Research Statement
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How do factors in our environment, especially those we are unaware of, affect our attitudes, decisions, and interactions? And, how do these factors influence interpersonal and organizational relations in terms of diversity and equality? These questions are the driving force behind my research that investigates how different factors --social tuning, perspective taking, culture, stigmas-- affect attitudes, decisions, perceptions, and self-views. Ultimately, I aim to promote and enhance equality, diversity, and cultural understanding.

Interpersonal Factors

In order to promote and enhance diversity, equality, and cultural understanding, a majority of my research investigates the transmission of stereotypic and egalitarian attitudes. In particular, my research in this area focuses on three key factors: social tuning (aligning one's views with an interaction partner), perspective taking (considering another person's viewpoint), and cultural orientation.

Social Tuning. Social tuning occurs when an individual aligns his/her views with the ostensible views of an interaction partner to gain a sense of shared reality (Hardin & Conley, 2000). I aim to understand *when* and *why* social tuning occurs because this provides important insights into how prejudiced and egalitarian views are spread. For instance, my collaborators and I wondered if a desire for shared reality could lead people to align themselves with their partner's apparent views and consequently self-stereotype (Sinclair, Huntsinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005). We found that those experiencing affiliative motivation (e.g., desire to get along) aligned their views with the perceived views of their partner more than those experiencing low affiliative motivation. More surprisingly, this occurred even if this made the individual self-stereotype (e.g., be more gender traditional)! This shows that people use the perceived views of others as a basis for how they see themselves in a given interaction. However, just how explicit do these perceived views need to be? In another set of experiments, we examined whether an experimenter's subtle endorsement of an attitude towards feminine beauty (e.g., wearing a tshirt with the slogan "Every BODY is beautiful") influenced participants' implicit self-esteem. When no endorsement was made (control/blank t-shirt condition), heavier women had lower implicit self-esteem than normal weight women. However, when the subtle endorsement was made, heavier women had higher implicit self-esteem than normal weight women (Weisbuch, Sinclair, Skorinko, & Eccleston, 2009)! Thus, very subtle cues influence social tuning and implicit self-views--including self-esteem. Currently, my research in this area is examining whose views are more likely to be adapted—an interaction partner or larger social group, and why.

Perspective Taking. My research in social tuning caused me to wonder more about the process by which people try to understand other's viewpoints (or perspective taking). More specifically, I am interested in *when* and *how* perspective taking influences self-views, attitudes, and perceptions of others. For instance, I found that perspective takers who visualized an older family member picked up on the perceived conservative attitudes of this target and reported enjoying an article about sex *less* than non-perspective takers who also visualized an older family member (Skorinko, Sinclair, & Conklin, 2012). But, based on my work in social tuning, I wondered if taking the perspective of a stranger could influence attitudes towards the self and others. In several different studies, I found that perspective takers, compared to non-perspective takers, will adjust their views towards the perceived views of their interaction partners (whether

prejudiced or egalitarian) and consequently this results in self-stereotyping and attitude transformation (Skorinko, Lun, & DiGiovanni, under review; Skorinko, Lun, & DiGiovanni, under review). Likewise, perspective taking with a defendant in the courtroom lowered perceptions of culpability and recidivism (Skorinko, Laurent, Bountress, Nyein, & Kuckuck, revise and resubmit). In addition, and again stemming from my social tuning work, I wanted to know if subtle contextual cues moderated the reductions in stereotyping observed in past research. I found that when a target confirmed stereotypes of their group, perspective takers anchored on these available stereotypes and stereotyped *more* than when the target did not confirm stereotypes of their group (Skorinko & Sinclair, 2012)! Taken together, this line of research shows that perspective taking serves not only as a cue to other's views, but also is an important component in self-views, attitude transmission, and stereotyping (including self-stereotyping). I am currently writing several grant proposals to help support the continuation of this research.

  Cultural Orientation. One's cultural orientation may also influence the extent to which individuals realize the views of others, consequently affecting attitude formation, transmission, and interpersonal relations. This topic is exceptionally important given the rise in cultural/ethnic conflicts (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians, etc.), and the lack of research on how these processes operate in the non-Western world (Fiske, 2000; Williams & Spencer-Rodgers, 2010). Using the social tuning model, my colleague and I examined whether collectivists (i.e., Easterners) were more likely to engage in social tuning than individualists (i.e., Westerners). And, we found that in the absence of affiliative motivation, collectivists, or Hong Kong participants, more readily adopted the egalitarian attitudes subtly endorsed by the experimenter than American participants. More surprisingly, priming cultural orientation replicated these effects. In other words, Hong Kong participants primed with an individualistic mindset were less likely to engage in social tuning than Hong Kong participants primed with a collectivist mindset (Skorinko & Lun, under review)! I am currently applying for funding to continue researching how and why culture influences stereotyping and attitude transmission.

Stigmas in the Workplace, the Courtroom, Public Policies, and Beyond
  Another line of my research focuses on the effects that stigmas and stereotypes have on interpersonal interactions, especially interactions in the workplace or courtroom. For instance, my colleagues and I wondered if feeling a sense of moral good would increase immoral acts (e.g., supporting discriminatory policies). To initiate a subtle sense of moral good, participants wrote about a positive experience with either a Black friend or acquaintance. We found that writing about a positive experience with a Black friend *increased* support for more discriminatory workplace policies more so than writing about a positive experience with a Black acquaintance (Bradley-Geist, King, Skorinko, Hebl, & McKenna, 2010).
  Looking more specifically at workplace policies, many diversity and anti-discrimination policies place the impetus of discussing one's stigma in the hands of the applicant. However, the ramifications of discussing one's stigma, especially during an interview, are unclear. Thus, I investigated whether acknowledging an overt stigma (e.g., a physical disability) reduces stereotyping and discrimination. I found that applicants who acknowledged their stigma sooner in an interview were viewed more favorably and recommended for hire more so than those who acknowledged their stigma later in an interview (Hebl & Skorinko, 2005). Thus, even though acknowledging the disability early may seem counterintuitive it helps!

Another area where stigmas may have serious consequences is in the courtroom. In particular, I questioned whether crime stereotypes influence mock juror's memories, decisions, and attitudes towards immigration policies. We found that certain crimes were associated with different groups of people. Moreover, when the crime was stereotypic in nature (e.g., White defendant committing a White crime), mock jurors' demonstrated more biased decisions and false memories than when the crime was not stereotypic in nature (Skorinko & Spellman, under review). I am currently looking to see how perspective taking influences these results.

Stereotype Reduction. In addition to looking at when stigmas may negatively influence decisions, I am also interested in discovering ways to combat these negative ramifications. For instance, in one set of studies we examined whether altering a ticket price could improve consumer's opinions of women's sporting teams because marking research shows that consumers valued higher-priced items. We found that people undervalued the women's team when their ticket price was less than the men's price. However, raising the price of the women's tickets to be higher than the men's tickets increased the value placed on the team (Hebl, Guiliano, King, Knight, Shapiro, Skorinko, & Wig, 2004)! My colleagues and I also wondered if sharing an alma mater could help reduce discