the veracity of self-

reported levels of prejudice because responses may be affected by social desirability concerns and other deceptive responding. For example, Sigall and Page (1971) found that stereotypes about blacks were more favourable in a standard rating condition compared to a so-called “bogus pipeline” condition in which participants believed that the researchers had an accurate, physiologically based measure of their attitudes and could easily detect their prejudices when they actually could not. Furthermore, Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, and Williams (1995) found that attitudes toward blacks reported on the Modern Racism Scale were more positive in the presence of a black, relative to a white, experimenter.

Reactivity in the expression of prejudice depending on context led many researchers to abandon self-report measures of prejudice and instead advocate for use of indirect measures as they were thought to be immune to self-presentation concerns and better predictors of behaviour (Fazio et al., 1995; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998).

Indirect and unobtrusive measures were hailed as “bona fide pipelines” to attitudes (Fazio et al., 1995). Recent research has shown, however, that attitudes assessed indirectly are also subject to contextual influences (Blair, 2002; Barden, Maddux, Petty, & Brewer, 2004) and that attitudes assessed via self-report are better predictors of some behaviours (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002). Thus, both explicit and implicit attitudes can be discordant with discriminatory behaviour; long live the prejudice paradox.

### **The Expression of Prejudice**

The social value of equality has changed the *expression* of prejudice markedly. Old fashioned prejudice involves the direct expression of negativity (e.g., blatant antipathy toward social groups, endorsement of negative stereotypes, and support for discrimination and segregation) and is out of social favour (McConahay, 1986). As such,

modern expressions of prejudice are more subtle and characterized by conflict between the value of equality and deep rooted negativity toward some social groups (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; McConahay, 1986). Two theories have been particularly instrumental in understanding the processes underlying the modern expression of prejudice: Dovidio and Gaertner's (2004) aversive prejudice theory, and Crandall and Eshleman's (2003) justification-suppression model of prejudice.

**Aversive prejudice theory.** The nature of aversive prejudice is characterized by two conflicting motivations: (1) personally endorsed social values concerning fairness, justice, and equality, and (2) underlying negative attitudes, feelings, and beliefs about particular social groups that are learned through socialization and categorization processes (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Although most people espouse egalitarian ideals and deny personal prejudice, aversive prejudice theory argues that underlying antipathy toward social groups can leak out under certain conditions. Importantly, these underlying negative attitudes toward social groups do not generally reflect open hostility or hatred, but instead involve feelings of discomfort, uneasiness, disgust, or even fear. As such, aversive prejudice may more strongly reflect pro-ingroup rather than anti-outgroup biases; that is, attitudes to one's ingroup may be more positive than attitudes toward other social outgroups, rather than attitudes to one's ingroup being positive and attitudes toward other social outgroups being negative in an absolute sense. In other words, aversive prejudice can be evident in a relative, rather than absolute, sense.

According to aversive prejudice theory, the expression of prejudice is situationally determined and the occurrence of discrimination can be predicted from features of the situation (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). In

particular, prejudice is likely to be expressed, and discrimination is thus likely to occur, when it can be justified on nonprejudicial grounds, such that people's egalitarian self images are protected from the threat of appearing prejudiced. As a result, discrimination is likely to occur only in situations that are unclear, ambiguous, or do not provide straightforward guidelines directing appropriate behaviour. On the other hand, discrimination is not likely to occur in situations that provide clear and straightforward guidelines directing appropriate behaviour. This basic prediction of aversive prejudice theory has been supported in a number of experimental studies (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Hodson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2002). For example, Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) asked white university students to evaluate candidates for a peer counselling position at their university. The candidates were presented as either white or black, and as having clearly strong, clearly weak, or ambiguous qualifications for the position. The results revealed that there was no discrimination between the black and white candidates when their qualifications for the job were clearly strong or clearly weak; when the candidate's qualifications were clearly strong, he was strongly recommended for the peer counselling position regardless of race, whereas when the candidate's qualifications were clearly weak, he was not recommended for the peer counselling position regardless of race. When the candidate's qualifications were ambiguous, however, the white candidate was recommended for the job significantly more strongly than the black candidate. Thus, only when the appropriate decision was more ambiguous and less clear was racial discrimination evident.

**Justification-suppression model of prejudice.** Crandall and Eshleman (2003) also argue that the modern expression of prejudice comprises two conflicting

motivations: (1) genuine prejudice: the underlying negative affectivity toward particular social groups that is learned via socialization, and (2) motivation to suppress prejudice due to egalitarian and humanitarian values and social norms. Whereas genuine prejudice toward outgroups develops through a wide range of social, cultural, and psychological processes such as direct learning, social categorization, and intergroup conflict, suppression is an internally or externally motivated attempt to reduce the expression or awareness of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). People suppress prejudice in order to maintain a nonprejudiced appearance to themselves and to others. Although genuine prejudice is usually suppressed and not directly expressed, it can be expressed if it is justified. Justifications are any psychological or social processes that serve as opportunities to express prejudice without suffering internal or external sanction. Justifications allow the expression of prejudice by explaining why it is acceptable to express a negative attitude or behaviour toward a social group or its members. In this way, genuine prejudice that is initially suppressed can still be expressed if it is justified, without feelings of compunction or image threat.

The justification-suppression model of the expression and experience of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003) organizes a plethora of prejudice theories and research studies according to suppression and justification processes. There are many sources of prejudice suppression, including motivation to respond without prejudice, social norms, and belief in the values of equality and egalitarianism (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). For example, Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, and Vaughn (1994) examined the influence of social norms on racist beliefs and found that participants endorsed antiracist statements to a greater extent after hearing an experimenter condemn racism and endorsed antiracist



statements to a lesser extent after hearing an experimenter condone racism compared to a control condition in which no opinions concerning racism were expressed. Crandall, Eshleman, and O'Brien (2002) demonstrated that the expression of prejudice is very strongly correlated with the social approval of such expressions ( $r = .96$ ), such that people strongly adhere to social norms when expressing prejudice, evaluating discrimination scenarios, and reacting to prejudiced humour.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the justification-suppression model is the notion that prejudice is expressed when it can be justified. King, Shapiro, Hebl, Singletary, and Turner (2006) investigated this aspect of the justification-suppression model of prejudice within a customer service paradigm examining the stigma of obesity. In this field experiment, average weight female confederate shoppers who dressed normally or wore an obesity prosthesis interacted with sales representatives at a local mall under the guise of looking for a birthday gift. In addition to manipulating the weight of the shopper, the absence or presence of a justification for prejudice was also manipulated via beliefs of weight controllability. In the justification condition, the shoppers drank a high calorie ice cream beverage and commented to the sales representatives that they could not engage in strenuous physical activity. In the no justification condition, the shoppers drank a low calorie diet soda and commented to the sales representatives that they recently engaged in strenuous physical activity. Results revealed that the obese shoppers drinking a high calorie beverage experienced interpersonal discrimination from sales representatives (e.g., extent of smiling, friendliness, eye contact) relative to the obese shoppers drinking a low calorie beverage and the average weight shoppers regardless of justification condition. Thus, only when a

justification was provided for the expression of prejudice was weight discrimination evident.

### **The Present Research**

The primary purpose of the present research is to examine systematic discrimination toward various social groups within a forced choice employment decision paradigm. In this methodology developed by Maio, Bernard, and Luke (1999), participants make a series of forced choice hiring decisions between equally qualified job candidates who differ from each other on one dimension. In particular, in the Maio et al. study, participants were presented with a total of six scenarios in which to choose between candidates differing on immigration status (Resident vs. Immigrant), race (White vs. Black), gender (Male vs. Female), weight (Slim vs. Obese), height (Tall vs. Short), and age (Young vs. Old). After indicating their choice of candidate from each pair, participants reported their degree of preference for the candidate they chose, rated the difficulty of each decision, and explained the reasons underlying their choice of candidate. In this study, the researchers were particularly interested in examining systematic discrimination toward immigrants and the role of value based motives for discriminating against immigrants.

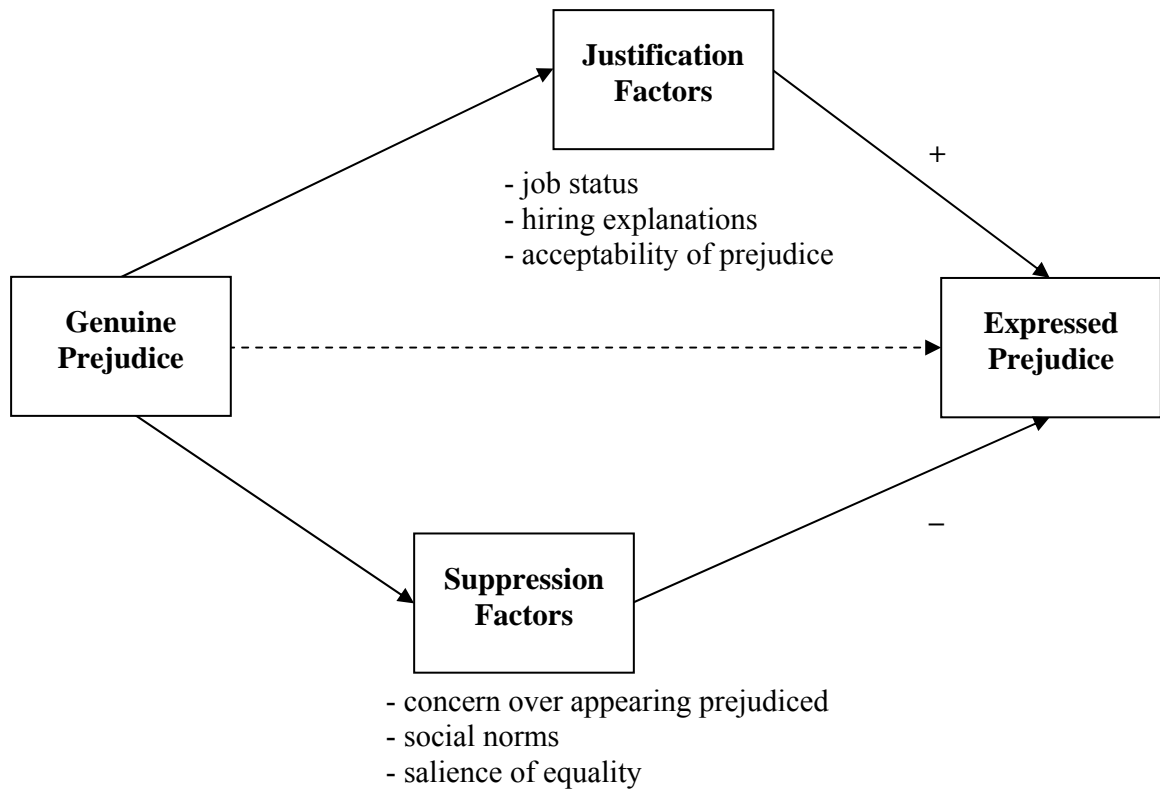
Maio and his colleagues (1999) found that participants were significantly less likely to select the stigmatized candidate for hire in the immigration status (i.e., Immigrant), race (i.e., Black), weight (i.e., Obese), height (i.e., Short), and age (i.e., Old) scenarios. In addition, participants reported the strongest preference for the candidate they chose when the age of the candidates was under consideration and the weakest preference for the candidate they chose when the race of the candidates was under

consideration. Participants also rated the decision as most difficult when the race of the candidates was under consideration and as least difficult when the age of the candidates was under consideration. In order to analyze participants' open ended explanations for the reasons underlying their choice of candidate, Maio and colleagues content analyzed the responses in terms of attitude function, and found that value expressive reasons were the most common in the race and immigrant status scenarios. The researchers concluded that discrimination against immigrants is especially pernicious as immigrants were discriminated against more than most of the other stigmatized candidates, and that such biased decision making was ideologically supported by perceived value conflict.

More generally, perhaps the most surprising finding of Maio et al.'s (1999) research was the pattern of systematic discrimination observed in every scenario, except for gender. Regardless of whether the candidates were differentiated on the basis of immigrant status, race, age, height, or weight, the nonstigmatized candidates were selected for hire more often than the stigmatized candidates, particularly in the immigrant status and weight scenarios. These findings suggest that the forced choice employment decision paradigm may provide a promising new method to assess people's attitudes using self-report. The pattern of systematic discrimination observed in Maio et al.'s (1999) study may be surprising given the normative endorsement of personal and social values regarding equality and egalitarianism, especially among university students in an experimental, laboratory setting. Theoretically, however, the situation created by the forced choice employment decision paradigm directly pitted the two conflicting motivations of prejudice expression and suppression against each other. If participants were primarily motivated to express their underlying prejudices, discrimination would be

observed (i.e., nonstigmatized candidates would be hired more frequently than stigmatized candidates), whereas if participants were primarily motivated to suppress their underlying prejudices, reverse discrimination would be observed (i.e., stigmatized candidates would be hired more frequently than nonstigmatized candidates). Thus, the results may speak to the power of justification in discriminatory employment decisions.

The present research attempted to more fully examine systematic discrimination in forced choice employment decisions both across and between several social groups. The justification-suppression model of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003) was used as a theoretical guide to interpret the findings (see Figure 1 for research strategy). In the first study, the status of the job for which participants made hiring decisions was manipulated, under the premise that a high status job would provide participants with stronger justification to not hire stigmatized candidates compared to a low status job. This hypothesis is based on the finding that stigmatized group members are more likely to be hired for low status jobs due to greater perceived fit or match with a low status compared to high status occupational position (Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2010; Stewart & Perlow, 2001). In addition, the explanations provided by participants for their hiring decisions were analyzed in order to determine how the decisions were justified. In the remaining studies, the focus shifted to suppression processes. In particular, concern over appearing prejudiced, social norms, and the salience of equality were manipulated in order to reduce the pattern of systematic discrimination observed in the forced choice employment decision paradigm. In the final study, focus shifted to also examine differences in responding to social groups that are considered more or less socially acceptable targets of prejudice. As a whole throughout the studies, hiring, firing, and promotion decisions were



*Figure 1.* Research strategy in examining systematic discrimination in forced choice employment decisions from a justification-suppression perspective (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003).

examined in order to better understand nuances in forced choice employment decision making and provide generalizability to the findings.

To summarize, one primary goal of this research was to examine systematic discrimination in forced choice employment decisions both between and across social groups. Another primary goal was to examine the influence of justification and suppression processes in forced choice employment decisions. Throughout this program of research, implications of the findings in terms of theoretical assumptions derived from the justification-suppression model of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), methodology in using a forced choice decision paradigm, and relevance to discrimination observed in the real world were considered.

### **Study 1**

Maio and colleagues' (1999) study was conducted over a decade ago at Cardiff University in the United Kingdom. The study was presented at conferences but was never published. Furthermore, the data have been destroyed and are no longer available. Thus, it seemed prudent to first examine the basic effect of systematic discrimination in the forced choice employment decision paradigm. Thus, the purpose of the current research's first study was to explore discrimination in this paradigm and determine whether systematic discrimination is evident across various social group categorizations. In addition, participants' explanations for the reasons underlying their choice of candidate were content analyzed in terms of prejudice justifications, rather than attitude functions, in order to understand how people justify discriminatory decisions, and determine whether this varies by stigma type. Furthermore, the status of the job for which hiring decisions were being made was manipulated in order to examine whether discrimination

against stigmatized candidates is less likely to be observed in low status than high status occupations as demonstrated in some previous research (Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2010; Stewart & Perlow, 2001). Discrimination may be more likely to occur and may be more easily justified in high status occupations due to perceptions of fit, such that stigmatized candidates are perceived to have poor fit with a high status job's requirements, whereas nonstigmatized candidates are perceived to have good fit (Stewart & Perlow, 2001).

## **Method**

**Participants.** Participants included 80 (50 female, 30 male) psychology students who ranged in age from 17 to 57 years ( $M = 25.03$ ,  $SD = 8.69$ ). The majority of participants reported their ethnicity as White/European ( $n = 38$ ; 47.5%) or Asian ( $n = 26$ ; 32.5%); of the remaining participants, 8.8% identified as East Indian ( $n = 7$ ), 3.7% as Hispanic ( $n = 3$ ), 2.5% as Black ( $n = 2$ ), 1.3% as North American Indian ( $n = 1$ ), and 3.7% as other ( $n = 3$ ). The sample primarily comprised Canadian citizens ( $n = 63$ ; 78.8%). Based on self-reported height and weight, participants' body mass index (BMI) ranged from 15.78 to 30.89 kg/m<sup>2</sup> ( $M = 22.04$ ,  $SD = 3.27$ ), such that 63.8% ( $n = 51$ ) of participants may be considered normal weight, 18.8% ( $n = 15$ ) overweight or obese, and 12.5% ( $n = 10$ ) underweight.<sup>1</sup> Four participants did not report their weight and/or height.

**Procedure and materials.** Participants were asked to imagine that they were an employer faced with a difficult decision: they must decide who to hire between two excellent candidates who were similarly qualified and equally competent in all respects, but who differed from each other on one obvious dimension. Participants were randomly

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<sup>1</sup> The most common computation of BMI is the Quetelet index which is calculated using body weight in kilograms divided by height in meters, squared (kg/m<sup>2</sup>). BMI categories are as follows: less than 18.5, underweight; 18.5-24.9, normal weight; 25-29.9, overweight; and 30 or more, obese (Health Canada, 2003).

assigned to make their hiring decisions for either a low status (Customer Service Representative) or high status (Chief Executive Officer) job. In total, participants were presented with eight scenarios, in which the dimension on which candidates differed was ethnicity (Middle Eastern vs. European), gender (Female vs. Male), religion (Muslim vs. Christian), age (Old vs. Young), height (Short vs. Tall), weight (Overweight vs. Average Weight), nationality (Immigrant vs. Canadian), or sexual orientation (Homosexual<sup>2</sup> vs. Heterosexual). As such, in each scenario, participants chose between a stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidate. No other information was presented to participants, other than that both candidates were excellent and their group membership category labels. After indicating their choice between the two candidates, participants reported their degree of preference for their selected candidate on a scale of 0 (*slightly*) to 100 (*very much*), explained why they chose the candidate by describing their thoughts and feelings relevant to the decision in an open ended format, and rated how difficult they found the decision to be on a scale of 0 (*not at all*) to 8 (*extremely*). All participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous (see Appendix A for the forced choice employment decision paradigm materials used in this study). The order of presentation of the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates in each scenario was counterbalanced. Participants completed the materials by paper and pencil.

## Results

**Data preparation.** Based on participants' hiring decisions in the eight scenarios, the total number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire was summed, creating a

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<sup>2</sup> The American Psychological Association's publication manual (6<sup>th</sup> edition; 2009) recommends the terms gay men, lesbian women, or bisexual individuals instead of homosexual. This research makes use of the term homosexual because it is not gendered and is still in common use among the lay public; in using this term, I do not intend it in a derogatory or offensive manner.



continuous variable ranging from 0 (none of the selected candidates were stigmatized) to 8 (all of the selected candidates were stigmatized). Based on participants' degree of preference for the candidate they selected, two variables were created for each participant by averaging the preference for the selected stigmatized candidates and for the selected nonstigmatized candidates across the eight scenarios. Similarly, two variables were created for each participant by averaging the decision difficulty ratings for selecting stigmatized candidates and for selecting nonstigmatized candidates across the eight scenarios. The order in which the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates were presented in each scenario did not significantly influence the total number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire, the degree of preference for the selected candidate, or decision difficulty, all  $t_s < 0.49$ , *ns*.

Based on an examination of the research literature on justifications for the expression of prejudice (e.g., Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), a coding scheme was developed in order to analyze participants' open ended explanations for their hiring decisions. There were seven main categories identified for this purpose: Stereotypes, Similarity, System Justification, Covering, Concern Over Appearing Biased, Perceived Disadvantage, and Diversity. Stereotypes are beliefs about the personal attributes and traits of a social group and its members, and responses were coded as such whenever a generalization about the candidates' social group membership was made (e.g., Overweight people are lazy). Stereotypes as justifications were further coded as to whether they were positive or negative in content, and whether they applied to the stigmatized or nonstigmatized candidate. Similarity was coded as a justification, particularly mentions of perceived familiarity, identification, or ability to relate with the

selected candidate (e.g., I chose the female because I am a female) or unfamiliarity or little group contact or knowledge of the nonselected candidates' group. System justification was coded whenever participants relied upon their perception of the status quo or social norms (e.g., Most CEOs are male; The general public is homophobic). Covering was coded whenever participants excused or otherwise downplayed their hiring decision despite having made a choice (e.g., It depends on the job). Concern over appearing biased was coded whenever participants mentioned the legality of discrimination or being perceived as discriminatory by others. Perceived disadvantage was coded whenever participants mentioned that some candidates are disadvantaged because of their group membership (e.g., Women are underrepresented in CEO positions). Diversity was coded whenever participants explained their choice in terms of increasing diversity in the workplace.

Participants' open ended explanations for their hiring decisions were coded by two research assistants according to the justification categorization coding scheme. All of participants' written responses were able to be coded using this scheme. Overall interrater reliability between the coding of the two research assistants, calculated using Krippendorff's  $\alpha$  (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007), was .74, ranging between .61 and .85 for the individual scenarios. All disagreements in coding were resolved through discussion. For the analyses, the justification codes were counted for their presence, and then the percentage of each justification code for each participants' response was calculated (i.e., for similarity: similarity justifications / total number of justifications).

**Selection of stigmatized candidates.** The mean number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire across the eight scenarios totaled 2.25 ( $SD = 1.77$ ), with a

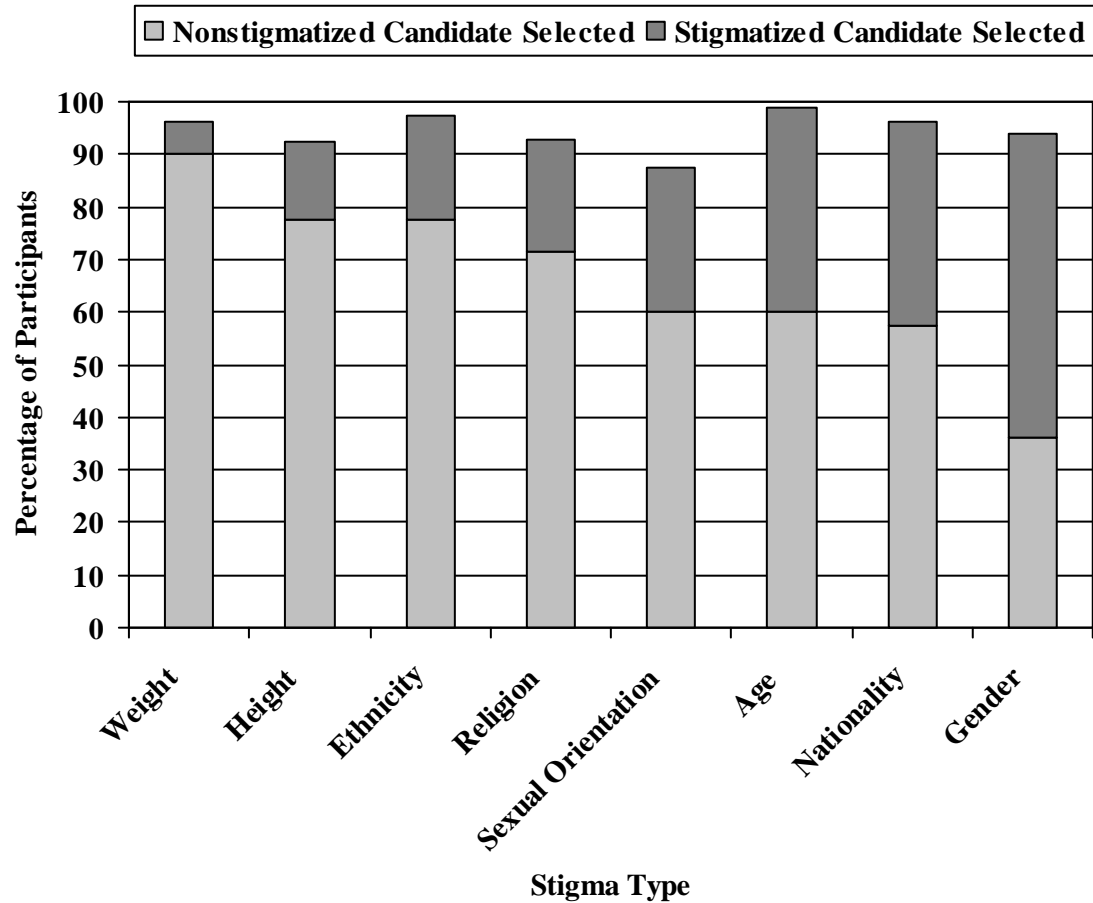
mode of 2. A value of 4 would be expected if the hiring decisions between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates were based on chance or were equal.<sup>3</sup> The mean number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire across the eight scenarios significantly differs from 4,  $t(79) = 8.85, p < .001$ , indicating that the decisions were not random. Whereas 80% ( $n = 64$ ) of participants selected fewer than four stigmatized candidates for hire, only 11% ( $n = 9$ ) selected more than four stigmatized candidates for hire. Unexpectedly, there was no effect of job status on the total number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire across the eight scenarios; an equal number of stigmatized candidates were recommended for hire regardless of whether the job was for a Customer Service Representative ( $M = 2.00, SD = 1.60$ ) or Chief Executive Officer ( $M = 2.50, SD = 1.91$ ),  $t(78) = 1.27, ns$ .

In order to determine if the number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire differed from the number of nonstigmatized candidates selected **for each stigma type** (see Figure 2), a series of  $\chi^2$  tests were run.<sup>4</sup> Significantly more nonstigmatized than stigmatized candidates were selected for hire in the weight, height, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation scenarios than expected by chance, all  $\chi^2s > 9.65, p < .01$ . Thus, the overweight, short, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and homosexual candidates were less likely to be hired than their nonstigmatized counterparts. A trend of more nonstigmatized than stigmatized candidates selected for hire was also observed in the age and nationality scenarios, both  $\chi^2s > 2.92, p < .09$ . Thus, the old and immigrant candidates tended to be

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<sup>3</sup> This reflects an assumption that in this paradigm, no discrimination is demonstrated when 50/50 decision making is evident. This is a conservative assumption, as it assumes that nondiscrimination would be equivalent to random responding. An alternative possibility is that nondiscrimination would be portrayed by favouring stigmatized candidates, as this takes into account the social context that typically disadvantages the stigmatized.

<sup>4</sup> Using a repeated measures ANOVA (Lunney, 1970), no effect of job status or interaction between job status and stigma type was found on hiring decisions, both  $F_s < 1.44, ns$ .



*Figure 2.* Percentage of participants selecting the nonstigmatized candidate and the stigmatized candidate for hire by stigma type, Study 1.

*Note.* The percentage of participants does not total 100 in each stigma type due to some participants not choosing between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates.

less likely to be hired than their nonstigmatized counterparts. Counter to expectation, a trend of more stigmatized than nonstigmatized candidates selected for hire was observed in the gender scenario,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.85, p = .05$ . Thus, the female (stigmatized) candidate tended to be more likely to be hired than her nonstigmatized counterpart.<sup>5</sup>

In order to test the hypothesis that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire would vary depending on stigma type, a Cochran test was run (Sheskin, 2007). A Cochran test is appropriate to test this hypothesis as the data are interdependent and dichotomous. As expected, this test revealed a significant effect indicating that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire varied by stigma type, Cochran's  $Q(7) = 69.41, p < .001$ . Post hoc analyses were run in order to explore which stigma types significantly differed from each other. Using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due to multiple comparisons, five of the comparisons with weight reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the weight scenario was significantly lower than the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected in the gender, nationality, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity scenarios, all  $\chi^2s > 19.86, p < .002$ . That is, the overweight candidate was less likely to be hired than the female, immigrant, old, homosexual, and Middle Eastern candidates. In addition, five of the comparisons with gender reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the gender scenario was significantly larger than the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the weight, height, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation scenarios, all  $\chi^2s > 10.02, p < .002$ . That is, the female candidate was more

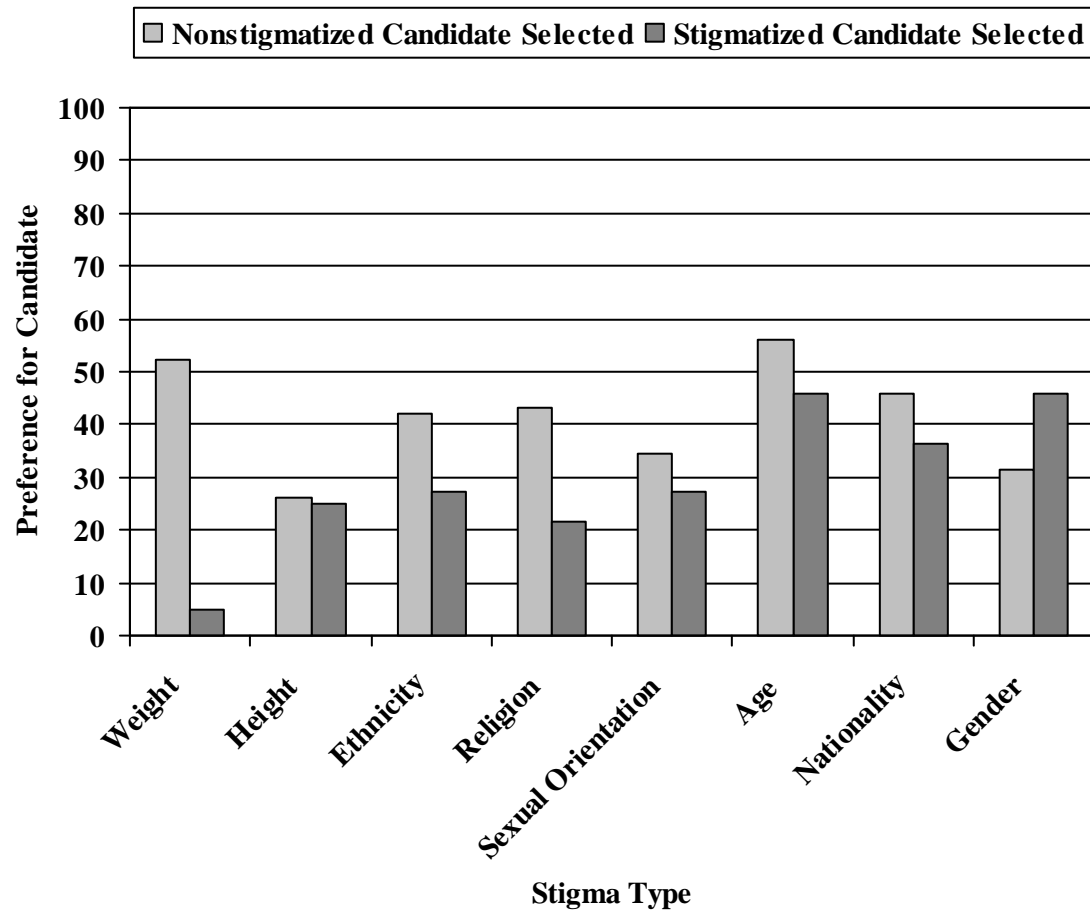
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<sup>5</sup> The term stigmatized is used even though the female candidate was not “stigmatized” (i.e., discriminated against) in the forced choice task. The use of the term stigmatized throughout this document refers to social groups that have historically been targets of discrimination and that continue to be disadvantaged in North American society.

likely to be hired than the overweight, short, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and homosexual candidates. Furthermore, the immigrant candidate was more likely to be hired than the short candidate,  $\chi^2(1) = 11.12, p = .001$ .

**Preference for selected candidate.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, there was a finding of marginal significance, such that the selected nonstigmatized candidates ( $M = 42.84, SD = 22.48$ ) tended to be preferred more strongly than the selected stigmatized candidates ( $M = 38.66, SD = 22.57$ ),  $t(68) = 1.78, p = .08$ . Thus, not only were stigmatized candidates less likely to be selected for hire, but if they were chosen, they tended to be preferred less strongly than the nonstigmatized candidates who were selected. In order to determine if preference for the selected stigmatized candidates differed from preference for the selected nonstigmatized candidates **for each stigma type**, a series of independent  $t$ -tests were run (see Figure 3). Nonstigmatized candidates selected for hire in the weight, religion, and ethnicity scenarios were preferred more strongly than stigmatized candidates, all  $t_s > 2.27, p < .05$ , and the nonstigmatized candidate selected for hire in the age scenario tended to be preferred more strongly than the stigmatized candidate selected for hire,  $t(77) = 1.84, p = .07$ . Counter to expectation, the stigmatized candidate selected for hire in the gender scenario was preferred more strongly than the nonstigmatized candidate selected for hire,  $t(73) = 2.24, p < .05$ .

A 2 (job status) x 8 (stigma type) mixed model analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run on participants' degree of preference for the candidate selected for hire. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma type on preference ratings,  $F(7, 462) = 8.64, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .12$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due



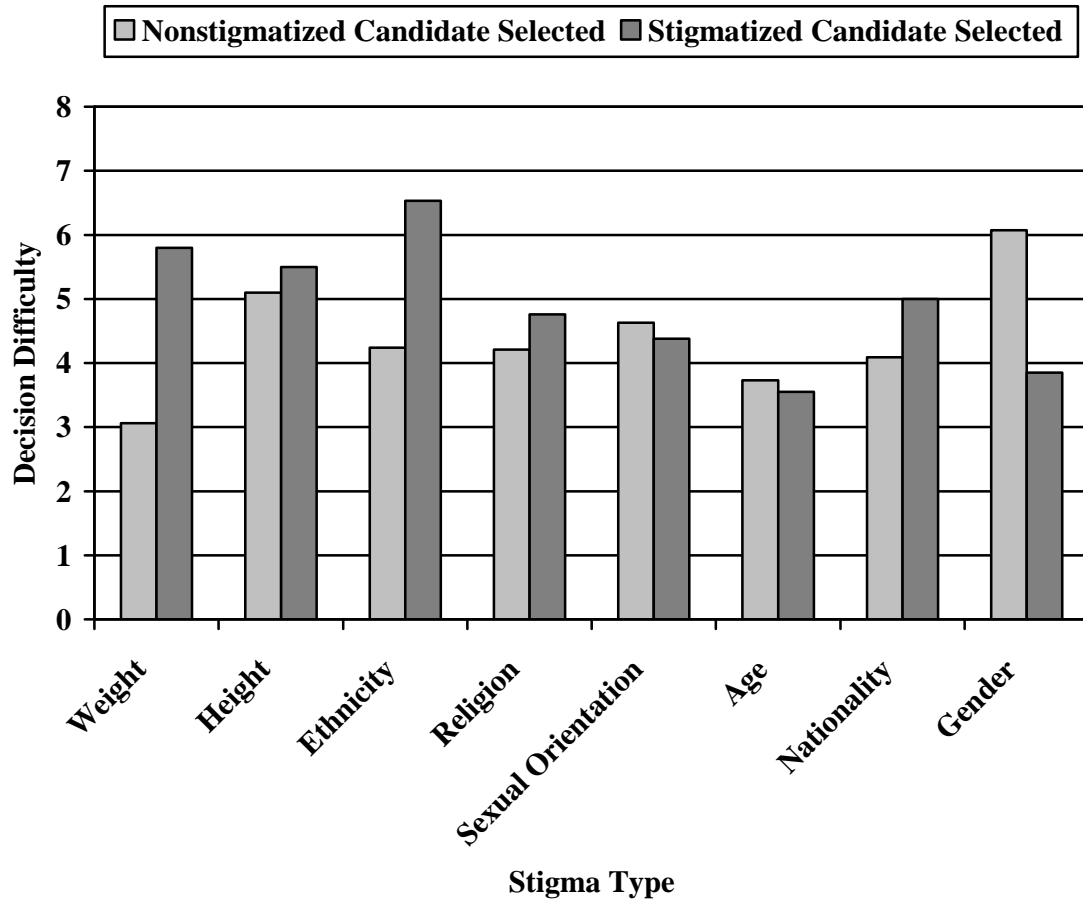
*Figure 3.* Preference ratings for the nonstigmatized and stigmatized candidates selected for hire by stigma type, Study 1.

to multiple comparisons revealed that five of the comparisons with height reached significance, such that preference ratings for candidates selected for hire in the height scenario were significantly lower than preference ratings for candidates selected for hire in the age, weight, nationality, gender, and ethnicity scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.26$ ,  $p < .05$ . In addition, two of the comparisons with sexual orientation reached significance, such that the preference ratings for candidates selected for hire in the sexual orientation scenario were significantly lower than the preference ratings of candidates selected for hire in the age and weight scenarios, both  $t_s > 4.46$ ,  $p < .01$ . No effect of job status was observed,  $F(1, 66) = 0.19$ ,  $ns$ , and there was no interaction between job status and stigma type on preference ratings,  $F(7, 462) = 1.46$ ,  $ns$ .

**Decision difficulty.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, the hiring decisions were reported to be similarly difficult regardless of whether stigmatized candidates ( $M = 4.49$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ) or nonstigmatized candidates ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 1.91$ ) were selected for hire,  $t(68) = 0.80$ ,  $ns$ . In order to determine whether difficulty in selecting stigmatized versus nonstigmatized candidates for hire varied **for each stigma type**, a series of independent  $t$ -tests were run (see Figure 4). Hiring the stigmatized candidates in the ethnicity and weight scenarios were reported as more difficult than hiring the nonstigmatized candidates, both  $t_s > 2.59$ ,  $p < .05$ . Counter to expectation, hiring the nonstigmatized candidate in the gender scenario was reported as more difficult than hiring the stigmatized candidate,  $t(73) = 4.02$ ,  $p < .001$ .

A 2 (job status) x 8 (stigma type) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' hiring decision difficulty ratings. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma





*Figure 4.* Decision difficulty ratings in selecting the nonstigmatized and stigmatized candidates for hire by stigma type, Study 1.

type on difficulty ratings,  $F(7, 476) = 5.01, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due to multiple comparisons revealed that three of the comparisons with weight reached significance, such that the hiring decision difficulty ratings in the weight scenario were significantly lower than the hiring decision difficulty ratings in the height, gender, and sexual orientation scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.42, p < .05$ . In addition, one other comparison with height reached significance, such that the hiring decision difficulty ratings in the height scenario were significantly higher than the hiring decision difficulty ratings in the age scenario,  $t(68) = 3.81, p < .01$ . No effect of job status was observed,  $F(1, 68) = 2.96, ns$ , and there was no interaction between job status and stigma type on difficulty ratings,  $F(7, 476) = 0.28, ns$ .

**Justifications for hiring decisions.** The majority ( $n = 60$ ; 75%) of participants provided some sort of justification for their hiring decisions in all of the scenarios. On average, participants explained their decisions in 7.34 ( $SD = 1.48$ ) of the 8 scenarios. Overall, an average of 1.24 ( $SD = 0.67$ ; range 0-4) justifications were coded for each participant in each scenario. Less than 30% of participants explained at least one of their hiring decisions by using the justification categories of negative stereotypes about the nonstigmatized candidate, diversity, and concern over appearing prejudiced, and so these will not be discussed further. The job status manipulation was not found to have any effect on the proportion of any of the justifications, and so will also not be discussed. Examples of the justifications given by the participants are provided in Table 1.

**Positive stereotypes about nonstigmatized candidates.** Positive stereotypes about nonstigmatized candidates as justifications for hiring decisions were used at least once by 89% ( $n = 71$ ) of participants and were used on average in 2.38 of the 8 scenarios ( $SD =$

Table 1

*Examples of Justifications by Stigma Type, Study 1*

Stigma Type	Participant	Comment
Positive Stereotypes about Nonstigmatized Candidates		
Weight	69	I would choose the person with average weight simply because they would be more attractive.
	94	Better health (probably more reliable; less sick days).
Height	63	Tall people show more confidence usually and are appealing to the eye.
	81	Physically, they're able to do more (e.g., get things from high places or carry things).
Ethnicity	27	I find Europeans are well rounded in everything they do. Europeans are very good at science.
	70	Europeans - time conscious, more productive, slightly more efficient.
Religion	10	Christian sounds more friendly.
	85	My own belief that Christian have a strong sense of responsibility and are honest and caring in work environment.
Sexual Orientation	32	It is easier for heterosexual people to find a partner.
	50	Personally speaking, heterosexual people tend to perform job well and work well with other in a team.
Age	39	Because they would be able to work effectively for more years, have more energy, and more time to grow and improve.
	75	Easier to train. More up to date with current trends.
Nationality	40	More accustomed to the Canadian culture.
	65	Canadian has better English.
Gender	37	Men are more competent.
	59	Men have more time to devote to careers.
Positive Stereotypes about Stigmatized Candidates		
Height	11	Being with short people can give me more confidence.
	100	Short people can deceive others by looking guileless and pedamorphic features increase trust.

Ethnicity	44	The majority of middle easterns that I have come across are very easygoing and good individuals.
	69	I feel many middle eastern workers are simply better more cooperative workers.
Religion	35	Muslims are dedicated.
	61	Muslims believe what they believe but don't push their beliefs on others.
Sexual Orientation	60	Less likely to have children which detract from workable hours.
	75	The homosexual person may be more approachable/nice.
Age	26	Generally speaking older candidates have more work experience possibly more education.
	41	I think an old employee is in general more consistent and responsible when it comes to work.
Nationality	31	Immigrants tend to be better educated and have a broader world-view in addition to language and cultural sensitivity.
	87	I think immigrants work harder and are on average more committed.
Gender	29	Females make decisions based more on feelings and consider more than just the bottom line.
	90	Females are determined and hard working these days.
Negative Stereotypes about Stigmatized Candidates		
Weight	7	Overweight implies lack of discipline, lazy, lack of balance.
	83	Overweight workers can become liabilities down the road (e.g., medical costs/benefit usage/time off) since obesity has significant health costs.
Ethnicity	28	Middle Eastern people usually have a language barrier.
	41	When I think about Middle Eastern, I think of terrorists.
Religion	11	Muslim let me feel dangerous, unsafe.
	77	The way some Muslim men treat women is a bit insulting.
Sexual Orientation	27	It also depends on how the homosexual acts. If he is very eccentric I would be much less willing to hire them.
	81	I am simply against homosexuality and do believe that that is associated with a psychological deficit.
Age	31	Older candidates will retire earlier and are prone to health concerns that are more likely to remove the candidate from work.
	100	The old are closed minded.

Nationality	10	It's hard for immigrant to speak perfect English.
	38	Immigrants can be difficult to understand and therefore their ability to do well in the job would be compromised. Also, their work experience may be less relevant.
Gender	59	Women are more likely to give up the position/career for family.
	77	I'd say women can be more "catty" and gossipy and that can create tension in the workforce.
Covering		
Weight	47	The weight of the person matters not.
	74	My hat chose for me.
Height	28	I don't know why. I don't know what height has to do with anything.
	68	I circled tall because I had to circle one.
Ethnicity	43	That doesn't mean the middle eastern candidate is not good. The question asked is too hard to make a correct judgment.
	68	I don't think ethnicity is too relevant to the decision, though I would choose the European.
Religion	47	I don't really think the religion of a person really matters. I would just as likely pick the Muslim over the Christian. I would probably decide this with a toss of a coin.
	61	It depends on how strongly religious they are.
Sexual	27	Depends on the job.
Orientation	77	This doesn't matter to me. Either is fine.
Age	26	This is a difficult one because it would depend on the position, and what qualifications I'm looking for.
	55	I think I may make this decision subconsciously.
Nationality	49	I would have to observe and interview both before coming to a decision.
	59	It really depends on company.
Gender	26	I only chose the male because I had to choose one. Personally, sex would make absolutely no difference to me.
	87	There is no way to choose but flip coin.
Similarity		
Height	39	Because I am short so I prefer to be around other people like me.
	66	I'm tall, relatability I guess.

Ethnicity	37	I am this.
	99	I do not know much about middle eastern culture and work ethics.
Religion	44	I would choose the Christian more likely because I am a Christian. I grew up in a Christian environment.
	64	I don't know too much about Muslims.
Sexual Orientation	7	You always choose those most like you as there is a natural sympathy there for them.
	91	Inability to relate to the candidate. Yes, I'm straight.
Age	32	Because I am young. It will be easy for me to get along with a person who is about my age.
	92	I choose this person strictly because I am young.
Nationality	11	I'm a immigrant too, so, more common.
	74	Both of my parents were immigrants.
Gender	52	Being female I can sympathize.
	74	As a female myself, it would be easier to relate to another female.
System Justification		
Weight	59	People have more negative views of overweight individuals, so having an overweight person represent the organization may reflect badly on the organization itself.
	87	All research shows people (i.e., customers) prefer people of average weight.
Height	29	Only because the image he may portray of the company, when it comes to other people's stereotypical views and judgments.
	55	I watched a documentary on how taller people are favored more in the workplace and I don't see how I wouldn't be biased in the same way.
Ethnicity	10	People who are CEO or director of the company would usually be white.
	40	There are more people of European background in Canada, and so this candidate might be able to identify more with customers.
Religion	33	It seems muslim is the minority religion.
	45	Could hurt the company's image.
Sexual Orientation	33	Heterosexual looks more common.
	59	Some people have negative views of homosexuals, so we could lose potential business with those that are prejudiced.

Age	72	The decision is based on an overall "best fit" - I will assume the rest of my work force (CSRs) are young.
	100	For a CEO, better to follow the status quo.
Nationality	36	Because they have been paying taxes to the state so deserve some advantages when faced with this type of scenario.
	93	I would give preference to a Canadian because I believe those qualified from our country should have priority for jobs over others not born here.
Gender	35	There are a lot of sexist potential business partners out there. Would rather not deal with that.
	85	It is generally believed that males do better with CEO position since there are very small number of female CEO.
Perceived Disadvantage		
Weight	34	People generally believe overweight people are lazy. I'd be trying to prove them wrong.
	81	I would probably hire the overweight person because of the discrimination he has probably gone through to get a job. I would give him his chance and see if it works.
Height	94	Because it's a fact that taller people always win in this scenario! Give the short one a break.
Ethnicity	31	There is an opportunity to give a job to someone who may face prejudice elsewhere with this choice.
	76	People of middle eastern background might be underrepresented in CEO positions.
Religion	39	Muslims have a bad rap and deserve a chance to show how smart they are.
	46	Muslims tend to get fewer choices.
Sexual Orientation	28	Homosexuals face a lot of discrimination so they should be given a chance.
	49	I understand their hardship and admire that they were able to overcome many difficulties.
Age	29	This younger person needs a break to start out in life.
	63	The young person probably has a greater chance of getting hired elsewhere and the old person might need the job more.
Nationality	53	It may be more difficult for the immigrant to get a job, so that would be my only rationale.
	58	I'd be more apt to want to give the immigrant-born candidate a chance.

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Gender	38	I chose woman because I think women are more discriminated against in the workplace. Even it up a little.
	78	To increase the number of women in high positions.

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*Note.* If there are less than two examples of a justification for a stigma type, then this indicates that no additional examples are available from participants' responses.



1.57). Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, positive stereotypes about nonstigmatized candidates were used more frequently by participants who selected nonstigmatized candidates for hire ( $M = .35$ ,  $SD = .25$ ) than participants who selected stigmatized candidates ( $M = .01$ ,  $SD = .05$ ),  $t(68) = 11.09$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Figure 5). Positive stereotypes about the nonstigmatized candidate were more frequently used when hiring the nonstigmatized candidates in the age, weight, gender, nationality, height, ethnicity, and religion scenarios than when hiring the stigmatized candidates in the respective scenarios, all  $t$ s  $> 2.93$ ,  $p < .01$ . Positive stereotypes about the nonstigmatized candidate also tended to be used more frequently when hiring the nonstigmatized candidate in the sexual orientation scenario than when hiring the stigmatized candidate,  $t(47) = 2.00$ ,  $p = .05$ . A significant effect of stigma type was observed on the proportion of positive stereotype justifications about nonstigmatized candidates,  $F(7, 441) = 11.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that positive stereotypes about nonstigmatized candidates occurred less frequently in the sexual orientation and religion scenarios than in the height, age, weight, and ethnicity scenarios, and that positive stereotyping about nonstigmatized candidates occurred less frequently in the gender scenario than in the height and age scenarios, all  $t$ s  $> 3.96$ ,  $p < .01$ .

***Positive stereotypes about stigmatized candidates.*** Positive stereotypes about stigmatized candidates as justifications for hiring decisions were used at least once by 73% ( $n = 58$ ) of participants and were used on average in 1.16 of the 8 scenarios ( $SD = 1.02$ ). Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, positive stereotypes about stigmatized candidates

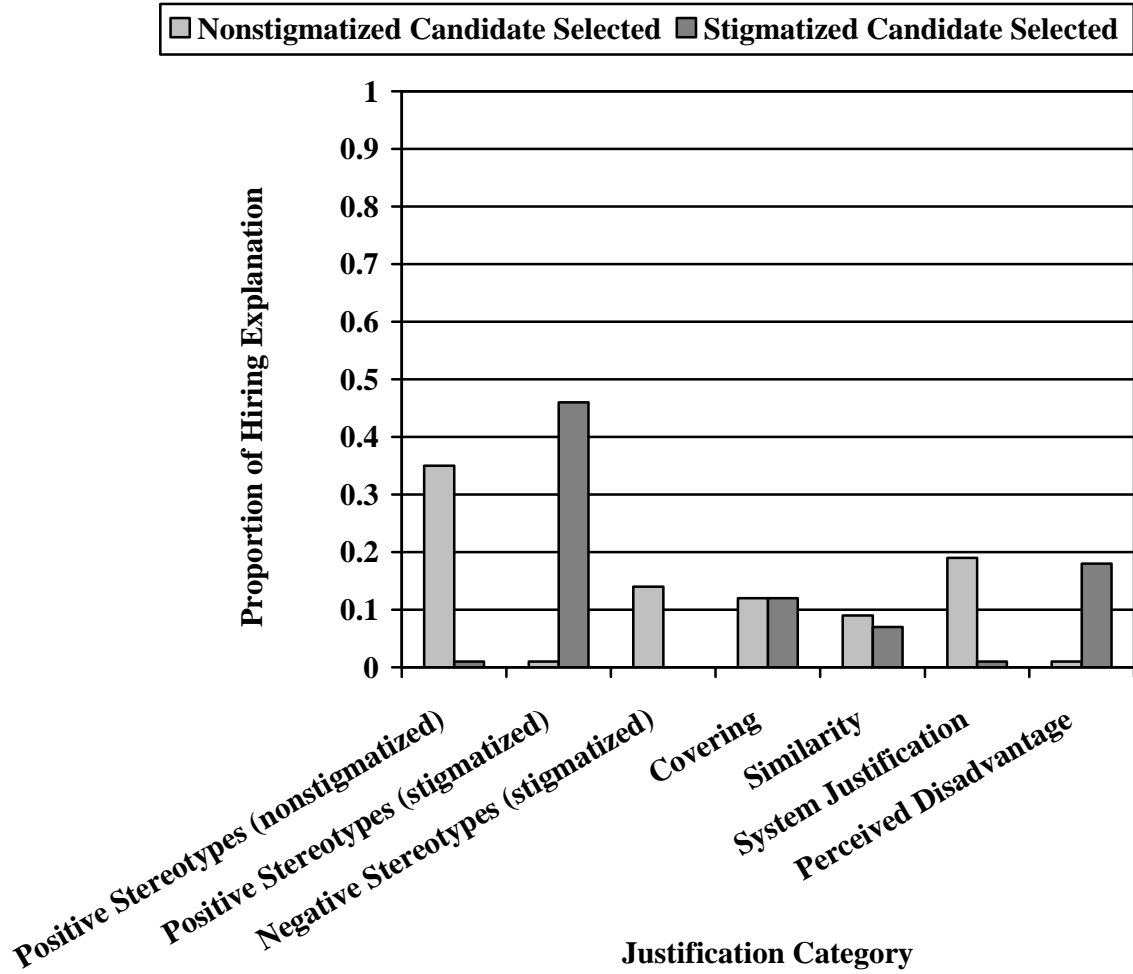


Figure 5. Proportion of justification categories explaining selection of nonstigmatized and stigmatized candidates for hire, Study 1.

were used more frequently as a justification for hiring stigmatized candidates ( $M = .46$ ,  $SD = .37$ ) than nonstigmatized candidates ( $M = .01$ ,  $SD = .03$ ),  $t(68) = 9.98$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Figure 5). All of the stigma scenarios revealed significance such that positive stereotypes about stigmatized candidates were used more frequently to justify hiring stigmatized candidates than nonstigmatized candidates, all  $ts > 3.47$ ,  $p < .01$ . A significant effect of stigma type was observed on the proportion of positive stereotype justifications about stigmatized candidates,  $F(7, 441) = 8.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .12$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that positive stereotypes about stigmatized candidates occurred more frequently in the age scenario than in the weight, height, religion, and ethnicity scenarios, that positive stereotypes about stigmatized candidates occurred more frequently in the gender scenario than in the weight and height scenarios, and that positive stereotypes about stigmatized candidates occurred more frequently in the nationality scenario than in the weight scenario, all  $ts > 3.32$ ,  $p < .05$ .

***Negative stereotypes about stigmatized candidates.*** Negative stereotypes about stigmatized candidates as justifications for hiring decisions were used at least once by 64% ( $n = 51$ ) of participants and were used on average in 1.14 of the 8 scenarios ( $SD = 1.18$ ). Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, negative stereotypes about stigmatized candidates were more frequently used to justify hiring nonstigmatized candidates ( $M = .14$ ,  $SD = .16$ ) than stigmatized candidates ( $M = .00$ ,  $SD = .01$ ),  $t(68) = 7.74$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Figure 5). All of the stigma scenarios revealed significance except for height, such that more negative stereotypes about stigmatized candidates were used to justify selection of the nonstigmatized candidates over the stigmatized candidates, all  $ts > 2.01$ ,  $p < .05$ . A

significant effect of stigma type was observed on the proportion of negative stereotype justifications about stigmatized candidates,  $F(7, 441) = 8.20, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .12$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that negative stereotypes about stigmatized candidates occurred more frequently in the weight scenario than in the height, sexual orientation, age, gender, nationality, and ethnicity scenarios, all  $ts > 3.32, p < .05$ .

**Covering.** Covering justifications for hiring decisions were used at least once by 64% ( $n = 51$ ) of participants and were used on average in 1.51 of the 8 scenarios ( $SD = 1.60$ ). Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, covering justifications were used with similar frequency regardless of whether hiring decisions were in favour of nonstigmatized ( $M = .12, SD = .16$ ) or stigmatized ( $M = .12, SD = .21$ ) candidates,  $t(68) = 0.11, ns$  (see Figure 5). Only the gender scenario reached significance, such that the proportion of covering justifications was greater when the nonstigmatized candidate was selected for hire than when the stigmatized candidate was selected,  $t(72) = 2.40, p < .02$ . A significant effect of stigma type was observed on the proportion of covering justifications,  $F(7, 441) = 5.06, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that covering justifications occurred more frequently in the height scenario than in the nationality, age, and ethnicity scenarios, and that covering justifications occurred more frequently in the sexual orientation scenario than in the weight scenario, all  $ts > 3.25, p < .05$ .

**Similarity.** Similarity as justifications for the hiring decisions were used at least once by 63% ( $n = 50$ ) of participants and were used on average in 1.05 of the 8 scenarios ( $SD = 1.14$ ). Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, similarity justifications were used with similar

frequency regardless of whether nonstigmatized ( $M = .09$ ,  $SD = .11$ ) or stigmatized ( $M = .07$ ,  $SD = .16$ ) candidates were selected,  $t(68) = 0.83$ ,  $ns$  (see Figure 5). Similarity justifications were used with greater frequency when hiring nonstigmatized over stigmatized candidates in the religion and ethnicity scenarios, both  $ts > 2.34$ ,  $p < .05$ , with a similar trend observed in the age scenario,  $t(47) = 1.84$ ,  $p = .07$ . On the other hand, similarity justifications were used with greater frequency when hiring the stigmatized candidate than the nonstigmatized candidate in the gender scenario,  $t(45) = 3.23$ ,  $p < .01$ , with a similar trend observed in the height scenario,  $t(12) = 2.06$ ,  $p < .07$ . A significant effect of stigma type was observed on the proportion of similarity justifications,  $F(7, 441) = 8.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .12$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that similarity justifications occurred more frequently in the religion scenario than in the weight, age, height, sexual orientation, gender, and ethnicity scenarios, all  $ts > 3.71$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**System justification.** System justifications for hiring decisions were used at least once by 59% ( $n = 47$ ) of participants and were used on average in 1.21 of the 8 scenarios ( $SD = 1.36$ ). Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, system justifications were used more frequently to explain hiring nonstigmatized candidates ( $M = .19$ ,  $SD = .22$ ) than stigmatized candidates ( $M = .01$ ,  $SD = .02$ ),  $t(68) = 7.22$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Figure 5). All of the stigma scenarios revealed significance except for age, such that the proportion of system justifications were greater when the nonstigmatized candidates were selected for hire than when the stigmatized candidates were selected, all  $ts > 2.56$ ,  $p < .05$ . A significant effect of stigma type was observed on the proportion of system justifications,  $F(7, 441) = 6.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .10$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that system justifications occurred more

frequently in the sexual orientation scenario than in the age, gender, religion, and height scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.79$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Perceived disadvantage.** Perceived disadvantage justifications for hiring decisions were used at least once by 40% ( $n = 32$ ) of participants and were used on average in 0.66 of the 8 scenarios ( $SD = 1.02$ ). Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, perceived disadvantage justifications were used more frequently when the stigmatized candidates ( $M = .18$ ,  $SD = .27$ ) were selected than the nonstigmatized candidates ( $M = .01$ ,  $SD = .04$ ),  $t(68) = 5.53$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Figure 5). The gender, nationality, religion, and ethnicity scenarios reached significance, such that the proportion of perceived disadvantage justifications was greater when the stigmatized candidates were selected for hire than when the nonstigmatized candidates were selected, all  $t_s > 2.39$ ,  $p < .01$ . A significant effect of stigma type was observed on the proportion of perceived disadvantage justifications,  $F(7, 441) = 5.61$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .08$ . Post hoc analyses revealed that perceived disadvantage justifications occurred more frequently in the gender scenario than in the height, sexual orientation, and weight scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.49$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Demographic influence.** The demographic characteristics of the sample were explored in order to determine whether they had an influence in the hiring decisions made in the gender scenario. Because discrimination against the stigmatized (i.e., female) candidate was not observed, it was hypothesized that ingroup biases may have influenced hiring decisions. The analyses revealed an ingroup bias among female participants; whereas male participants were equally likely to hire the male candidate (observed  $N = 12$ ) and the female candidate (observed  $N = 15$ ),  $\chi^2(1) = 0.33$ ,  $ns$ , female participants

were more likely to hire the female candidate (observed  $N = 31$ ) than the male candidate (observed  $N = 17$ ),  $\chi^2(1) = 4.08, p < .05$ .

## **Discussion**

The primary purpose of this first study was to examine the responses of participants to a forced choice employment decision paradigm requiring them to make difficult hiring decisions between stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates across several stigma types. The pervasive, systematic discrimination observed across and between stigmatized social groups is astounding. Systematic discrimination abounded regardless of job status; overall, stigmatized candidates were less likely to be selected for hire than nonstigmatized candidates. The proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire varied by stigma type, however. Overweight candidates were the most frequent targets of discrimination, with only 6% of participants choosing to hire the overweight candidate instead of the average weight candidate. Stigmatized candidates were also less likely to be selected for hire than nonstigmatized candidates in the height, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation scenarios. Marginally significant findings revealed that stigmatized candidates also tended to be less likely to be selected for hire than nonstigmatized candidates in the age and nationality scenarios. Counter to expectations, stigmatized candidates in the gender scenario were more likely to be selected for hire than nonstigmatized candidates in the gender scenario, which may be partially attributable to demographic characteristics of the sample, in particular the fact that a majority of participants were women.

Not only were stigmatized candidates less likely to be selected overall, but a finding of marginal significance revealed that they also tended to be less preferred than

nonstigmatized candidates when they were selected for the job. Stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the weight, religion, and ethnicity scenarios were preferred less strongly than nonstigmatized candidates selected, and stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the age scenario tended to be preferred less strongly than the nonstigmatized candidates selected. Counter to expectations, stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the gender scenario were preferred more strongly than nonstigmatized candidates. Although participants reported that it was similarly difficult to hire stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates overall, participants reported that it was more difficult to select stigmatized than nonstigmatized candidates in the ethnicity and weight scenarios. Counter to expectations, participants reported that it was less difficult to hire the stigmatized than nonstigmatized candidates in the gender scenario.

Participants' hiring decisions were justified in predictable ways. Those who selected nonstigmatized over stigmatized candidates for hire relied upon positive stereotypes about the nonstigmatized candidate, negative stereotypes about the stigmatized candidate, and system justifications to explain their hiring decisions, whereas those who selected stigmatized over nonstigmatized candidates for hire relied upon positive stereotypes about the stigmatized candidate and perceived disadvantage justifications to explain their hiring decisions. Covering and similarity justifications were used by participants with comparable frequency to justify hiring both nonstigmatized and stigmatized candidates.

In this paradigm, participants have three potential pieces of information to guide their decision making: (1) information indicating that both candidates are excellent, (2) presentation of the group memberships of both candidates, and (3) likely knowledge that



stigmatized individuals are disadvantaged in society. Participants appear to have focused on the group membership information and relied upon it in negative and derogatory ways, rather than modifying their stereotypic assumptions with the information that both candidates were excellent and taking into account that the stigmatized candidate is typically a target of discrimination. As justification processes seemed to overtake suppression processes in this forced choice paradigm, the purpose of the following studies was to attempt to boost suppression processes and examine the effect on patterns of systematic discrimination observed across and between social groups.

### **Study 2**

The forced choice employment decision paradigm directly pits the conflicting motivations of prejudice suppression and expression against each other because participants must make hiring decisions based on social category information. Nevertheless, only 6% of participants expressed any concern over appearing biased in their hiring explanations. Thus, whereas the first study examined justification processes in forced choice decisions, the second study examined suppression processes by experimentally inducing concern over appearing prejudiced. Based on the justification-suppression model of the experience and expression of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), experiencing concern over appearing prejudiced should suppress prejudicial responding. Previous research has demonstrated that individual differences in personal standards to be nonprejudiced predict the expression of prejudice, such that those motivated to respond without prejudice report less prejudiced attitudes and stereotyped beliefs (Crandall et al., 2002; Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Plant & Devine, 1998). Manipulations designed to experimentally induce concern over appearing prejudiced

have also been shown to be successful at reducing prejudice (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Fazio et al., 1995).

In the second study then, an attempt was made to boost suppression processes in the forced choice employment decision paradigm by manipulating concern over appearing prejudiced. In particular, participants were randomly assigned to be presented with instructions from their boss, the company president, to not be biased in their hiring decisions, or not. Previous research has demonstrated that such instructions from an authority figure are effective in hypothetical employment scenarios (Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow, 2000; Umphress, Simmons, Boswell, & Triana, 2008). Furthermore, similar instructions were used effectively by Norton, Vandello, and Darley (2004) in order to make salient political correctness norms among all participants. Thus, based on this research and the predictions of the justification-suppression model of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), it was expected that systematic discrimination would be eliminated or at least attenuated when instructions from the boss to not be biased were present. In addition, due to the possibility that participants may have misinterpreted the low status job position in Study 1, in this study job status was manipulated a second time.

## **Method**

**Participants.** Participants included 162 (90 female, 72 male) introductory psychology students who ranged in age from 17 to 35 years ( $M = 19.02$ ,  $SD = 2.22$ ). The majority (65.4%) of participants reported their ethnicity as White/European ( $n = 106$ ); 14.2% of participants identified as Asian ( $n = 23$ ), 7.4% as East Indian ( $n = 12$ ), 2.5% as Black ( $n = 4$ ), 1.2% as North American Indian ( $n = 2$ ), 0.6% as Hispanic ( $n = 1$ ), and 8.7% as other ( $n = 14$ ). The sample primarily comprised Canadian citizens ( $n = 150$ ;

92.6%). Based on self-reported height and weight, participants' BMI ranged from 16.09 to 35.42 kg/m<sup>2</sup> ( $M = 22.47$ ,  $SD = 3.07$ ), such that 72.2% ( $n = 117$ ) of participants may be considered normal weight, 19.1% ( $n = 31$ ) overweight or obese, and 7.4% ( $n = 12$ ) underweight. Two participants did not report their weight and/or height.

**Procedure and materials.** Participants were presented with materials similar to those used in Study 1, and were randomly assigned to make their hiring decisions for either a low status (Retail Salesperson) or high status (Chief Executive Officer) job. In order to manipulate concern over appearing prejudiced, participants were randomly assigned to the experimental condition, in which they were presented with instructions from their boss ordering them to not be biased in their hiring decisions, or to the control condition, in which they were not presented with any instructions from their boss. As in Study 1, after indicating their selection between the two candidates, participants were asked to indicate the degree of preference for their chosen candidate, were provided with the opportunity to explain why they chose the person they did, and were asked to report how difficult they found the decision to be. The order of presentation of the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates in each scenario was counterbalanced. Participants completed the materials by paper and pencil.

## Results

**Data preparation.** Dependent variables were aggregated and created as in Study 1. The order in which the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates were presented in each scenario did not significantly influence the total number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire, the degree of preference for the selected candidate, or decision difficulty, all  $t_s < 1.08$ , *ns*.

**Selection of stigmatized candidates.** The mean number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire across the eight scenarios totaled 2.12 ( $SD = 1.54$ ), with a mode of 1. A value of 4 would be expected if the hiring decisions between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates were based on chance or were equal. The mean number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire across the eight scenarios significantly differs from 4,  $t(161) = 15.54, p < .001$ , indicating that the decisions were not random. Whereas 82% ( $n = 133$ ) of participants selected fewer than four stigmatized candidates for hire, only 6% ( $n = 10$ ) selected more than four stigmatized candidates for hire. As in Study 1, there was no effect of job status on the total number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire across the eight scenarios; an equal number of stigmatized candidates were recommended for hire regardless of whether the job was for a Retail Salesperson ( $M = 2.05, SD = 1.50$ ) or Chief Executive Officer ( $M = 2.19, SD = 1.59$ ),  $t(160) = 0.56, ns$ . Unexpectedly, there was also no effect of instructions from the boss to not be biased; an equal number of stigmatized candidates were recommended for hire regardless of whether instructions to not be biased were present ( $M = 2.28, SD = 1.73$ ) or not ( $M = 1.95, SD = 1.32$ ),  $t(160) = 1.38, ns$ .

In order to determine if the number of stigmatized candidates selected for hire differed from the number of nonstigmatized candidates selected **for each stigma type** (see Figure 6), a series of  $\chi^2$  tests were run.<sup>6</sup> Significantly more nonstigmatized than stigmatized candidates were selected for hire in the weight, ethnicity, religion, height, sexual orientation, nationality, and age scenarios than expected by chance, all  $\chi^2$ s  $> 30.62, p < .001$ . Thus, the overweight, Middle Eastern, Muslim, short, homosexual, immigrant,

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<sup>6</sup> No effect of job status, instructions to not be biased, or interaction between job status, instructions, and stigma type was found on hiring decisions, all  $F$ s  $< 2.36, ns$ .

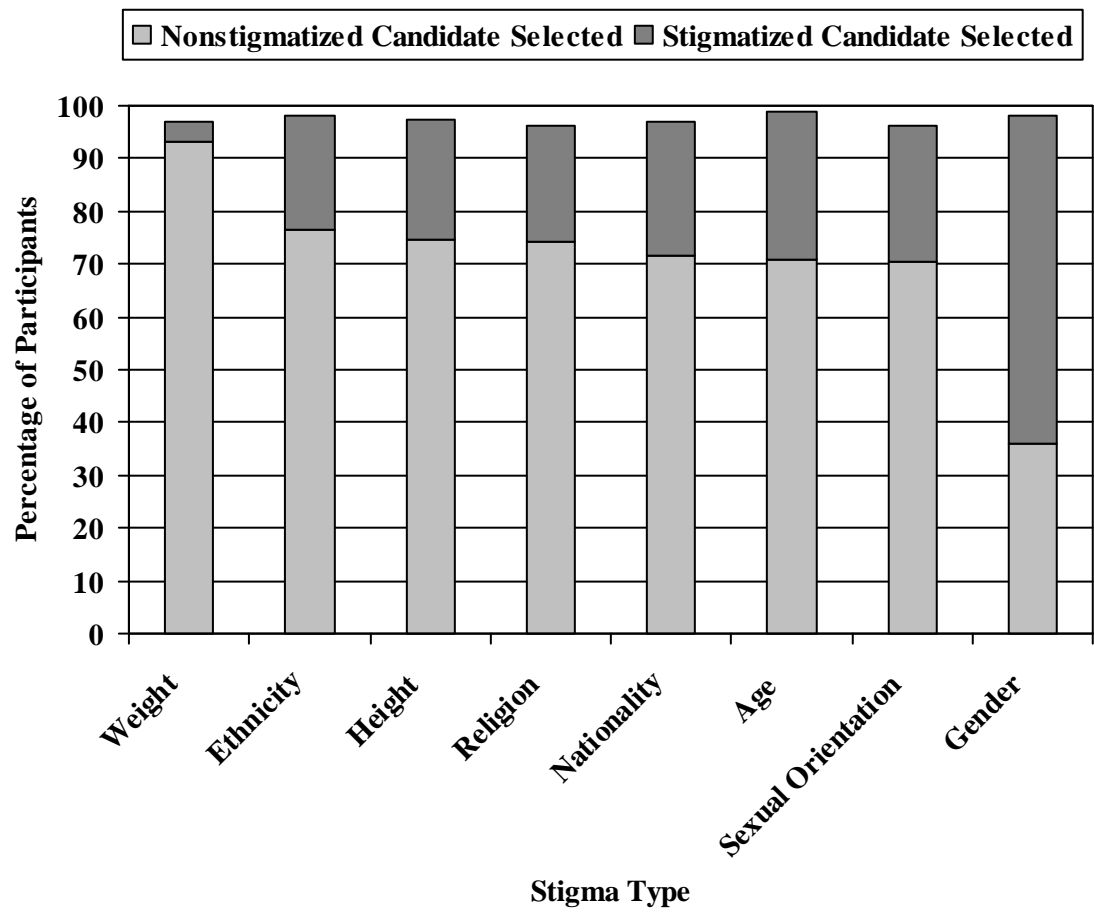


Figure 6. Percentage of participants selecting the nonstigmatized candidate and the stigmatized candidate for hire by stigma type, Study 2.

Note. The percentage of participants does not total 100 in each stigma type due to some participants not choosing between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates.

and old candidates were less likely to be hired than their nonstigmatized counterparts. Furthermore, significantly more stigmatized than nonstigmatized candidates were selected for hire in the gender scenario,  $\chi^2(1) = 11.63, p = .001$ . Thus, the female candidate was more likely to be selected for hire than her nonstigmatized counterpart.

The proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire varied by stigma type, Cochran's  $Q(7) = 165.25, p < .001$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due to multiple comparisons revealed that all of the comparisons involving weight reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the weight scenario was significantly lower than the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the gender, age, sexual orientation, nationality, height, religion, and ethnicity scenarios, all  $\chi^2s > 20.24, p < .001$ . That is, participants were less likely to hire the overweight candidate than the female, old, homosexual, immigrant, short, Muslim, and Middle Eastern candidates. In addition, all of the comparisons involving gender reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the gender scenario was significantly larger than the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected in the weight, ethnicity, religion, height, nationality, sexual orientation, and age scenarios, all  $\chi^2s > 30.69, p < .001$ . That is, participants were more likely to hire the female candidate than the overweight, Middle Eastern, Muslim, short, immigrant, homosexual, and old candidates.

**Preference for selected candidate.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, nonstigmatized candidates selected for hire ( $M = 35.41, SD = 20.44$ ) were preferred more strongly than stigmatized candidates ( $M = 30.92, SD = 23.32$ ),  $t(138) = 2.77, p < .01$ . Thus, not only

were stigmatized candidates less likely to be selected for hiring, but if they were chosen, they were preferred less strongly than the nonstigmatized candidates who were selected for hire. In order to determine if preference for stigmatized candidates differed from preference for nonstigmatized candidates **for each stigma type**, a series of independent *t*-tests were run (see Figure 7). Nonstigmatized candidates selected for hire in the weight, nationality, and ethnicity scenarios were preferred more strongly than stigmatized candidates selected for hire in the respective scenarios, all *t*s > 1.99, *p* < .05.

Nonstigmatized candidates selected for hire in the religion scenario tended to be preferred more strongly than stigmatized candidates,  $t(153) = 1.72, p < .09$ .

A 2 (job status) x 2 (boss instructions) x 8 (stigma type) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' degree of preference for the chosen candidate. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma type on preference ratings,  $F(7, 980) = 35.24, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .20$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for *p*-value due to multiple comparisons revealed that six of the comparisons with age reached significance, such that preference ratings for candidates selected for hire in the age scenario were significantly higher than preference ratings for candidates selected in the height, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, gender, and nationality scenarios, and five of the comparisons with weight reached significance, such that the preference ratings for candidates selected for hire in the weight scenario were significantly higher than the preference ratings for candidates selected in the height, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and gender scenarios, all *t*s > 4.70, *p* < .001. In addition, preference ratings for candidates selected for hire in the nationality scenario were significantly higher than preference ratings for candidates selected in the height, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and

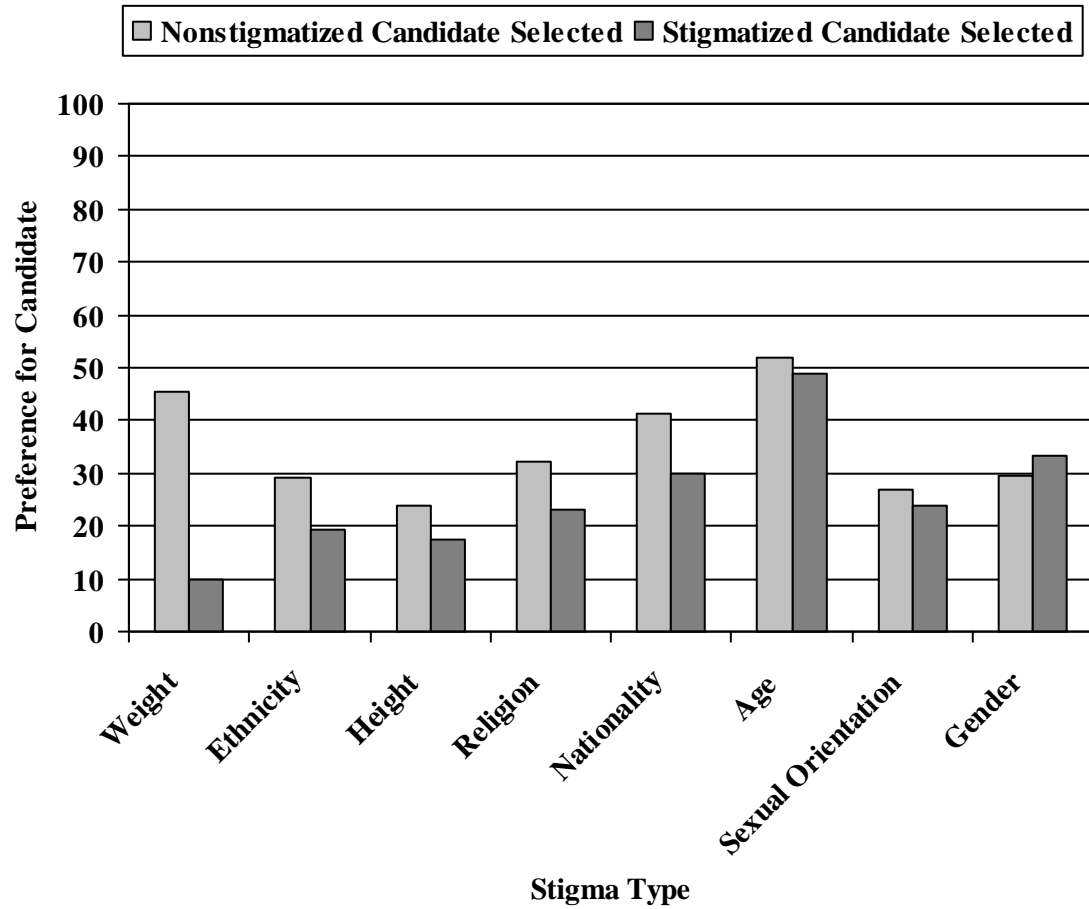


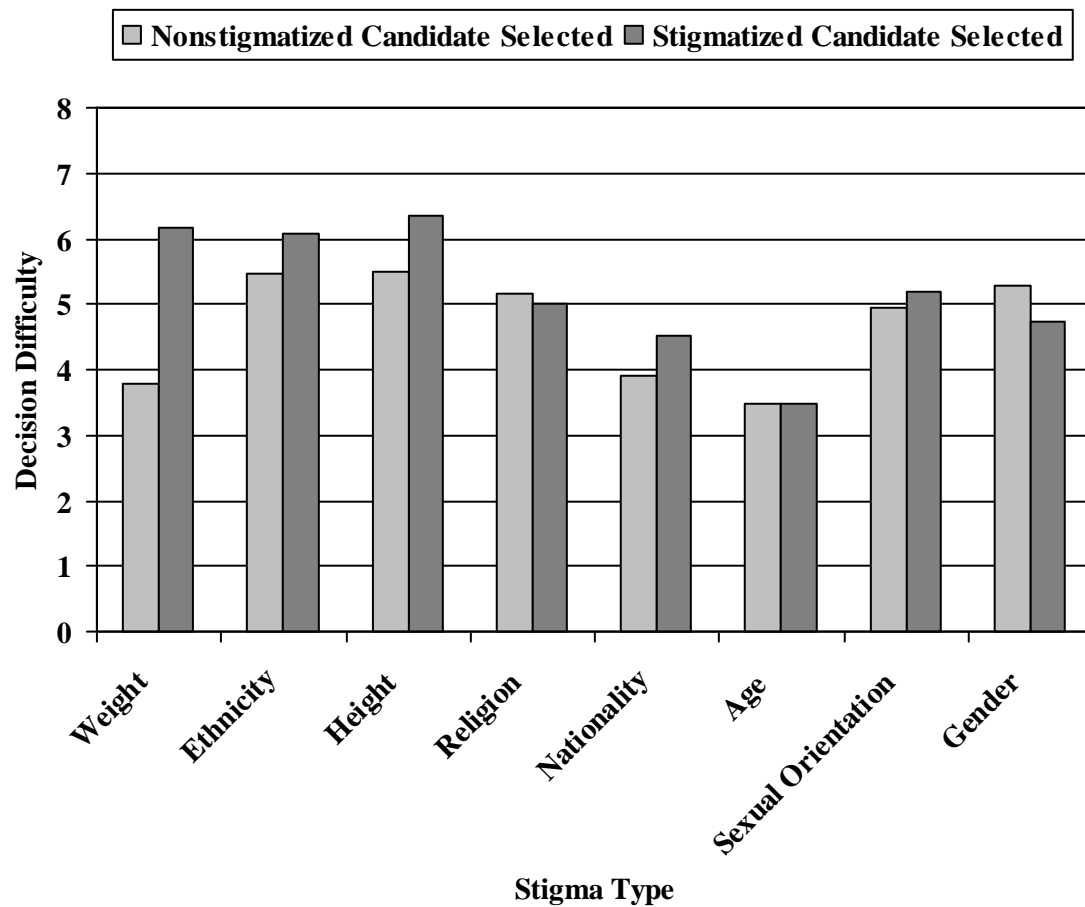
Figure 7. Preference ratings for the nonstigmatized and stigmatized candidates selected for hire by stigma type, Study 2.



religion scenarios, and preference ratings for candidates selected in the height scenario were significantly lower than preference ratings for candidates selected in the gender and religion scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.45$ ,  $p < .05$ . No main effects of job status or boss instructions were observed, both  $F_s < 1.05$ ,  $ns$ , and no interaction effects were observed on preference ratings, all  $F_s < 1.39$ ,  $ns$ .

**Decision difficulty.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized candidate and at least one stigmatized candidate for hire, hiring stigmatized candidates ( $M = 4.83$ ,  $SD = 2.15$ ) and nonstigmatized candidates ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 1.76$ ) was reported to be similarly difficult,  $t(139) = 1.06$ ,  $ns$ . In order to determine whether difficulty in selecting stigmatized versus nonstigmatized candidates varied **for each stigma type**, a series of independent  $t$ -tests were run (see Figure 8). Hiring stigmatized candidates in the weight and height scenarios was reported to be more difficult than hiring nonstigmatized candidates in these scenarios, both  $t_s > 2.12$ ,  $p < .05$ .

A 2 (job status) x 2 (boss instructions) x 8 (stigma type) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' decision difficulty ratings. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma type on difficulty ratings,  $F(7, 945) = 23.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due to multiple comparisons revealed that four of the comparisons with height reached significance, such that the hiring decision difficulty ratings in the height scenario were significantly higher than the hiring decision difficulty ratings in the age, weight, nationality, and gender scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.95$ ,  $p < .01$ . In addition, the hiring decision difficulty ratings in the ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and gender scenarios were significantly higher than the hiring decision difficulty ratings in the age, weight, and nationality scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.32$ ,  $p <$



*Figure 8.* Decision difficulty ratings in selecting the nonstigmatized and stigmatized candidates for hire by stigma type, Study 2.

.05. No effect of job status or boss instructions was observed, both  $F_s < 0.29$ , *ns*, and no interaction effects were observed on difficulty ratings, all  $F_s < 1.28$ , *ns*.

**Demographic influence.** Due to the significant reversal of discrimination in the gender scenario, the demographic characteristics of the sample were explored in order to determine whether they had an influence on the hiring decisions made in the gender scenario. As in Study 1, the analyses revealed an ingroup bias among female participants; whereas male participants were equally likely to select the male (observed  $N = 39$ ) and female (observed  $N = 31$ ) candidates for hire,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.91$ , *ns*, female participants were more likely to select the female (observed  $N = 70$ ) than male (observed  $N = 19$ ) candidate for hire,  $\chi^2(1) = 29.23$ ,  $p < .001$ .

## **Discussion**

The primary purpose of this study was to examine whether boosting suppression processes would eliminate or at least attenuate the systematic discrimination observed in the forced choice employment decision paradigm. In particular, concern over appearing prejudiced was induced via instructions from one's boss to not be biased in hiring decisions. Based on previous research using similar manipulations (Brief et al., 2000; Umphress et al., 2008) and the theoretical perspective of the justification-suppression model (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), it was expected that systematic discrimination would be reduced among participants who received instructions from an authority to not be biased in their hiring decisions. Nevertheless, systematic discrimination abounded regardless of the presence of instructions from the boss to not be biased and job status; overall, stigmatized candidates were less likely to be selected for hire than nonstigmatized candidates. The proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for hire

varied by stigma type, however, such that stigmatized candidates were less likely to be selected for hire than nonstigmatized candidates in the weight, ethnicity, height, religion, nationality, age, and sexual orientation scenarios. On the other hand, stigmatized candidates were more likely to be chosen than nonstigmatized candidates in the gender scenario, which may be partially attributable to the gender composition of the sample. Not only were stigmatized candidates less likely to be selected overall, but they were also less preferred than nonstigmatized candidates when they were selected for the job, particularly in the weight, nationality, and ethnicity scenarios. Although participants reported that it was similarly difficult to select stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates for hire overall, participants reported that it was more difficult to hire the stigmatized candidates in the weight and height scenarios than the nonstigmatized candidates.

These results are rather surprising given the potentially strong demand characteristics present in the experimental condition. Even participants who were told to not be biased in their decisions exhibited patterns of pervasive systematic discrimination in the task, and their hiring decisions did not differ from participants in the control condition. Thus, this strong manipulation designed to induce concern over appearing prejudiced was resisted, indicating that justification processes overwhelmed suppression processes in the forced choice task.

### **Study 3**

Because the first attempt to reduce systematic discrimination in forced choice employment decisions was unsuccessful, the purpose of the next study was to make another attempt to reduce discrimination by boosting suppression processes through the establishment of nonprejudicial social norms. Previous research has demonstrated that

social norms are highly predictive of prejudicial responding (Blanchard et al., 1994; Crandall et al., 2002; Monteith, Deneen, & Tooman, 1996). For example, Monteith and colleagues (1996) demonstrated that participants reported less prejudiced opinions after a nonprejudiced norm was made salient relative to a control condition and regardless of participants' own prejudice level. In the current study, social norms were established by describing the workplace in which participants were making employment decisions as diverse or nondiverse. A control condition was also utilized in which the diversity of the workplace was not described. Previous research examining employment discrimination in hypothetical scenarios has demonstrated that descriptions of workplace diversity are effective in establishing nonprejudicial social norms (Brief et al., 2000; Petersen & Dietz, 2000, 2005). Based upon this previous research and the theoretical perspective of the justification-suppression model of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), it was expected that systematic discrimination would be reduced in the diverse workplace condition compared to the control and nondiverse workplace conditions.

In order to further boost suppression processes in the forced choice employment decision paradigm, participants in this study were instructed to make firing (rather than hiring) decisions. The theoretical rationale underlying the possibility that systematic discrimination may be attenuated for forced choice firing compared to hiring decisions is based upon the following analysis. Research on intergroup bias has demonstrated that prejudice is more likely to be expressed by withholding positive outcomes from social outgroups, rather than allocating negative outcomes to social outgroups (Brewer, 1979; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). Thus, translated to employment decision making, this would suggest that stigmatized group members may be less likely to be selected for hire but not

necessarily more likely to be selected for fire. This may be the case because ingroup favouritism may be more easily justified on nonprejudicial grounds than outgroup derogation (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). Selecting nonstigmatized candidates for hire may seem rather innocuous and harmless, whereas selecting stigmatized candidates for fire may seem more questionable and offensive.

## **Method**

**Participants.** Participants were 82 (56 female, 26 male) introductory psychology students who ranged in age from 17 to 61 years ( $M = 19.28$ ,  $SD = 5.38$ ). The majority (65.9%) of participants reported their ethnicity as White/European ( $n = 54$ ); 20.7% of participants identified as Asian ( $n = 17$ ), 6.1% as East Indian ( $n = 5$ ), 2.4% as Black ( $n = 2$ ), 1.2% as North American Indian ( $n = 1$ ), and 3.7% as other ( $n = 3$ ). The sample primarily comprised Canadian citizens ( $n = 75$ ; 91.5%). Based on self-reported height and weight, participants' BMI ranged from 17.30 to 33.20 kg/m<sup>2</sup> ( $M = 22.27$ ,  $SD = 3.23$ ), such that 78.0% ( $n = 64$ ) of participants may be considered normal weight, 14.6% ( $n = 12$ ) overweight or obese, and 4.9% ( $n = 4$ ) underweight. Two participants did not report their weight and/or height.

**Procedure and materials.** Participants were presented with materials similar to those used in Study 1, but with the following changes. First, participants were told that due to the current economic situation, they must layoff one of their Graphic Designer employees. Thus, rather than making hiring decisions, participants were told to choose whom to fire between two excellent employees who exhibited similar performance and competence in their job. Second, in order to establish social norms, participants were randomly assigned to make their firing decisions within the context of a diverse

workplace, a nondiverse workplace, or in a control condition in which no information was provided about the diversity of their workplace. The instructions presented to participants are as follows:

We would like you to imagine that you are an employer who is faced with a tough decision. Due to the current economic situation, you must layoff one of your Graphic Designers. Often in such situations, employers must decide between employees who exhibit similar performance and competence in their job. Such situations are frequent in the real-world. In the following scenarios, please imagine that you are faced with two employees who are equally competent in all respects. Nonetheless, you must decide which person to layoff. For each pair, there is only one obvious characteristic that is different between them. You must make a decision. Who would you choose to let go?

[In making these decisions, it is important to consider that your employees are quite diverse. That is, you have quite a diverse group of employees.]

[In making these decisions, it is important to consider that your employees are not very diverse. That is, you have quite a non-diverse group of employees.]

As in the previous studies, after indicating their selection between the two employees, participants were asked to indicate the degree of preference for the employee they chose to layoff, were provided with the opportunity to explain why they chose to layoff the person they did, and were asked to report how difficult they found the decision to be. The order of presentation of the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees in each scenario was counterbalanced. Participants completed the materials by paper and pencil.

## Results

**Data preparation.** The dependent variables were aggregated and created as in the previous studies. The order in which the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees were presented in each scenario did not significantly influence the total number of stigmatized employees selected for fire, the degree of preference for the laid off employee, or decision difficulty, all  $t_s < 1.73$ , *ns*.

**Selection of stigmatized employees.** The mean number of stigmatized employees selected for fire across the eight scenarios totaled 5.09 ( $SD = 1.83$ ), with a mode of 6. A value of 4 would be expected if the firing decisions between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees were based on chance or were equal. The mean number of stigmatized employees selected for fire across the eight scenarios significantly differs from 4,  $t(81) = 5.38, p < .001$ , indicating that the decisions were not random. Whereas 62% ( $n = 51$ ) of participants selected more than four stigmatized employees for fire, only 18% ( $n = 15$ ) selected fewer than four stigmatized employees for fire. Unexpectedly, there was no effect of workplace context on the total number of stigmatized employees selected for fire; an equal number of stigmatized employees were fired regardless of whether the workplace was described as diverse ( $M = 5.00, SD = 1.27$ ), nondiverse ( $M = 5.04, SD = 2.33$ ), or no information was provided about workplace diversity ( $M = 5.22, SD = 1.76$ ),  $F(2, 81) = 0.11, ns$ .

In order to determine if the number of stigmatized employees selected for fire differed from the number of nonstigmatized employees selected **for each stigma type** (see Figure 9), a series of  $\chi^2$  tests were run.<sup>7</sup> Significantly more stigmatized than nonstigmatized employees were selected for fire in the weight, religion, height, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age scenarios than expected by chance, all  $\chi^2$ s  $> 5.44, p < .05$ . That is, the overweight, Muslim, short, Middle Eastern, homosexual, and old employees were more likely to be fired than their nonstigmatized counterparts. Furthermore, significantly more nonstigmatized than stigmatized employees were selected for fire in the gender scenario,  $\chi^2(1) = 12.49, p < .001$ . That is, the female employee was less likely

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<sup>7</sup> No effect of workplace diversity or interaction between workplace diversity and stigma type was found on firing decisions, both  $F$ s  $< 0.97, ns$ .



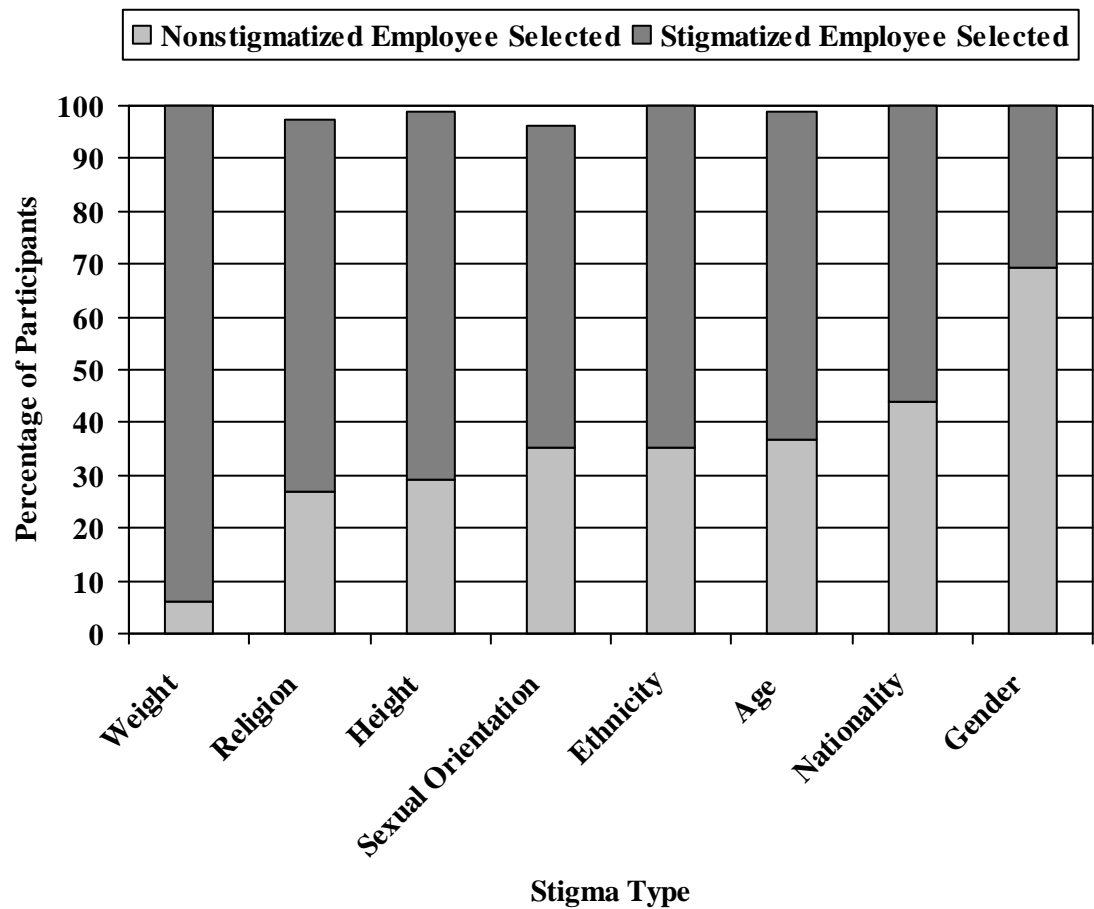


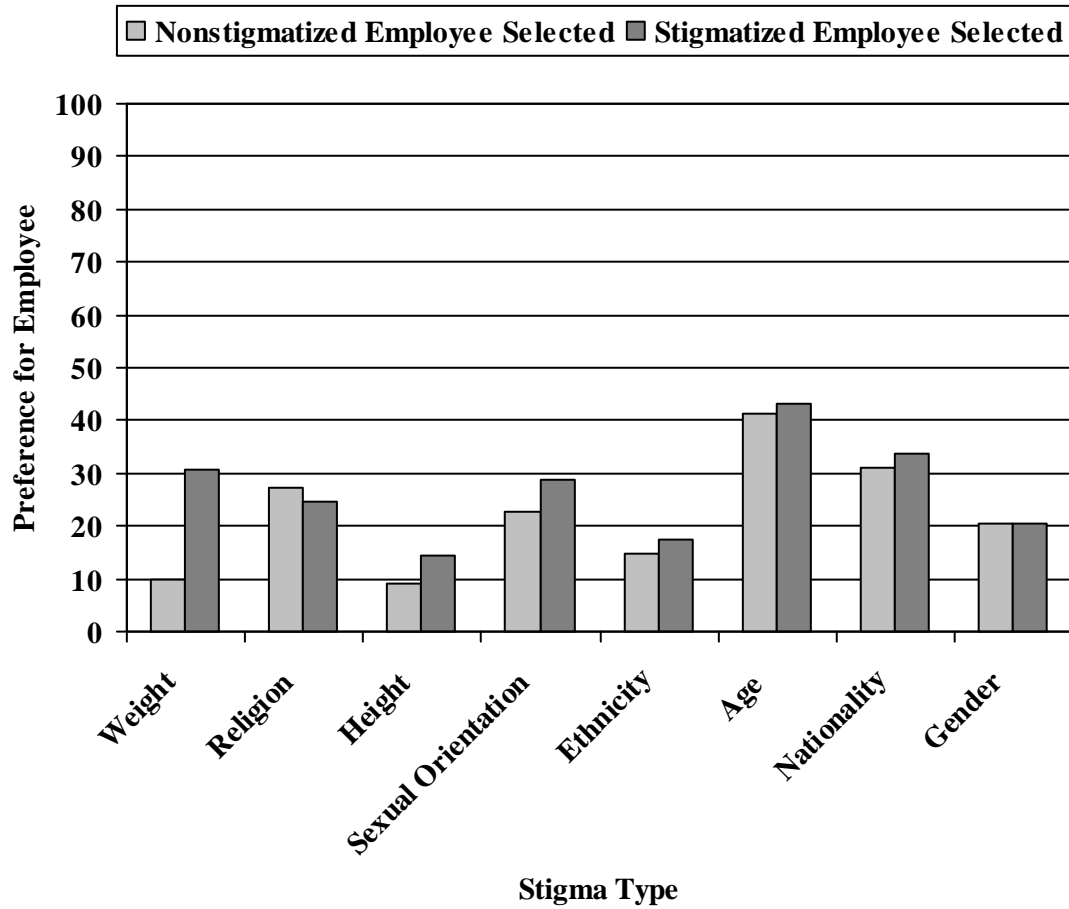
Figure 9. Percentage of participants selecting the nonstigmatized employee and the stigmatized employee for fire by stigma type, Study 3.

Note. The percentage of participants does not total 100 in each stigma type due to some participants not choosing between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees.

to be fired than her nonstigmatized counterpart.

The proportion of stigmatized employees selected for fire varied by stigma type, Cochran's  $Q(7) = 83.90, p < .001$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due to multiple comparisons revealed that all of the comparisons involving weight reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized employees selected for fire in the weight scenario was significantly larger than the proportion of stigmatized employees selected for fire in the gender, nationality, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, religion, and height scenarios, all  $\chi^2s > 18.89, p < .001$ . Thus, participants were more likely to fire the overweight employee than the female, immigrant, homosexual, Middle Eastern, old, Muslim, and short employees. In addition, all of the comparisons involving gender reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized employees selected for fire in the gender scenario was significantly smaller than the proportion of stigmatized employees selected for fire in the weight, height, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and nationality scenarios, all  $\chi^2s > 9.30, p < .05$ . Thus, participants were less likely to fire the female employee than the overweight, short, Muslim, homosexual, Middle Eastern, old, and immigrant employees.

**Preference for selected employee.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized employee and at least one stigmatized employee for fire, the employees were reported to be similarly preferred whether the stigmatized employees ( $M = 26.22, SD = 20.01$ ) or nonstigmatized employees ( $M = 23.92, SD = 21.94$ ) were laid off,  $t(74) = 1.18, ns$ . In order to determine if preference for stigmatized employees differed from preference for nonstigmatized employees **for each stigma type**, a series of independent  $t$ -tests were run (see Figure 10). Only nonstigmatized employees ( $M = 10.00, SD = 10.00$ )



*Figure 10.* Preference ratings for the nonstigmatized and stigmatized employees selected for fire by stigma type, Study 3.

selected for layoff in the weight scenario were preferred less strongly than their stigmatized counterparts ( $M = 30.78$ ,  $SD = 29.90$ ),  $t(80) = 3.70$ ,  $p < .01$ ; all other comparisons were nonsignificant, all  $ts < 1.04$ , *ns*.

A 3 (workplace diversity) x 8 (stigma type) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' degree of preference for the employee selected for layoff. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma type on preference ratings,  $F(7, 532) = 19.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .20$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due to multiple comparisons revealed that six of the comparisons with age reached significance, such that preference ratings for employees selected for fire in the age scenario were significantly higher than preference ratings for employees selected in the height, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and weight scenarios, and six of the comparisons with height reached significance, such that the preference ratings for employees selected for fire in the height scenario were significantly lower than the preference ratings for employees selected in the age, nationality, weight, sexual orientation, religion, and gender scenarios, all  $ts > 3.42$ ,  $p < .05$ . In addition, preference ratings for employees selected for fire in the ethnicity scenario were significantly lower than preference ratings for employees selected in the nationality, weight, and religion scenarios, and preference ratings for employees selected for fire in the gender scenario were significantly lower than preference ratings for employees selected in the nationality scenario, all  $ts > 3.53$ ,  $p < .05$ . No effect of workplace diversity was observed,  $F(2, 76) = 2.15$ , *ns*, and no interaction between stigma type and workplace diversity was observed on preference ratings,  $F(14, 532) = 0.78$ , *ns*.

**Decision difficulty.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized employee and at least one stigmatized employee for fire, there was no difference in the

decision difficulty reported in selecting stigmatized employees for fire ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ) and nonstigmatized employees for fire ( $M = 5.69$ ,  $SD = 1.94$ ),  $t(74) = 1.12$ , *ns*. In order to determine whether difficulty in selecting stigmatized versus nonstigmatized employees varied **for each stigma type**, a series of independent  $t$ -tests were run (see Figure 11). None of the stigma scenarios revealed a significant difference in decision difficulty ratings in selecting between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized candidates for fire, all  $ts < 1.19$ , *ns*.

A 3 (workplace diversity) x 8 (stigma type) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' decision difficulty ratings. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma type on difficulty ratings,  $F(7, 518) = 13.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .16$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due to multiple comparisons revealed that five of the comparisons with age reached significance, such that the firing decision difficulty ratings in the age scenario were significantly lower than the firing decision difficulty ratings in the height, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation scenarios, and four of the comparisons with height reached significance, such that the firing decision difficulty ratings in the height scenario were significantly higher than the firing decision difficulty ratings in the age, nationality, weight, and sexual orientation scenarios, all  $ts > 4.19$ ,  $p < .01$ . In addition, the firing decision difficulty ratings in the ethnicity scenario were significantly higher than the firing decision difficulty ratings in the nationality and weight scenarios, and the firing decision difficulty ratings in the gender scenario were significantly higher than the firing decision difficulty ratings in the nationality scenario, all  $ts > 3.29$ ,  $p < .05$ . No effect of workplace diversity was observed,  $F(2, 74) = 1.05$ , *ns*, and no interaction effect between stigma type and workplace diversity was observed on

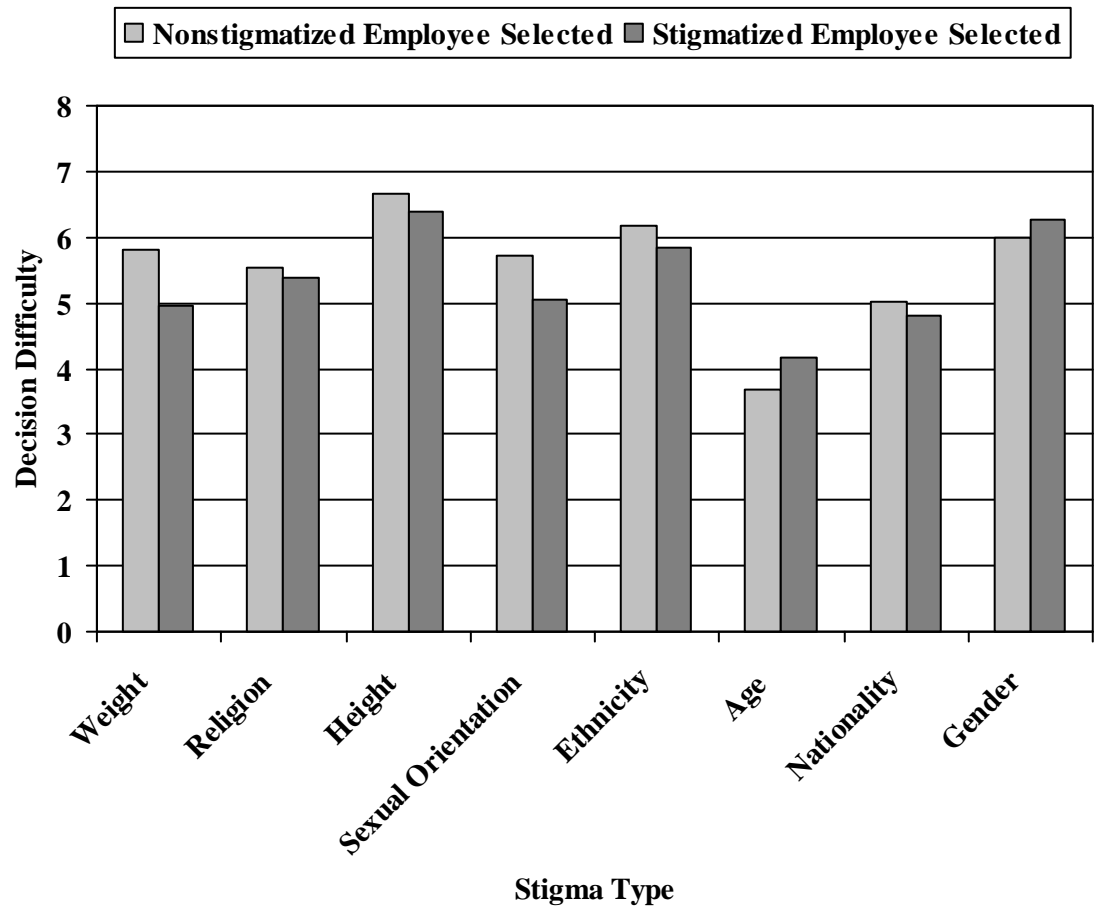


Figure 11. Decision difficulty ratings in selecting the nonstigmatized and stigmatized employees for fire by stigma type, Study 3.

difficulty ratings,  $F(14, 518) = 1.13, ns$ .

**Demographic influence.** Due to the significant reversal of discrimination in the gender scenario, the demographic characteristics of the sample were explored in order to determine whether they had an influence on the firing decisions made in the gender scenario. The analyses revealed an ingroup bias among female participants, and, counter to expectations, an outgroup bias among male participants; both female and male participants were more likely to lay off the male employee (female participants observed  $N = 37$ ; male participants observed  $N = 20$ ) than the female employee (female participants observed  $N = 19$ ; male participants observed  $N = 6$ ), both  $\chi^2s > 5.78, p < .05$ .

## **Discussion**

The primary purpose of this study was to examine whether boosting suppression processes would eliminate or at least attenuate the systematic discrimination observed in the forced choice employment decision paradigm. In particular, nonprejudicial social norms were established through descriptions of workplace diversity and participants were directed to make firing, rather than hiring, decisions. Based on previous research on social norms (Blanchard et al., 1994; Crandall et al., 2002; Monteith et al., 1996) and the theoretical perspective of the justification-suppression model (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), it was expected that systematic discrimination would be reduced among participants who were told that their workplace was diverse. Nevertheless, systematic discrimination abounded regardless of information provided about the diversity of the workplace; overall, stigmatized employees were more likely to be laid off than nonstigmatized employees. The proportion of stigmatized employees selected for fire varied by stigma type, however, such that stigmatized employees were more likely to be

laid off than nonstigmatized employees in the weight, height, religion, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity scenarios. On the other hand, stigmatized employees were less likely to be laid off than nonstigmatized employees in the gender scenario, which may be partially attributable to the characteristics of the sample. No differences in preference or decision difficulty between firing stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees were observed.

The manipulation of social norms via descriptions of workplace diversity was rather subtle; participants were simply informed as to whether their workplaces were currently diverse or not (or were given no information pertaining to the diversity of their workplace). Upon reflection, a more direct (and perhaps stronger) manipulation of social norms would have been to inform participants that their workplace *values* diversity (or not). Nevertheless, taken together, the results of the three studies presented thus far indicate that systematic discrimination in this paradigm is pervasive, and suggest that justification processes overwhelm suppression processes in forced choice decision making.

#### **Study 4**

The three studies presented using the forced choice employment decision paradigm revealed a consistent pattern of systematic discrimination against stigmatized individuals in hiring and firing decisions. Furthermore, the systematic discrimination observed in the paradigm was not attenuated by manipulations previously demonstrated to reduce prejudice and discrimination. The purposes of the fourth and final study were fivefold. First, it signifies one final attempt to reduce systematic discrimination in the forced choice employment decision paradigm based upon processes identified in the



justification-suppression model of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). In particular, systematic discrimination may be attenuated among participants for whom the value of equality is made salient; if participants are asked to think about the importance of equality as a social value, then systematic discrimination may be reduced (Maio, Hahn, Frost, & Cheung, 2009; Maio, Olson, Allen, & Bernard, 2001). Second, the stigma types were selected more strategically on the basis of whether the social group is considered to be an acceptable or unacceptable target of prejudice. Previous research has found that prejudice is expressed to the extent that it is considered socially acceptable (Crandall et al., 2002); with this finding in mind, it was expected that stigmatized employees that belonged to social groups considered to be unacceptable targets of prejudice would be less likely to be targets of bias than stigmatized employees that belonged to social groups considered to be acceptable targets of prejudice. Third, this study examined potential mechanisms underlying the systematic discrimination evident in the forced choice employment decision paradigm. In particular, the potential mechanisms of (1) affect, such as guilt, discomfort, and anger at others (Monteith, 1996), (2) favourability of attitudes toward social groups, (3) beliefs regarding the justifiability of discrimination toward some social groups, (4) personal importance of the value of equality (Schwartz, 1992), and (5) egalitarian-based, nonprejudicial goals (Gawronski, Peters, Brochu, & Strack, 2008) in accounting for different levels of discrimination were examined. Fourth, this study examined promotion decisions within the forced choice employment decision paradigm. As systematic discrimination within hiring and firing decisions had already been demonstrated, this study tested the generalizability of this effect within the context of promotion. Fifth, response times were recorded to determine how long participants

took to make promotion decisions between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees for each stigma type. If participants perceived the decisions as difficult or were uncertain about who to promote, then longer response times would be expected. To improve study design, the presentation order of the stigma types was randomized to control for order effects.

## **Method**

**Participants.** Participants included 143 (78 male, 65 female) introductory psychology students who ranged in age from 16 to 75 years ( $M = 19.04$ ,  $SD = 5.13$ ). Most participants reported their ethnicity as White/European (46.2%;  $n = 66$ ) or Asian (30.1%;  $n = 43$ ); 11.9% of participants identified as East Indian ( $n = 17$ ), 2.8% as Black ( $n = 4$ ), 2.1% as Hispanic ( $n = 3$ ), 1.4% as North American Indian ( $n = 2$ ), and 2.8% as other ( $n = 4$ ). Four participants did not report their ethnicity. The sample primarily comprised Canadian citizens ( $n = 133$ ; 93.0%). Based on self-reported height and weight, participants' BMI ranged from 15.00 to 42.19 kg/m<sup>2</sup> ( $M = 22.58$ ,  $SD = 3.53$ ), such that 71.3% ( $n = 102$ ) of participants may be considered normal weight, 18.2% ( $n = 26$ ) overweight or obese, and 9.8% ( $n = 14$ ) underweight. One participant did not report his weight and height.

**Procedure and materials.** Participants were told that the research session consisted of two separate studies. In the first study, participants completed the value instantiation manipulation (Cowan, Resendez, Marshall, & Quist, 2002; Maio et al., 2001, 2009). Participants were told that they were going to be asked to think about a topic that is important in their life for 7 minutes and list reasons as to why they think it is important on a sheet of paper. In the experimental condition, participants listed reasons

why the social value of equality is important; in the control condition, participants listed reasons why daily routines are important.

In the purported second study, participants completed the forced choice employment decision paradigm in which they decided whom to promote to an Assistant Managerial Position between two excellent Retail Salesperson employees who exhibited similar performance and competence in their job, but differed from each other on one obvious dimension. Participants made a total of ten promotion decisions in which five included a stigmatized group member considered to be an acceptable target of prejudice (i.e., weight: Overweight vs. Average Weight, sexual orientation: Homosexual vs. Heterosexual, nationality: Immigrant vs. Canadian, ethnicity: Native vs. European, and religion: Muslim vs. Protestant) and five included a stigmatized group member considered to be an unacceptable target of prejudice (i.e., disability status: Disabled vs. Able, gender: Female vs. Male, age: Old vs. Young, religion: Jewish vs. Christian, and race: Black vs. White). Response times for each promotion decision were recorded by computer. For each decision, participants were asked to explain why they chose the employee by listing their thoughts and feelings relevant to the decision, indicate their degree of preference for the promoted employee, and rate decision difficulty, as in the previous studies. The order of presentation of the stigma types was randomized and the order of presentation of the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees in each scenario was counterbalanced.

The stigma types were selected based on pilot testing of 30 introductory psychology students' ratings of the perceived acceptability of holding negative attitudes toward several social groups on a scale of 1 (*definitely not OK*) to 5 (*definitely OK*; see

Appendix B for the pilot questionnaire). Participants indicated that it was more acceptable to hold negative attitudes toward overweight people, gay men, immigrants, Native people, and Muslims ( $M = 2.63$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ) than people with physical disabilities, women, old people, Jews, and blacks ( $M = 1.78$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ),  $t(29) = 7.15$ ,  $p < .001$ . Each of the comparisons between the prejudice acceptable and unacceptable groups obtained conventional levels of significance, all  $ts(29) > 2.54$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Upon completion of the forced choice paradigm, participants completed a number of questionnaires attempting to assess psychological mechanisms responsible for discriminatory responding in the task. First, participants indicated the extent to which a series of emotions described them on a scale of 1 (*does not apply at all*) to 7 (*applies very much*; Monteith, 1996) to measure how participants were feeling after completing the forced choice paradigm. Monteith's (1996) measure consists of five affect indices: Negself (e.g., angry at oneself, guilty), Discomfort (e.g., uneasy, bothered), Positive (e.g., friendly, happy), Angry at Others (e.g., irritated at others, disgusted with others), and Down (e.g., depressed, low). Then, participants reported the favourability of their attitudes toward several social groups, including the stigmatized and nonstigmatized groups presented in the forced choice employment decision task. Using an attitude thermometer, participants reported the favourability of their attitudes on a scale of 0 (*extremely unfavourable*) to 100 (*extremely favourable*; Esses et al., 1993). Next, participants reported their beliefs concerning the justifiability of discrimination using scale items designed for this purpose (see Appendix C). The Justification of Discrimination Scale consisted of 7 items (e.g., Unequal treatment of some groups of people is justifiable;  $\alpha = .88$ ), which participants responded to on a 7-point Likert type

scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). In addition, participants indicated how justifiable they thought it was to treat several social groups differently because of their group membership on a 7-point Likert type scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*), including the stigmatized and nonstigmatized groups presented in the forced choice employment decision task. Then, participants were asked how important they consider ten social values using the Schwartz Value Survey (1992) to assess the extent to which participants personally value equality. In particular, participants indicated how important they consider the values of equality, inner harmony, social power, pleasure, freedom, a spiritual life, sense of belonging, social order, an exciting life, and meaning in life on a scale of 0 (*not important*) to 7 (*of supreme importance*) with an additional scale point of -1 (*opposed to my values*). Finally, participants responded to Gawronski and colleagues' (2008) 10-item measure of egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals by reflecting on their thoughts and feelings while completing the employment decision paradigm. That is, participants responded to each item (e.g., Negative evaluations of disadvantaged minority members are wrong;  $\alpha = .84$ ) according to the extent to which that thought occurred to them while completing the task on a scale of 0 (*this did not cross my mind in any of the scenarios*) to 10 (*this crossed my mind in all of the scenarios*).

## **Results**

**Data preparation.** The dependent variables were aggregated and created as in the previous studies. The response time variable was converted from milliseconds to seconds to allow for ease of interpretation. The order in which the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees were presented in each scenario did not significantly influence the total number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion, the degree of preference for the

promoted employee, decision difficulty, or time taken to make the promotion decisions, all  $t_s < 1.58$ , *ns*.

Monteith's (1996) five factor model of affect (negself, discomfort, positive, angry at others, down) was not found to be a good fit to the data. Eigenvalues and the scree plot recommended six factors; however, a three factor model was found to be most appropriate based on the face validity of the content of factor loadings. The first factor, that of negself, consisted of items from Monteith's negself subscale, and some items from her discomfort and angry at others subscales (i.e., uncomfortable, helpless, disappointed with myself, uneasy, regretful, shameful, threatened, sad, low, self-critical, tense, annoyed with myself, embarrassed, anxious, depressed, angry at myself, disgusted with myself, guilty, fearful;  $\alpha = .96$ ). The second factor, that of negoother, comprised the remaining items from Monteith's angry at others and discomfort subscales (i.e., irritated at others, bothered, disgusted with others, frustrated, angry at others;  $\alpha = .89$ ). The third factor, that of positive, consisted of items from Monteith's positive subscale (i.e., optimistic, good, neutral, content, consistent, energetic, happy, friendly;  $\alpha = .80$ ). The mechanistic variables (i.e., affect, attitude thermometer, justification of discrimination, egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals) were aggregated by first reverse scoring any necessary items and then calculating the mean. Descriptive statistics of and correlations between the variables assessing potential mechanisms are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

**Selection of stigmatized employees.** The mean number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion across the ten scenarios totaled 3.59 ( $SD = 2.15$ ), with a mode of 4. A value of 5 would be expected if the promotion decisions between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees were based on chance or were equal. The mean number of

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of Variables Assessing Potential Mechanisms, Study 4*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Negself Affect	2.72	1.35	1	7
Negother Affect	2.73	1.56	1	7
Positive Affect	3.62	1.12	1.13	6.13
Attitudes toward Stigmatized Acceptable Targets	58.19	17.93	2	100
Attitudes toward Stigmatized Unacceptable Targets	66.65	15.85	24	100
Justification of Discrimination	2.56	1.29	1	6.29
Justification of Discrimination toward Stigmatized Acceptable Targets	2.16	1.32	1	6
Justification of Discrimination toward Stigmatized Unacceptable Targets	2.16	1.26	1	6.60
Value of Equality Importance	5.35	1.68	0	7
Egalitarian-Based Nonprejudicial Goals	5.93	2.19	0.10	10

Table 3

*Correlations Between Variables Assessing Potential Mechanisms, Study 4*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	--								
2	.70***	--							
3	-.37***	-.30***	--						
4	.01	.03	.09	--					
5	-.09	-.08	.10	.76***	--				
6	-.08	-.12	.00	-.38***	-.28**	--			
7	-.04	-.13	-.05	-.42***	-.28**	.59***	--		
8	-.06	-.13	-.04	-.32***	-.29***	.60***	.86***	--	
9	.04	.08	.00	.27**	.19*	-.43***	-.34***	-.41***	--
10	.40***	.24**	-.08	.25**	.24**	-.30***	-.15†	-.27**	.37***

†  $p = .07$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

*Note.* 1. Negself Affect. 2. Negother Affect. 3. Positive Affect. 4. Attitudes toward Stigmatized Acceptable Targets. 5. Attitudes toward Stigmatized Unacceptable Targets. 6. Justification of Discrimination. 7. Justification of Discrimination toward Stigmatized Acceptable Targets. 8. Justification of Discrimination toward Stigmatized Unacceptable Targets. 9. Value of Equality Importance. 10. Egalitarian-Based Nonprejudicial Goals.



stigmatized employees selected for promotion across the ten scenarios significantly differs from 5,  $t(142) = 7.84, p < .001$ , indicating that the decisions were not random. Whereas 71% ( $n = 101$ ) of participants selected less than five stigmatized employees for promotion, only 21% ( $n = 30$ ) selected more than five stigmatized employees for promotion.

A 2 (equality salience) x 2 (prejudice acceptability) mixed model ANOVA was run on the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion. As expected, a significant effect of prejudice acceptability was found, such that stigmatized employees who were socially acceptable targets of prejudice ( $M = 1.51, SD = 1.27$ ) were selected for promotion less often than stigmatized employees who were socially unacceptable targets of prejudice ( $M = 2.08, SD = 1.29$ ),  $F(1, 141) = 24.14, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .15$ . Unexpectedly, no effect of equality salience emerged; participants selected an equal number of stigmatized employees regardless of whether they wrote about why equality ( $M = 3.69, SD = 2.15$ ) or daily routine ( $M = 3.48, SD = 2.16$ ) is important,  $F(1, 141) = 0.36, ns$ . No interaction was found,  $F(1, 141) = 0.34, ns$ .

In order to determine if the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion differed from the number of nonstigmatized employees selected **for each stigma type** (see Figure 12), a series of  $\chi^2$  tests were run.<sup>8</sup> Significantly more nonstigmatized than stigmatized employees were selected for promotion in the weight, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion (Protestant vs. Muslim), and nationality scenarios than expected by chance, all  $\chi^2s > 5.89, p < .05$ . That is, the overweight, disabled, old, homosexual, Muslim, and immigrant employees were less likely to be

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<sup>8</sup> No effect of equality salience or interaction between equality salience and stigma type was found on promotion decisions, both  $Fs < 0.58, ns$ .

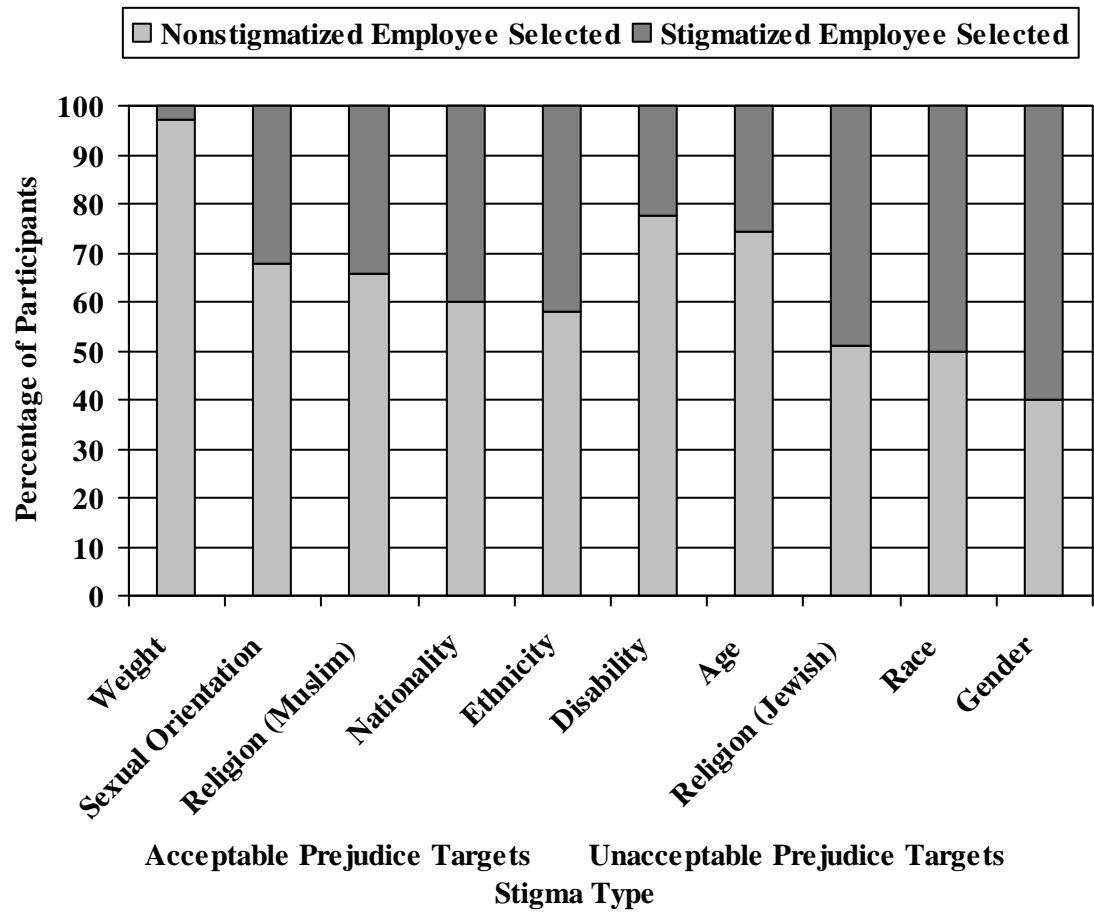


Figure 12. Percentage of participants selecting the nonstigmatized employee and the stigmatized employee for promotion by prejudice acceptability and stigma type, Study 4.

promoted than their nonstigmatized counterparts. There was also a marginally significant finding that the Native employee tended to be less likely to be selected for promotion than the European employee,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.70, p < .06$ . Furthermore, significantly more stigmatized than nonstigmatized employees were selected for promotion in the gender scenario,  $\chi^2(1) = 5.88, p < .05$ . That is, the female employee was more likely to be promoted than her nonstigmatized counterpart. The stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees in the religion (Christian vs. Jewish) and race (White vs. Black) scenarios were selected with similar frequency, both  $\chi^2s < 0.07, ns$ .

The proportion of stigmatized employees selected for promotion varied by stigma type, Cochran's  $Q(9) = 168.92, p < .001$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for  $p$ -value due to multiple comparisons revealed that all of the comparisons involving weight reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for promotion in the weight scenario was significantly smaller than the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for promotion in the gender, race, religion (Jewish), ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion (Muslim), age, and disability scenarios, all  $\chi^2s > 22.78, p < .001$ . Thus, participants were less likely to promote the overweight employee than the female, black, Jewish, Native, immigrant, homosexual, Muslim, old, and disabled employees. Two of the comparisons involving disability reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized employees selected for promotion in the disability scenario was significantly smaller than the proportion of stigmatized employees selected for promotion in the religion (Jewish) and ethnicity scenarios, both  $\chi^2s > 15.18, p < .001$ . The old employee was also found to be less likely to be promoted than the Jewish employee,  $\chi^2(1) = 17.97, p < .001$ . In addition, six of the comparisons

involving gender reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for promotion in the gender scenario was significantly larger than the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for promotion in the weight, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion (Muslim), and nationality scenarios, all  $\chi^2$ s > 9.30,  $p < .05$ . Thus, participants were more likely to promote the female candidate than the overweight, disabled, old, homosexual, Muslim, and immigrant employees. Three of the comparisons involving race reached significance, such that the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for promotion in the race scenario was significantly larger than the proportion of stigmatized candidates selected for promotion in the disability, age, and sexual orientation scenarios, all  $\chi^2$ s > 13.02,  $p < .001$ .

**Preference for selected employee.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized employee and at least one stigmatized employee for promotion, nonstigmatized employees selected for promotion ( $M = 37.46$ ,  $SD = 21.47$ ) were preferred more strongly than stigmatized employees ( $M = 29.96$ ,  $SD = 25.71$ ),  $t(141) = 4.63$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, not only were stigmatized employees less likely to be selected for promotion, but if they were chosen, they were preferred less strongly than the nonstigmatized employees who were selected for promotion. A 2 (equality salience) x 2 (prejudice acceptability) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' preference ratings for the employee selected for promotion. No effect of equality salience was observed; participants' preference ratings did not differ between the equality salience ( $M = 35.78$ ,  $SD = 21.83$ ) and control conditions ( $M = 36.24$ ,  $SD = 21.22$ ),  $F(1, 141) = 0.02$ ,  $ns$ . No effect of prejudice acceptability was found, indicating that employees selected for promotion in which the stigmatized option was a socially unacceptable target of prejudice

( $M = 36.76$ ,  $SD = 21.77$ ) were preferred as strongly as employees selected for promotion in which the stigmatized option was a socially acceptable target of prejudice ( $M = 35.26$ ,  $SD = 23.05$ ),  $F(1, 141) = 1.87$ , *ns*. The interaction between equality salience and prejudice acceptability was not significant,  $F(1, 141) = 0.02$ , *ns*.

In order to determine if preference for stigmatized employees differed from preference for nonstigmatized employees **for each stigma type**, a series of independent *t*-tests were run (see Figure 13). Stigmatized employees selected in the disability ( $M = 30.00$ ,  $SD = 27.36$ ), age ( $M = 40.81$ ,  $SD = 26.81$ ), and sexual orientation ( $M = 24.78$ ,  $SD = 32.16$ ) scenarios were preferred less strongly than their nonstigmatized counterparts (disability  $M = 52.70$ ,  $SD = 32.11$ ; age  $M = 54.53$ ,  $SD = 27.64$ ; sexual orientation  $M = 40.00$ ,  $SD = 32.79$ ), all *t*s  $> 2.60$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ; all other comparisons were nonsignificant, all *t*s  $< 1.50$ , *ns*. A 2 (equality salience)  $\times$  10 (stigma type) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' degree of preference for the promoted employee. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma type on preference ratings,  $F(9, 1269) = 23.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for *p*-value due to multiple comparisons revealed that seven of the comparisons with age reached significance, such that preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in the age scenario were significantly higher than preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in the race, religion (Muslim), religion (Jewish), ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and nationality scenarios, and six of the comparisons with disability reached significance, such that the preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in the disability scenario were significantly higher than the preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in the race, religion (Muslim), religion (Jewish), ethnicity, gender, and sexual

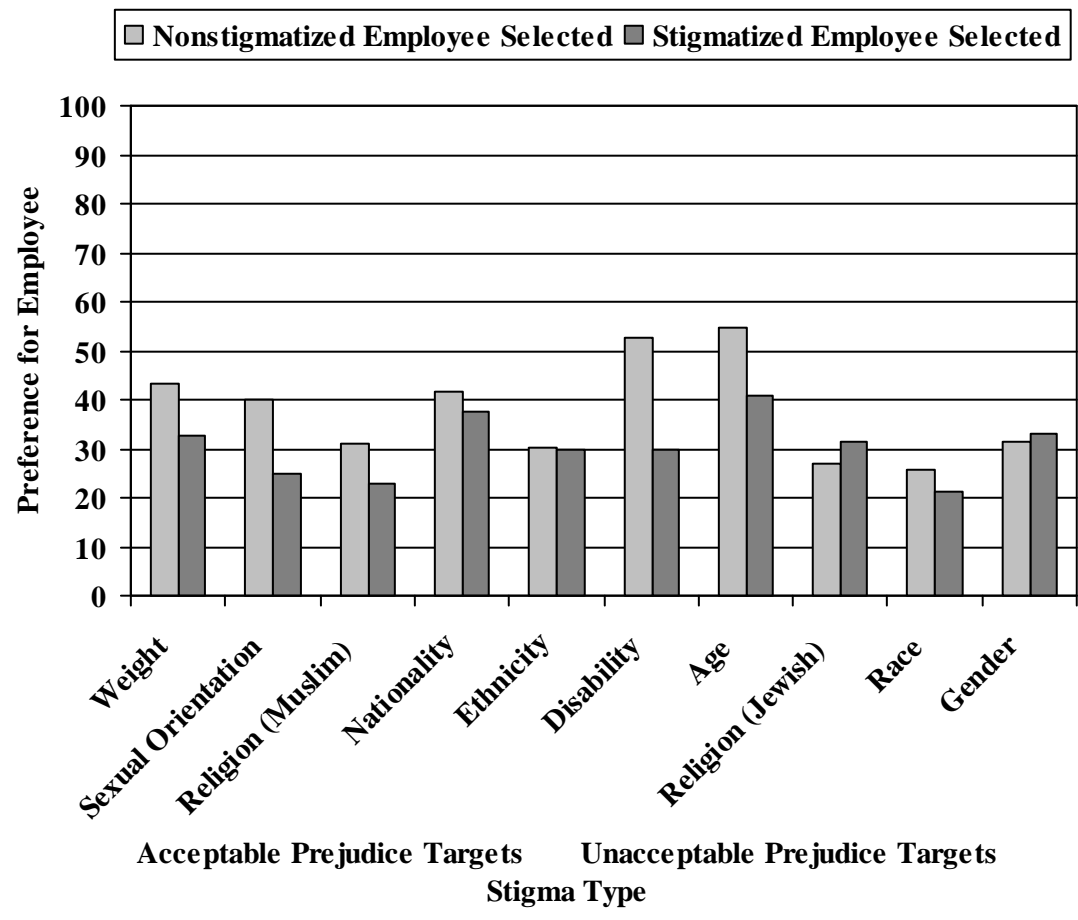


Figure 13. Preference ratings for the nonstigmatized and stigmatized employees selected for promotion by prejudice acceptability and stigma type, Study 4.

orientation scenarios, all  $t_s > 4.43$ ,  $p \leq .001$ . In addition, preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in the weight scenario were significantly higher than preference ratings for employees selected in the race, religion (Muslim), religion (Jewish), ethnicity, and gender scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.85$ ,  $p < .01$ . Furthermore, six of the comparisons with race reached significance, such that the preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in the race scenario were significantly lower than the preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in the age, disability, weight, nationality, sexual orientation, and gender scenarios, all  $t_s > 4.38$ ,  $p \leq .001$ . In addition, preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in both religious scenarios were significantly lower than preference ratings for employees selected in the age, disability, weight and nationality scenarios, and preference ratings for employees selected for promotion in the ethnicity scenario were significantly lower than preference ratings for employees selected in the nationality scenario, all  $t_s > 4.22$ ,  $p < .01$ . No effect of equality salience was observed,  $F(1, 141) = 0.02$ , *ns*, and no interaction between stigma type and equality salience was observed on preference ratings,  $F(9, 1269) = 0.58$ , *ns*.

**Decision difficulty.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized employee and at least one stigmatized employee for promotion, there was no difference in the decision difficulty reported in selecting nonstigmatized employees for promotion ( $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = 1.75$ ) and stigmatized employees for promotion ( $M = 4.50$ ,  $SD = 2.34$ ),  $t(141) = 1.32$ , *ns*. A 2 (equality salience) x 2 (prejudice acceptability) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' difficulty ratings for their promotion decision. No effect of equality salience was observed; participants' preference ratings did not differ between the equality salience ( $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ) and control conditions ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD$

= 1.64),  $F(1, 141) = 0.02$ , *ns*. No effect of prejudice acceptability was found, indicating that selecting employees for promotion in which the stigmatized option was a socially acceptable target of prejudice ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SD = 1.95$ ) was rated as difficult a decision as selecting employees for promotion in which the stigmatized option was a socially unacceptable target of prejudice ( $M = 4.68$ ,  $SD = 1.69$ ),  $F(1, 141) = 0.13$ , *ns*. The interaction between equality salience and prejudice acceptability was not significant,  $F(1, 141) = 0.18$ , *ns*.

In order to determine whether difficulty in selecting stigmatized versus nonstigmatized employees varied **for each stigma type**, a series of independent *t*-tests were run (see Figure 14). Selecting stigmatized employees in the religion (Jewish) scenario was perceived as more difficult than selecting their nonstigmatized counterparts,  $t(141) = 2.54$ ,  $p = .01$ , and a trend was observed such that selecting stigmatized employees in the race scenario was reported as more difficult than selecting their nonstigmatized counterparts,  $t(141) = 1.82$ ,  $p = .07$ . All other comparisons were nonsignificant, all *ts* < 1.11, *ns*. A 2 (equality salience) x 10 (stigma type) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' decision difficulty ratings. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma type on difficulty ratings,  $F(9, 1269) = 10.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .07$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for *p*-value due to multiple comparisons revealed that seven of the comparisons with age reached significance, such that the promotion decision difficulty ratings in the age scenario were significantly lower than the promotion decision difficulty ratings in the race, religion (Jewish), ethnicity, religion (Muslim) gender, sexual orientation, and weight scenarios, and six of the comparisons with race reached significance, such that the promotion decision difficulty



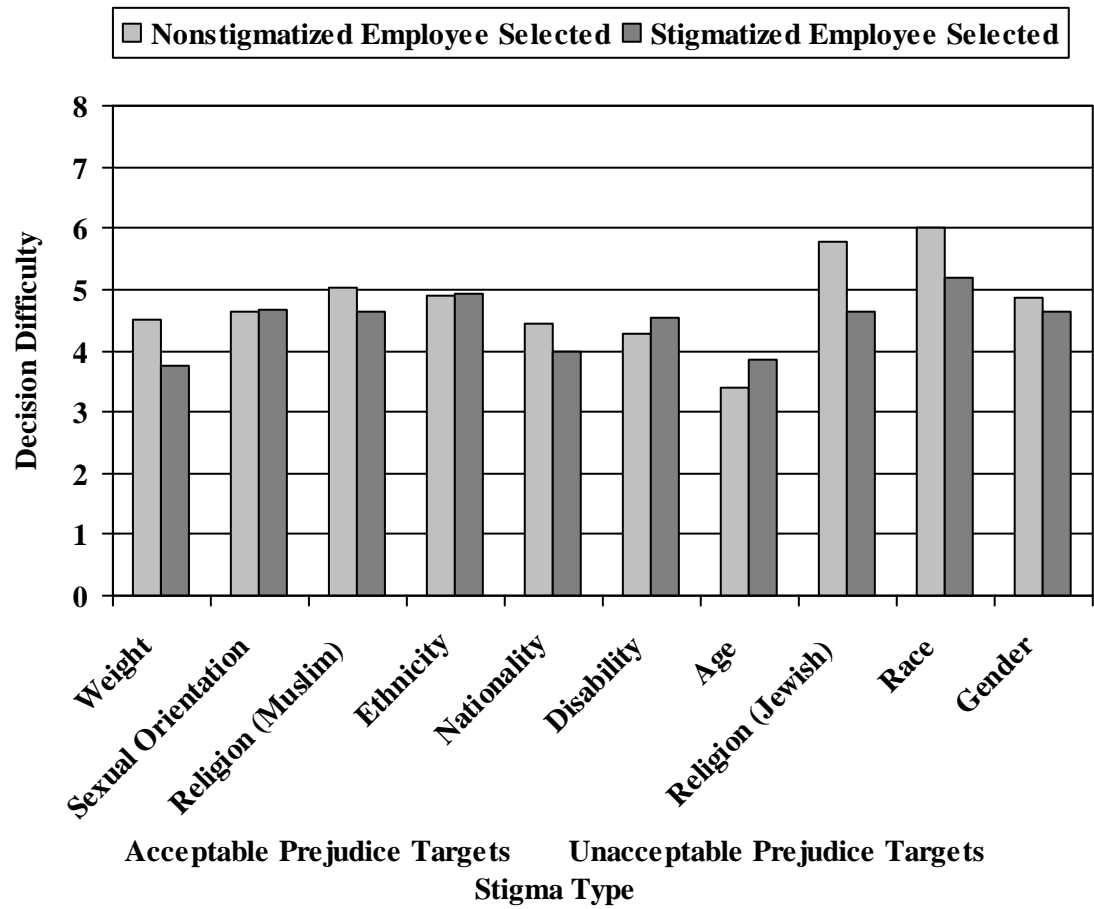


Figure 14. Decision difficulty ratings in selecting the nonstigmatized and stigmatized employees for promotion by prejudice acceptability and stigma type, Study 4.

ratings in the race scenario were significantly higher than the promotion decision difficulty ratings in the age, nationality, disability, weight, sexual orientation, and gender scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.60$ ,  $p < .05$ . In addition, the promotion decision difficulty ratings in the religion (Jewish) scenario were significantly higher than the promotion decision difficulty ratings in the nationality scenario,  $t = 3.45$ ,  $p < .05$ . No effect of equality salience was observed,  $F(1, 141) = 0.18$ , *ns*, and no interaction effect between stigma type and equality salience was observed on difficulty ratings,  $F(9, 1269) = 1.18$ , *ns*.

**Time to select employee.** Of the participants who selected at least one nonstigmatized employee and at least one stigmatized employee for promotion, nonstigmatized employees selected for promotion ( $M = 11.70$ ,  $SD = 7.62$ ) were chosen more quickly than stigmatized employees ( $M = 13.82$ ,  $SD = 11.01$ ),  $t(134) = 2.89$ ,  $p < .01$ . A 2 (equality salience) x 2 (prejudice acceptability) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' reaction times in making promotion decisions. There was a trend toward a main effect of prejudice acceptability, such that promotion decisions involving an unacceptable target of prejudice ( $M = 11.44$ ,  $SD = 7.33$ ) were made more quickly than promotion decisions involving an acceptable target of prejudice ( $M = 12.51$ ,  $SD = 9.28$ ), irrespective of whether a stigmatized or nonstigmatized employee was selected,  $F(1, 141) = 3.52$ ,  $p = .06$ . No effect of equality salience was observed; participants' response times in making promotion decisions were similar between the equality salience ( $M = 12.05$ ,  $SD = 16.57$ ) and control ( $M = 11.90$ ,  $SD = 12.00$ ) conditions,  $F(1, 141) = 0.01$ , *ns*. The interaction was not significant,  $F(1, 141) = 0.10$ , *ns*.

In order to determine if response times in selecting nonstigmatized employees differed from response times in selecting stigmatized employees **for each stigma type**, a series of

independent *t*-tests were run (see Figure 15). Nonstigmatized employees selected in the age ( $M = 6.62, SD = 4.59$ ), race ( $M = 12.02, SD = 12.03$ ), and disability ( $M = 10.04, SD = 11.13$ ) scenarios were chosen more quickly than their stigmatized counterparts (age  $M = 10.52, SD = 6.78$ ; race  $M = 18.08, SD = 20.19$ ; disability  $M = 14.92, SD = 13.38$ ), all  $t_s > 2.08, p < .05$ . A similar trend was observed in the ethnicity scenario, such that decisions to promote the nonstigmatized (European) employee ( $M = 13.65, SD = 12.31$ ) were quicker than decisions to promote the stigmatized (Native) employee ( $M = 18.40, SD = 20.63$ ),  $t(141) = 1.72, p < .09$ ; all other comparisons were nonsignificant, all  $t_s < 1.05, ns$ . A 2 (equality salience) x 10 (stigma type) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' promotion decision response times. As expected, there was a significant effect of stigma type on response times,  $F(9, 1269) = 8.52, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$ . Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni corrections for *p*-value due to multiple comparisons revealed that seven of the comparisons with age reached significance, such that the promotion decision response times in the age scenario were significantly quicker than the response times in the religion (Muslim), ethnicity, race, religion (Jewish), sexual orientation, disability, and nationality scenarios, and four of the comparisons with weight reached significance, such that the promotion decision response times in the weight scenario were significant quicker than the promotion decision response times in the religion (Muslim), ethnicity, race, and religion (Jewish) scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.45, p < .05$ . In addition, the promotion decision response times in the gender scenario were significantly quicker than the promotion decision response times in the ethnicity, race, and religion (Jewish) scenarios, all  $t_s > 3.74, p < .05$ . No effect of equality salience was observed,  $F(1, 141) = 0.01, ns$ , and no interaction effect between stigma type and equality salience was observed on

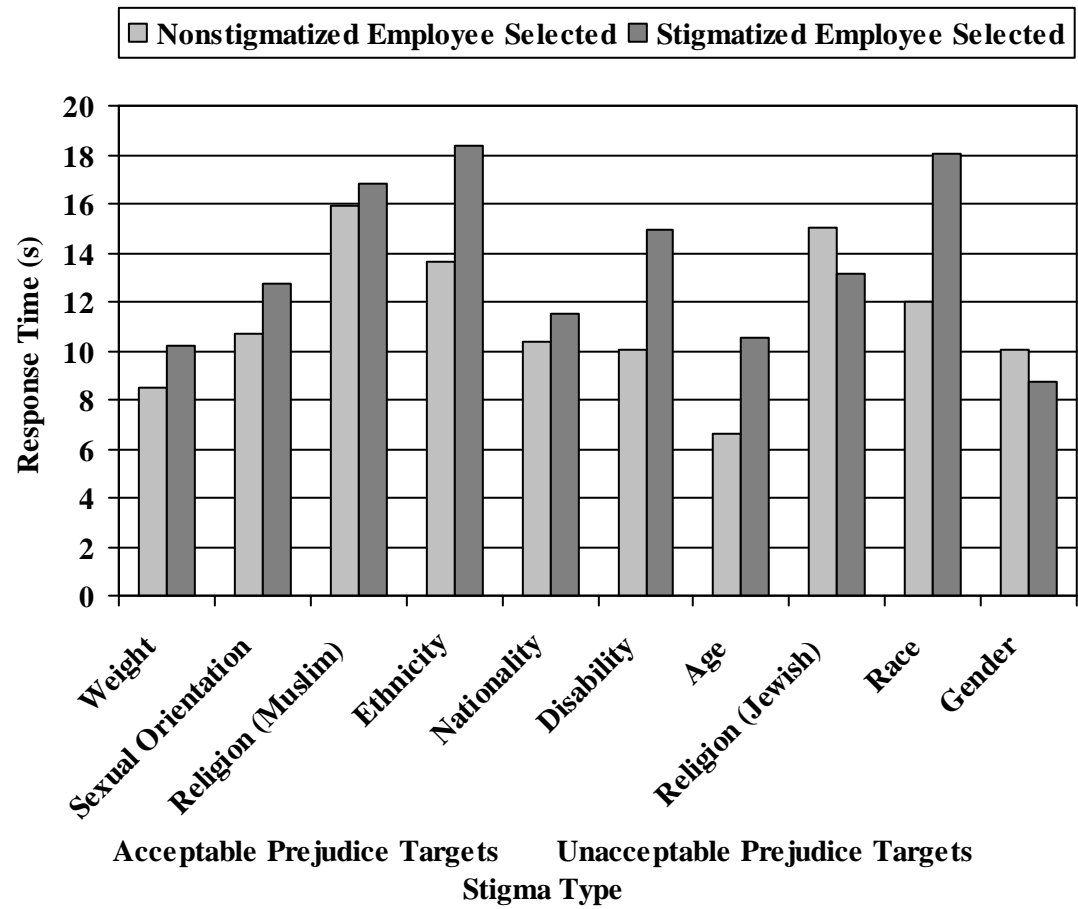


Figure 15. Time taken to select the nonstigmatized and stigmatized employees for promotion by prejudice acceptability and stigma type, Study 4.

decision response times,  $F(9, 1269) = 0.26, ns$ .

**Demographic influence.** Due to the significant reversal of discrimination in the gender scenario, the demographic characteristics of the sample were explored in order to determine whether they had an influence on the promotion decisions made in the gender scenario. The analyses revealed an ingroup bias among female participants; whereas male participants were equally likely to promote the male candidate (observed  $N = 39$ ) and the female candidate (observed  $N = 39$ ),  $\chi^2(1) = 0.00, ns$ , female participants were more likely to promote the female candidate (observed  $N = 47$ ) than the male candidate (observed  $N = 18$ ),  $\chi^2(1) = 12.94, p < .001$ .

**Analysis of mechanisms.** The potential mechanisms of affect, attitude favourability, justification of discrimination, value of equality, and egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals were examined for their ability to predict discrimination observed in the task. As they were assessed at the end of the research session, the influence of equality salience was also examined. Although mediation analyses were planned, they were not conducted given that no effect of equality salience was observed on the selection of stigmatized employees for promotion.

**Affect.** Participants in the equality salience condition ( $M = 2.93, SD = 1.41$ ) tended to feel more negatively about themselves than participants in the control condition ( $M = 2.51, SD = 1.26$ ),  $t(141) = 1.89, p = .06$ . Participants in the equality salience condition reported feelings of negativity toward others ( $M = 2.76, SD = 1.52$ ) and positivity ( $M = 3.64, SD = 1.14$ ) that did not differ from that reported in the control condition (negother  $M = 2.69, SD = 1.61$ ; positive  $M = 3.61, SD = 1.11$ ), both  $ts < 0.25, ns$ . Correlation analyses between the total number of stigmatized employees selected for

promotion and these affect indices revealed that participants who selected a greater number of stigmatized employees for promotion overall felt more negative about others,  $r(141) = .23, p < .01$ , and tended to feel more negative about themselves,  $r(141) = .14, p < .10$ . Participants who selected a greater number of stigmatized employees who were socially acceptable targets of prejudice reported more negativity toward themselves and others, both  $rs < .17, p < .05$ , whereas participants who selected a greater number of stigmatized employees who were socially unacceptable targets of prejudice only reported more negativity toward others,  $r(141) = .20, p < .05$ . No significant correlations were found between the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion and positive affect, all  $rs < 0.08, ns$ .

**Attitude favourability.** A 2 (equality salience) x 2 (prejudice acceptability) x 2 (stigma status: stigmatized vs. nonstigmatized) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' attitude thermometer ratings. A main effect of prejudice acceptability was found, such that participants' attitudes toward the socially unacceptable stigmatized targets of prejudice and their nonstigmatized counterparts ( $M = 68.26, SD = 14.59$ ) were more favourable than participants' attitudes toward the socially acceptable stigmatized targets of prejudice and their nonstigmatized counterparts ( $M = 64.67, SD = 14.74$ ),  $F(1, 140) = 40.19, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$ . A main effect of stigma status was also found, such that participants' attitudes toward nonstigmatized groups ( $M = 70.52, SD = 15.38$ ) were more favourable than participants' attitudes toward stigmatized groups ( $M = 62.41, SD = 15.92$ ),  $F(1, 140) = 56.36, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .29$ . No effect of equality salience was found; participants' attitudes were similarly favourable between the equality salience ( $M = 66.21, SD = 20.04$ ) and control ( $M = 66.72, SD = 20.33$ ) conditions,  $F(1, 140) = 0.05, ns$ .

These effects are qualified by two significant interactions. Probing the significant interaction between equality salience and prejudice acceptability,  $F(1, 140) = 4.39, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , revealed that stigmatized groups that are socially unacceptable targets of prejudice and their nonstigmatized counterparts ( $M = 67.41, SD = 20.48$ ) were evaluated more favourably than socially acceptable targets of prejudice and their nonstigmatized counterparts ( $M = 65.01, SD = 20.70$ ) in the equality salience condition with an even larger difference observed in the control condition (prejudice acceptable  $M = 64.33, SD = 21.00$ ; prejudice unacceptable  $M = 69.11, SD = 20.77$ ), both  $t_s > 3.02, p < .01$ . Probing the significant interaction between prejudice acceptability and stigma status,  $F(1, 140) = 76.31, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .35$ , revealed that although nonstigmatized groups (prejudice acceptable  $M = 71.17, SD = 15.34$ ; prejudice unacceptable  $M = 69.86, SD = 16.11$ ) were evaluated more favourably than stigmatized groups (prejudice acceptable  $M = 58.17, SD = 17.97$ ; prejudice unacceptable  $M = 66.66, SD = 15.90$ ), stigmatized groups that are socially unacceptable targets of prejudice were evaluated more favourably than stigmatized groups that are socially acceptable targets of prejudice, whereas nonstigmatized groups that were counterparts of socially acceptable targets of prejudice were evaluated more favourably than nonstigmatized groups that were counterparts of socially unacceptable targets of prejudice, all  $t_s > 2.38, p < .05$ . All other interactions were nonsignificant, all  $F_s < 0.82, ns$ . Correlation analyses between the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion and attitude thermometer ratings revealed that participants who reported more positive attitudes toward the stigmatized groups selected a greater number of stigmatized employees for promotion, regardless of prejudice acceptability, both  $r_s > .32, p < .001$ .

**Justification of discrimination.** The extent to which participants generally believed that discrimination can be justified did not differ significantly between those in the equality salience ( $M = 2.51$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ) and control ( $M = 2.62$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ) conditions,  $t(140) = 0.49$ , *ns*. A 2 (equality salience) x 2 (prejudice acceptability) x 2 (stigma status) mixed model ANOVA was run on participants' justification of discrimination beliefs regarding specific social groups. A main effect of stigma status was observed, such that it was believed to be more justifiable to discriminate against stigmatized ( $M = 2.16$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ) than nonstigmatized ( $M = 2.06$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ) groups,  $F(1, 140) = 5.17$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ . No other main effects or interactions reached significance, all  $F_s < 1.30$ , *ns*.

Correlation analyses between the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion and justification of discrimination beliefs revealed that participants who more strongly believed that discrimination can be justified (both generally and specifically) selected fewer stigmatized employees for promotion, regardless of prejudice acceptability, all  $r_s > .24$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Value of equality.** Participants' ratings of the importance of the value of equality did not differ significantly between the equality salience ( $M = 5.51$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ) and control ( $M = 5.17$ ,  $SD = 1.80$ ) conditions,  $t(140) = 1.21$ , *ns*. Correlation analyses between the total number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion and the value of equality ratings revealed that participants who rated equality as a more important value selected a greater number of stigmatized employees for promotion, regardless of prejudice acceptability, all  $r_s > .17$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**Egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals.** Participants' ratings of the extent to which they experienced consideration of egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals while



completing the forced choice employment decision task did not differ significantly between those in the equality salience ( $M = 6.21$ ,  $SD = 2.13$ ) and control ( $M = 5.65$ ,  $SD = 2.23$ ) conditions,  $t(140) = 1.53$ ,  $ns$ . Correlation analyses between the total number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion and endorsement of egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals revealed that participants who reported greater consideration of nonprejudicial goals during the task selected a greater number of stigmatized employees for promotion,  $r(141) = .18$ ,  $p < .05$ , with marginally significant correlations observed regardless of prejudice acceptability, both  $rs > .14$ ,  $p < .10$ .

***Predicting promotion decisions.*** Two regression analyses were run to predict the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion among the socially acceptable and unacceptable targets from participants' affect ratings, attitudes, justification of discrimination beliefs, value of equality importance, and egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals. In predicting the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion who were socially acceptable targets of prejudice, attitudes toward these groups,  $\beta = .42$ ,  $t = 3.17$ ,  $p < .01$ , and general beliefs in the justifiability of discrimination,  $\beta = -.22$ ,  $t = 2.19$ ,  $p < .05$ , were found to be significant predictors. In predicting the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion who were socially unacceptable targets of prejudice, negative feelings toward others was found to be a significant predictor,  $\beta = .30$ ,  $t = 2.71$ ,  $p < .01$ , and attitudes toward these groups was a marginally significant predictor,  $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 1.80$ ,  $p = .07$ . All other variables lacked predictive utility, all  $\beta s < .16$ ,  $ts < 1.22$ ,  $ns$ .

## **Discussion**

The two primary purposes of this study were to examine whether equality salience would eliminate or at least attenuate the systematic discrimination observed in the forced

choice employment decision paradigm, and whether systematic discrimination would be more common among socially acceptable than unacceptable targets of prejudice. As in the previous studies, suppression processes (in this case, equality salience) did not mitigate systematic discrimination in the task; nonstigmatized employees were more likely to be promoted than stigmatized employees. In line with a group norm theory of prejudice (Crandall et al., 2002), however, stigmatized employees who are socially unacceptable targets of prejudice (e.g., female, black, Jewish) were more likely to be promoted than stigmatized employees who are socially acceptable targets of prejudice (e.g., overweight, homosexual, Muslim). Not only were stigmatized employees less likely to be promoted, but even if they were selected for promotion, they were preferred less strongly than nonstigmatized employees selected for promotion. In addition, promotion decisions made in favour of nonstigmatized employees were made more quickly than promotion decisions made in favour of stigmatized employees. No differences in reports of decision difficulty between promoting the stigmatized and nonstigmatized employees were observed, however.

In attempting to explain why discriminatory responding occurs in this task, attitudes toward the stigmatized groups were found to predict the number of stigmatized employees selected for promotion, regardless of prejudice acceptability. In addition, general beliefs regarding the justifiability of discrimination was also found to (negatively) predict the number of socially acceptable stigmatized targets promoted, whereas negative feelings toward others elicited by the task was found to predict the number of socially unacceptable stigmatized targets promoted. Thus, in addition to one's personal attitudes driving such forced choice employment decisions, beliefs regarding the

justifiability of discrimination predicted the selection of fewer stigmatized employees who were socially acceptable targets of prejudice, and feelings of negativity toward others predicted the selection of more stigmatized employees who were socially unacceptable targets of prejudice.

Why would participants who selected more stigmatized employees for promotion feel more negatively about themselves and others? Based on the correlational nature of the findings, causal conclusions cannot be made, but some speculations can be drawn. Perhaps it is the case that those who recognized the implications of their decisions in terms of prejudice and discrimination felt worse about others (for being placed in a situation that required forced choice decisions based on group categorizations), felt worse about themselves (for appearing prejudiced and acting in a discriminatory manner in some of the scenarios), and thus chose a greater number of stigmatized employees for promotion than participants who did not realize the implications of their decisions. This possibility is supported by the patterns of correlations observed with the other potential mechanisms, as participants who selected more stigmatized employees for promotion were less likely to believe in the justifiability of discrimination, regarded the value of equality as more important, and considered egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals more frequently during the forced choice task.

### **General Discussion**

Across a series of four studies, evidence for pervasive systematic discrimination against stigmatized individuals and in favour of nonstigmatized individuals across several different stigma types was observed in hiring, firing, and promotion decisions using a forced choice employment decision paradigm. Although previous research has

demonstrated that employment discrimination is attenuated for low status compared to high status jobs (Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2010; Stewart & Perlow, 2001), systematic discrimination was observed in Studies 1 and 2 regardless of job status (Customer Service Representative/Retail Salesperson vs. Chief Executive Officer). Increasing salience of concern over appearing biased by presenting participants with instructions from their boss to not be biased in their hiring decisions did not reduce the systematic discrimination observed in Study 2, although previous research has demonstrated that such calls to authority are effective in hypothetical employment scenarios (Brief et al., 2000; Umphress et al., 2008). Establishing nonprejudicial social norms by describing the workplace as diverse also failed to attenuate systematic discrimination observed in firing decisions in Study 3, although previous research has demonstrated the influence of such social norms on the expression of prejudice (Blanchard et al., 1994; Monteith et al., 1996) and workplace diversity on employment discrimination (Petersen & Dietz, 2000, 2005). Making the importance of equality salient among participants did not reduce the systematic discrimination observed in Study 4, although previous research has demonstrated that such equality manipulations are effective in reducing the expression of prejudice (Maio et al., 2001, 2009). Study 4 did reveal, however, that stigmatized individuals were more likely to be promoted if they belonged to social groups that are socially unacceptable rather than acceptable prejudice targets.

Not only were stigmatized individuals the target of systematic discrimination, but even if they were supported in employment decisions, they were preferred less strongly than their nonstigmatized counterparts who were supported in employment decisions (found in three of the four studies). This discrimination did not extend to perceptions of

decision difficulty, however; the employment decisions were rated as similarly difficult regardless of whether the nonstigmatized or stigmatized individual was supported. Study 4 revealed, however, that nonstigmatized employees were selected for promotion more quickly than the stigmatized employees who were selected, indicating that such decisions were easier to make.

As shown in Study 1, such decisions were justified in predictable ways. Selection of nonstigmatized over stigmatized candidates for hire was justified by relying on positive stereotypes about the nonstigmatized individual, negative stereotypes about the stigmatized individual, and system justifications to maintain the status quo. On the other hand, selection of stigmatized over nonstigmatized candidates for hire was justified by relying on positive stereotypes about the stigmatized individual and perceptions of group disadvantage. The proportion of participants' explanations that mentioned covering or similarity justifications was similar regardless of whether a stigmatized or nonstigmatized individual was selected.

Study 4 also revealed a number of potential mechanisms that may explain discriminatory responding in the forced choice employment decision paradigm. Selection of stigmatized employees for promotion was related to more negative feelings about the self and others that were elicited by the task, more favourable attitudes toward the stigmatized social groups, weaker belief that discrimination can be justified, stronger belief in the importance of equality as a social value, and greater reported activation of egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals when completing the task. This suggests that discriminatory responding in the task may be at least partially explained by holding less favourable attitudes toward the stigmatized social groups, believing that discrimination

can be justifiable, not valuing equality as an important social value, and not experiencing egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals. It also appears as though participants who selected a greater number of nonstigmatized individuals for promotion did not feel negatively about themselves and others compared to those who selected relatively fewer nonstigmatized individuals for promotion. Simultaneous regression analyses demonstrated that selection of stigmatized employees for promotion that were socially acceptable targets of prejudice were predicted by more favourable attitudes toward these social groups and less endorsement of general beliefs regarding the justifiability of discrimination, whereas selection of stigmatized employees for promotion that were socially unacceptable targets of prejudice were predicted by more negative feelings toward others elicited by the task and more favourable group attitudes.

Considered within the context of current social psychological theory and research on prejudice and discrimination, the results of these studies are rather surprising. As such, the theoretical and methodological implications of this research will be elaborated. Furthermore, the influence of the acceptability versus the justifiability of prejudice on decision making will be discussed, as will directions for future research using forced choice decision paradigms.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Given the pervasive incidence of systematic discrimination in the forced choice employment decision paradigm, and the ineffectiveness of suppression manipulations in reducing discrimination in the task, one may question whether decision making in this task is actually a reflection of prejudice. In the task, participants are placed in a situation in which they must choose between two individuals who are pitted against each other

based solely on their group membership. If no prejudice were evident, the number of stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals selected should not have differed significantly, which was not the case in any of the four studies. Furthermore, the acceptability of expressing prejudice toward stigmatized groups influenced employment decisions, such that discrimination was most pronounced against individuals who belonged to groups who are socially acceptable targets of prejudice. Thus, participants differentiated between the stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals and must have made their decisions in this task based on their group preferences. This is further supported by the fact that the selection of nonstigmatized individuals over stigmatized individuals was accompanied by less negative feelings about the self and others elicited by the task, less favourable attitudes toward the stigmatized social group targets, greater endorsement of the belief that discrimination can be justified, weaker belief in the importance of equality as a social value, and weaker reported activation of egalitarian-based nonprejudicial goals. Regardless of whether the decisions that disadvantage members of stigmatized groups are primarily driven by biases related to ingroup favoritism or outgroup derogation (Brewer, 1979, 1999), the evidence therefore indicates that these decisions reflect prejudice.

The findings of the present research cannot distinguish whether the forced choice decisions are reflections of old-fashioned or modern prejudice, however. Although seemingly blatant in nature, participants' decisions may be suggestive of modern prejudice as they involved contemporary social issues and were justified effortlessly based on group labeling (i.e., stereotypes) and social perceptions (i.e., system justifications; Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). On the other hand, participants

overwhelmingly relied on stereotypes to explain their decisions, which typically are viewed as aspects of old-fashioned prejudice (McConahay, 1986). Regardless of the subtlety of the processes involved in making forced choice decisions, selecting between stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals is a rather explicit outcome in which the expression of prejudice was typically not suppressed.

What would aversive prejudice theorists (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) predict should have occurred in this forced choice employment decision task? There are three possible outcomes in this task: (1) systematic discrimination in which nonstigmatized individuals are supported more than stigmatized individuals, (2) systematic reverse discrimination in which stigmatized individuals are supported more than nonstigmatized individuals, or (3) no discrimination, in which stigmatized and nonstigmatized individuals are equally supported. Theorists from the aversive prejudice perspective argue that people endorse social norms regarding egalitarianism and equality and believe that prejudice is wrong, and thus face personal and social pressures when underlying negativity toward social groups learned through early learning and socialization processes seeks expression (Dovidio & Gaertner 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). They argue that this underlying negativity toward social groups only gets released when individuals are able to maintain a nonprejudiced appearance to themselves and to others. This is often possible in ambiguous situations in which clear guidelines for appropriate behaviour are not apparent. Applying this theorizing to the forced choice employment decision paradigm leads to difficulty in understanding how participants were able to maintain a nonprejudiced appearance to themselves, given the systematic discrimination observed in the task. Furthermore, participants were well aware that they



were making employment decisions based on group labels, and to the extent that social norms espousing that prejudice is wrong were apparent in the research situation, it seems unlikely that guidelines directing appropriate behaviour were unclear. Thus, from an aversive prejudice perspective, it seems likely that most theorists would have predicted no discrimination, with the possibility of systematic reverse discrimination resulting from participants' bending over backwards to avoid appearing prejudiced (Brochu, Gawronski, & Esses, 2011; Dunton & Fazio, 1997; Gawronski et al., 2008).

The justification-suppression model of prejudice also argues that people are motivated to not express prejudice in order to maintain a nonprejudiced appearance to themselves and to others (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). The theory may help to explain why systematic discrimination was so pervasive in the forced choice employment decision task, however, through the concept of justification. Crandall and Eshleman (2003) specify that the default mode is to suppress expressions of negativity about groups, but that justifications for prejudice are required when one does express one's prejudices. From the justification-suppression perspective, it appears as though participants were able to overcome their inclination to suppress prejudice and were able to justify prejudicial responding in the task. This begs the question of why suppression processes were overridden in this task, and why participants overwhelmingly chose to rely on the group information in a detrimental, derogatory, and otherwise negative way, instead of viewing the stigmatized individuals in a more positive light (i.e., bending over backwards) or viewing the group information as irrelevant. It may be the case that although expectations for appropriate behaviour were clear, attributions regarding responsibility for decisions in the task were more ambiguous in that participants were

forced to choose between two individuals such that one person had to be rejected in each decision, thus making it easier to justify discrimination in the task.

The basic idea advocated by the majority of social psychological prejudice researchers is that everyday people in North American society walk around driven by the goal, “I don’t want to appear prejudiced.” Based on the results of this series of studies, however, it appears as though suppression was not the primary driver of response, as the expression of prejudice varied and depended on personal, situational, cultural, and social factors. For example, discrimination was most pervasive in the weight scenario, with the majority of participants rejecting the overweight individual and supporting the average weight individual; thus, it appears as though many of these participants were not driven to suppress prejudice and were prepared to justify their decisions on multiple grounds. On the other hand, reverse discrimination was only apparent in the gender scenario, with more participants supporting the female individual and rejecting the male individual, suggesting that many of these participants were motivated to suppress prejudice and/or were ill prepared to justify discriminatory decisions. No discrimination was observed in the race (Black vs. White) and religion (Jewish vs. Christian) scenarios, further suggesting that many of the participants were motivated to suppress the expression of prejudice out of concern about appearing to be a racist bigot. My point here is a simple one, but one that counters the prevailing notion in current prejudice research: suppression is not necessarily the primary process underlying prejudice expression. Throughout the course of a day, people are bombarded with a number of concerns, goals, and desires, such as representing themselves accurately to others, feeling good about themselves, and protecting their ingroup, in which not appearing prejudiced may be a lesser priority. In

this way, justification can easily overwhelm processes underlying the expression of prejudice. This is the power of justification in a nutshell, in that participants overwhelmingly did not recognize (or attempt to control for) the discrimination they displayed in the task.

A major contribution of the present research is that of comparing and examining a number of social groups at the same time. One final theoretical implication of this research is that prejudices toward different social groups are not equal. That is, not all prejudices are the same. If this research focused on the social groups typically examined in the prejudice and discrimination literature, women and blacks, we may have mistakenly concluded that ‘discrimination is dead,’ as women and blacks were not disadvantaged in the forced choice task. Other social groups, particularly overweight individuals, people with disabilities, homosexuals, old people, Muslims, Middle Easterners, immigrants, and short people, however, were systematic targets of discrimination. Discrimination is *not* dead – not in the real world, and not in the laboratory using an explicit, forced choice measure of prejudice and discrimination. That said, the finding that women, blacks, and Jews did not experience systematic discrimination in the task is not an indication that discrimination against these groups is dead either. Instead, it suggests that the form of prejudice exhibited toward these groups has evolved more uniformly in our society, such that more people perceived discriminatory decisions involving these social groups in particular to be inappropriate.

### **Methodological Implications**

One criticism of the forced choice paradigm may be that the research methodology of the task violates conversational norms and logic, leading to findings that

are artifacts (Schwarz, 1994, 1998, 1999). Based on the Gricean logic of conversation, Schwarz (1994, 1998, 1999) argues that many researchers violate conversational norms that participants tacitly assume are valid during research situations, as they are during most social interactions. In the research setting, investigators often provide information to participants that is not relevant, informative, truthful, or clear, whereas participants assume or infer that the information provided is or must be relevant, informative, truthful, and clear. The argument would then be that because participants faced with the forced choice employment decision paradigm are forced to choose between two individuals based solely on group membership information, the participants may assume that such information is informative, relevant, and valid upon which to make such a decision. Participants may even further assume that the researcher is prejudiced in some way for relying upon such group information upon which to make employment decisions. Within this contextual framing, the patterns of systematic discrimination observed across the four studies presented would perhaps not be all that surprising. This is not an accurate or complete contextual framing for participants in this research, however. All participants were told that the individuals were equally competent and that they were both excellent candidates for the job; as such, counterstereotypical information about the stigmatized individuals was provided. In addition, participants were likely equipped with knowledge that one of the individuals in the pair was socially disadvantaged. Furthermore, the manipulations designed to reduce discriminatory responding in the task (e.g., to not appear biased; the workplace is diverse) also work against such a prejudice legitimizing context. Thus, there is no reason to believe that responding in the task is artifactual and not a reflection of people's preferences and prejudices.

### **Acceptability versus Justifiability of Prejudice**

In all four studies, weight and gender showed stronger effects than the other stigma scenarios; consistently, the overweight (stigmatized) individual was supported by less than 10% of participants (and by as few as 2.8%), whereas the female (stigmatized) individual was supported by more than 60% of participants (and by as many as 70%).

What could account for the strength of these effects? In addition to gender composition of the sample which was found to influence decision making in the gender scenario, such that female participants demonstrated an ingroup bias by supporting the female individual whereas male participants demonstrated no bias for the most part (though a bias in favour of the outgroup was observed in Study 3), the social acceptability of prejudice likely played a role. Specifically, weight bias is often described as one of the last acceptable forms of discrimination (Puhl & Brownell, 2001), and negative attitudes toward individuals perceived to carry excess weight have been shown to be rather pervasive and profound (Brochu & Esses, in press). On the other hand, sexism is now commonly viewed as socially unacceptable due to advancements in women's rights (Swim, Aiken, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). Thus, a primary purpose of Study 4 was to examine whether the social acceptability of prejudice influences employment decisions in the forced choice paradigm.

Study 4 indeed revealed that the social acceptability of prejudice influenced promotion decisions, such that stigmatized employees who were members of groups perceived to be socially unacceptable targets of prejudice were more likely to be selected for promotion than stigmatized employees who were members of groups perceived to be socially acceptable targets of prejudice (as assessed in a pilot study using a different

sample of participants). That is, overall, female, black, Jewish, old, and disabled employees were more likely to be promoted than overweight, homosexual, Muslim, immigrant, and Native employees. That prejudice acceptability was found to influence forced choice decisions is consistent with findings by Crandall and colleagues (2002) showing that people express prejudice only to the extent that such attitudes are socially approved. This perspective is supported by the group norm theory of prejudice (Sherif & Sherif, 1953), which argues that group attitudes are formed by simply adopting the attitudes of one's ingroup. In this way, group attitudes are acquired through socialization processes and adherence to group norms, such that external norms become internal attitudes. Group attitudes are then not based on personal experiences such as intergroup contact; instead, group norms shape the contact experience itself. For example, an interracial interaction may be interpreted or enacted in such a way that adopts or matches the prevailing social attitude toward racial minorities. Thus, the group norm theory perspective argues that people share the prejudices that their ingroup promotes and refrain from the prejudices that their ingroup abhors in order to be a good group member.

Examining participants' responses in Study 4 more closely by focusing on stigma type clouds the normative perspective, however. For two of the socially unacceptable stigmatized group targets, disabled and old, systematic discrimination was observed, such that the able-bodied and young employees were selected for promotion more frequently than the old and disabled employees. Among this sample of participants, it appeared to be relatively common to justify promotion decisions by focusing on negative stereotypes about the disabled employee (e.g., they would be unable to perform the work necessary) and perceptions of similarity with the young employee. These decisions were easily

justified even when the stigmatized groups were socially unacceptable targets of prejudice. Thus, even though the acceptability and justifiability of prejudice often work in parallel (as in the case of attitudes toward overweight individuals, for example), there are instances in which justifiability and acceptability do not coincide (as in the case of attitudes toward disabled individuals).

One alternative interpretation for the pattern of results observed in Study 4 other than the social acceptability of prejudice can be understood from the perspective of the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2002). Participants were asked to make forced choice *employment* decisions, in which considerations of competence reign supreme. Thus, social groups perceived to be low in competence (regardless of warmth perceptions), may have been favoured the least. The three stigmatized employees that were the most consistent targets of discrimination in Study 4 were the overweight, disabled, and old employees, each of which may have been considered low in competence by participants. Although ratings of competence and warmth for overweight individuals have not yet been examined by Fiske and her colleagues, low ratings of competence would likely emerge given the stereotypes of overweight individuals as lazy and lacking willpower (Brochu & Esses, in press). Research by Fiske and her colleagues using the stereotype content model has found that disabled individuals, elderly people, immigrants, and Middle Easterners typically are rated low in competence and that gay men, blacks, and Muslims are typically rated as mid-competent, whereas Jews, on the other hand, are rated high in competence (Clausell & Fiske, 2005; Fiske et al., 2002; Lee & Fiske, 2006). Coincidentally, women are also typically rated as low in competence, unless specific subgroups are brought to mind, such as career women, who are typically

rated as high in competence (Eckes, 2002). Blacks are typically rated as mid-competent unless the subgroup of black professionals is brought to mind, who are also rated high in competence (Fiske et al., 2002). An interesting implication of this type of analysis is that patterns of discrimination would shift depending on the decision at hand; decisions that place more importance on warmth ratings (such as choosing a friend or a roommate) might see patterns of discrimination reverse for some social groups.

### **Future Research Directions**

The forced choice employment decision paradigm is a measure of prejudice and discriminatory intentions. Although not found to be influenced by manipulations commonly used to attenuate discriminatory responding, decision making in the task was found to vary predictably with various measures, such as attitude favourability and beliefs in the justifiability of discrimination. The forced choice employment decision paradigm may also prove useful in studies interested in inducing feelings of hypocrisy, given the systematic discrimination observed in the task. For example, Son Hing, Li, and Zanna (2002) found that aversive racists (i.e., those low in explicit prejudice but high in implicit prejudice toward Asians) responded to a prejudice hypocrisy induction procedure with increased feelings of guilt and discomfort and a reduction in prejudicial behaviour compared to those truly low in prejudice and control participants who did not experience hypocrisy. Presenting participants with their overall scores across scenarios in a forced choice paradigm may be used as a component of a prejudice hypocrisy induction procedure, leading to similar effects.

Another potential avenue for future research using the forced choice employment decision paradigm is investigating responses to individuals who have multiple social



categories. Intersectionality is a concept that reflects the notion that groups are not mutually exclusive, but are multidimensional; for example, men and women likely experience racism differently, just as women of different races likely experience sexism differently, and so on (Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008; Shields, 2008; Warner, 2008). One current debate within the psychological intersectionality literature is whether people with multiple stigmatized group identities experience more prejudice and discrimination than people with a single stigmatized group identity (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) argue that androcentric (i.e., the tendency to define the standard person as male), ethnocentric (i.e., the tendency to define the standard person as white), and heterocentric (i.e., the tendency to define the standard person as heterosexual) ideologies render people with multiple stigmatized group identities as intersectionally invisible as they are viewed as nonprototypical members of social groups. These ideologies were apparent in participants' open ended responses in the present research. For example, even though the female individual was supported more frequently than the male individual in the forced choice employment decisions, whenever participants described the individuals in the other stigma scenarios using a gendered pronoun, 'he' was almost exclusively used. Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach argue that intersectional invisibility has distinct advantages and disadvantages, as those with multiple stigmatized identities may be less direct targets of prejudice and discrimination as they are viewed as less prototypical group members, but more likely to be misrepresented, marginalized, and disempowered. In contrast, some researchers argue that individuals with multiple stigmatized group identities face the most prejudice and discrimination (i.e., double or multiple jeopardy; Hancock, 2007), whereas others argue

that group members who bear a single stigmatized identity bear the brunt of prejudice and discrimination (e.g., Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000). Given the flexibility of the forced choice employment decision paradigm, it may be used to elucidate such debates by manipulating the social categories of interest.

In order to better understand the power of justification in the forced choice employment decision paradigm, future research could examine whether similar effects are found when the opportunity to provide explanations for the decisions is removed. This would help to establish whether such justifications support discriminatory responding only when made available, or whether they occur rather automatically in forced choice decision making. Future research could also examine whether people consider justifications to be socially acceptable explanations for their decisions by comparing responding in a private to a public response context. Such a study may help to elucidate whether people actually fail to recognize that their responses reflect discrimination. Finally, the forced choice decision paradigm is not only applicable to an employment context; this paradigm could be used to examine decision making in a variety of domains, such as preferences in mate selection, group work, and giving awards or scholarships. It would be interesting for future research to examine forced choice decisions across a variety of domains differing on key elements, such as personal relevance.

### **Conclusion**

This research examined forced choice employment decisions in which participants chose between two excellent and similarly qualified individuals differing only on one dimension. Across four studies, results revealed a consistent pattern of

systematic discrimination regardless of job status, instructions to not appear biased, workplace diversity, and equality salience. Using an innovative methodology, this research demonstrates that systematic discrimination is prevalent in forced choice decision making, and that manipulations used previously to attenuate discrimination were ineffective in this context. Employers often must choose between two qualified individuals when making employment decisions and this research demonstrates that bias may be especially likely to operate under such forced choice conditions. Future research employing forced choice decision paradigms may offer useful clues to solving the prejudice paradox, as participants appeared to be more concerned with maintaining systems of inequality and privilege than advocating for equality.

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## Appendix A

### Forced Choice Employment Decision Paradigm, Study 1 Materials

#### Study Instructions

**Project Title:** Difficult Employment Decisions

**Principal Investigators:** P. Brochu, V. Esses

We would like you to imagine that you are an employer who is faced with a tough decision. Often, employers must decide between candidates who have very similar qualifications. Such situations are frequent in the real-world. In the following scenarios, please imagine that you are faced with two candidates who are equally competent in all respects. Nonetheless, you must decide which person to hire as a Customer Service Representative [Chief Executive Officer]. For each pair, there is only one obvious characteristic that is different between them. You must make a decision. Who would you choose?

In each case, we would like you to first indicate your choice by circling the candidate whom you would choose. Next, we would like you to indicate how much you prefer the candidate that you have chosen over the other candidate, using the scale from 0 (slightly) to 100 (very much).

For example, if you only slightly prefer Person A, you would choose Person A and then circle a number close to 0 (e.g., 10). In contrast, if you greatly favour Person B, you would choose Person B and then circle a number close to 100 (e.g., 90).

Please consider your responses carefully. Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential. There is no right or wrong answer to any of the scenarios. We are interested in finding out how you truly feel in each scenario, and why you feel the way you do. Thus, please respond as honestly as possible.

Scenario A

You are forced to choose between two excellent candidates, one of whom is of MIDDLE EASTERN background and the other who is of EUROPEAN background. Who would you choose? (Circle One)

MIDDLE EASTERN                      EUROPEAN

By how much would you prefer this person?

Slightly	Mildly	Moderately	Strongly	Very Much
0     10	20   30	40     50     60	70     80	90   100

Why would you choose this person? That is, what are the thoughts and feelings relevant to your decision?

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How difficult would this decision be?

Not At All Difficult		Mildly Difficult		Moderately Difficult		Very Difficult		Extremely Difficult
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Scenario B

You are forced to choose between two excellent candidates, one of whom is MALE and the other who is FEMALE. Who would you choose? (Circle One)

MALE                      FEMALE

By how much would you prefer this person?

Slightly	Mildly	Moderately	Strongly	Very Much
0      10	20    30	40      50      60	70      80	90    100

Why would you choose this person? That is, what are the thoughts and feelings relevant to your decision?

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How difficult would this decision be?

Not At All		Mildly		Moderately		Very		Extremely
Difficult		Difficult		Difficult		Difficult		Difficult
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8



Scenario C

You are forced to choose between two excellent candidates, one of whom is CHRISTIAN and the other who is MUSLIM. Who would you choose? (Circle One)

CHRISTIAN                      MUSLIM

By how much would you prefer this person?

Slightly	Mildly	Moderately	Strongly	Very Much
0      10	20    30	40      50      60	70      80	90    100

Why would you choose this person? That is, what are the thoughts and feelings relevant to your decision?

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How difficult would this decision be?

Not At All Difficult	Mildly Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Scenario D

You are forced to choose between two excellent candidates, one of whom is OLD and the other who is YOUNG. Who would you choose? (Circle One)

OLD                      YOUNG

By how much would you prefer this person?

Slightly	Mildly	Moderately	Strongly	Very Much
0      10	20    30	40      50      60	70      80	90    100

Why would you choose this person? That is, what are the thoughts and feelings relevant to your decision?

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How difficult would this decision be?

Not At All		Mildly		Moderately		Very		Extremely
Difficult		Difficult		Difficult		Difficult		Difficult
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Scenario E

You are forced to choose between two excellent candidates, one of whom is TALL and the other who is SHORT. Who would you choose? (Circle One)

TALL                      SHORT

By how much would you prefer this person?

Slightly                  Mildly                          Moderately                          Strongly                  Very Much  
 0           10           20    30           40           50           60           70           80           90    100

Why would you choose this person? That is, what are the thoughts and feelings relevant to your decision?

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How difficult would this decision be?

Not At All                  Mildly                          Moderately                          Very                          Extremely  
 Difficult                      Difficult                      Difficult                      Difficult                      Difficult  
 0           1           2           3           4           5           6           7           8

Scenario F

You are forced to choose between two excellent candidates, one of whom is OVERWEIGHT and the other who is AVERAGE WEIGHT. Who would you choose? (Circle One)

OVERWEIGHT                      AVERAGE WEIGHT

By how much would you prefer this person?

Slightly	Mildly	Moderately	Strongly	Very Much
0     10	20   30	40     50     60	70     80	90   100

Why would you choose this person? That is, what are the thoughts and feelings relevant to your decision?

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How difficult would this decision be?

Not At All Difficult	Mildly Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Scenario G

You are forced to choose between two excellent candidates, one of whom is CANADIAN-BORN and the other who is an IMMIGRANT. Who would you choose?  
 (Circle One)

CANADIAN                  IMMIGRANT

By how much would you prefer this person?

Slightly	Mildly	Moderately	Strongly	Very Much
0     10	20   30	40     50     60	70     80	90     100

Why would you choose this person? That is, what are the thoughts and feelings relevant to your decision?

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How difficult would this decision be?

Not At All Difficult	Mildly Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult
0	1	2     3	4     5	6     7     8

Scenario H

You are forced to choose between two excellent candidates, one of whom is HOMOSEXUAL and the other who is HETEROSEXUAL. Who would you choose? (Circle One)

HOMOSEXUAL                      HETEROSEXUAL

By how much would you prefer this person?

Slightly	Mildly	Moderately	Strongly	Very Much
0     10	20   30	40     50     60	70     80	90   100

Why would you choose this person? That is, what are the thoughts and feelings relevant to your decision?

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How difficult would this decision be?

Not At All Difficult	Mildly Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Very Difficult	Extremely Difficult
0     1	2     3	4     5	6     7	8

## Appendix B

### Pilot Questionnaire on the Perceived Acceptability of Prejudice

We are interested in the perceived acceptability of holding negative attitudes toward specific groups of people in Canada. **That is, which group(s) do Canadians consider it is more or less okay to hold negative attitudes toward?** Please indicate your perception of what most Canadians think about each group listed. We are NOT interested in your personal attitude toward the groups listed. We are interested in your perceptions of the acceptability of holding negative attitudes toward the following groups of people in Canada.

	Definitely NOT OK to hold negative attitudes toward this group				Definitely OK to hold negative attitudes toward this group
1. Men	1	2	3	4	5
2. Asians	1	2	3	4	5
3. People with Mental Disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
4. Muslims	1	2	3	4	5
5. Gay Men	1	2	3	4	5
6. Lesbian Women	1	2	3	4	5
7. Native People	1	2	3	4	5
8. Immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
9. People with Physical Disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
10. People with Mental Illness	1	2	3	4	5
11. Refugees	1	2	3	4	5
12. Hispanics	1	2	3	4	5
13. Homeless People	1	2	3	4	5
14. Overweight People	1	2	3	4	5
15. Welfare Recipients	1	2	3	4	5
16. Blacks	1	2	3	4	5
17. Christian Fundamentalists	1	2	3	4	5
18. Poor People	1	2	3	4	5
19. Jews	1	2	3	4	5
20. Bisexual People	1	2	3	4	5
21. Rich People	1	2	3	4	5
22. Atheists	1	2	3	4	5
23. Women	1	2	3	4	5
24. Old People	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix C

### **Justification of Discrimination Scale Items**

1. Unequal treatment of some groups of people is justifiable.
2. Not all social groups deserve to be treated equally.
3. Differential treatment of some groups of people is acceptable.
4. If discrimination can be properly justified, then it is OK.
5. Disparity in the social and economic standing between some social groups is warranted.
6. Some groups of people are more worthy of opportunity than others.
7. It is alright to prefer some groups of people over others.



## Appendix D

### Ethics Approval, Study 1



**Department of Psychology** The University of Western Ontario  
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 Telephone: (519) 661-2067 Fax: (519) 661-3961

#### Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice

<b>Review Number</b>	<b>08 05 06</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>08 05 28</b>
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	<b>Vicki Esses/Paula Brochu</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>08 10 31</b>
<b>Protocol Title</b>	<b>Difficult employment decisions</b>		
<b>Sponsor</b>	n/a		

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Department of Psychology Research Ethics Board (PREB) has granted expedited ethics approval to the above named research study on the date noted above.

The PREB is a sub-REB of The University of Western Ontario's Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. (See Office of Research Ethics web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/>)

This approval shall remain valid until end date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the University's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the PREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of research assistant, telephone number etc). Subjects must receive a copy of the information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the PREB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to the PREB for approval.

Members of the PREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the PREB.



Clive Seligman Ph.D.

Chair, Psychology Expedited Research Ethics Board (PREB)

The other members of the 2007-2008 PREB are: Mike Atkinson, David Dozois, Bill Fisher and Matthew Maxwell-Smith

CC: UWO Office of Research Ethics

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## Appendix E

### Ethics Approval, Study 2



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#### Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice

<b>Review Number</b>	08 11 11	<b>Approval Date</b>	08 11 13
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	Vicki Esses/Paula Brochu	<b>End Date</b>	09 04 30
<b>Protocol Title</b>	Difficult employment decisions		
<b>Sponsor</b>	n/a		

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Department of Psychology Research Ethics Board (PREB) has granted expedited ethics approval to the above named research study on the date noted above.

The PREB is a sub-REB of The University of Western Ontario's Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. (See Office of Research Ethics web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/>)

This approval shall remain valid until end date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the University's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the PREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of research assistant, telephone number etc). Subjects must receive a copy of the information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the PREB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to the PREB for approval.

Members of the PREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the PREB.



Clive Seligman Ph.D.

Chair, Psychology Expedited Research Ethics Board (PREB)

The other members of the 2087-2009 PREB are: David Dozois, Bill Fisher, Riley Hinson and Steve Lupker

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## Appendix F

### Ethics Approval, Study 3



**Department of Psychology** The University of Western Ontario  
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#### Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice

<b>Review Number</b>	09 09 28	<b>Approval Date</b>	09 09 25
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	Vicki Esses/Paula Brochu	<b>End Date</b>	10 04 30
<b>Protocol Title</b>	Philosophy types at Western and difficult employment decisions		
<b>Sponsor</b>	n/a		

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Department of Psychology Research Ethics Board (PREB) has granted expedited ethics approval to the above named research study on the date noted above.

The PREB is a sub-REB of The University of Western Ontario's Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. (See Office of Research Ethics web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/>)

This approval shall remain valid until end date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the University's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the PREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of research assistant, telephone number etc). Subjects must receive a copy of the information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the PREB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to the PREB for approval.

Members of the PREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the PREB.



Clive Seligman Ph.D.

Chair, Psychology Expedited Research Ethics Board (PREB)

The other members of the 2008-2009 PREB are: David Dozois, Bill Fisher, Riley Hinson and Steve Lupker

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## Appendix G

## Ethics Approval, Study 4



**Department of Psychology** The University of Western Ontario  
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### Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice

<b>Review Number</b>	10 10 09	<b>Approval Date</b>	10 10 05
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	Vicki Esses/Paula Brochu	<b>End Date</b>	11 04 30
<b>Protocol Title</b>	Two short studies: What's important in your life? & Difficult employment decisions		
<b>Sponsor</b>	n/a		

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Department of Psychology Research Ethics Board (PREB) has granted expedited ethics approval to the above named research study on the date noted above.

The PREB is a sub-REB of The University of Western Ontario's Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. (See Office of Research Ethics web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/>)

This approval shall remain valid until end date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the University's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the PREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of research assistant, telephone number etc). Subjects must receive a copy of the information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the PREB:

- changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to the PREB for approval.

Members of the PREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the PREB.



Clive Seligman Ph.D.

Chair, Psychology Expedited Research Ethics Board (PREB)

The other members of the 2009-2010 PREB are: David Dozois, Bill Fisher, Riley Hinson and Steve Lupker

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## Curriculum Vitae

- Name:** Paula M. Brochu
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University of Western Ontario
- 2005 Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Honours, Psychology  
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*Journal of Applied Social Psychology.*

Gawronski, B., Brochu, P. M., Sritharan, R., & Strack, F. (in press). Consistency principles in prejudice-related belief systems: Integrating old-fashioned, modern, aversive, and implicit forms of prejudice. To appear in B. Gawronski & F. Strack (Eds.), *Cognitive consistency: A fundamental principle in social cognition*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

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Brochu, P. M., Gawronski, B., & Esses, V. M. (2008). Cognitive consistency and the relation between implicit and explicit prejudice: Reconceptualizing old-fashioned, modern, and aversive forms of prejudice. In M. A. Morrison & T. G. Morrison (Eds.), *The psychology of modern prejudice* (pp. 27-50). Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

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Brochu, P. M., & Morrison, M. A. (2007). Implicit and explicit prejudice toward overweight and average-weight men and women: Testing their correspondence and relation to behavioral intentions. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 147*, 681-706.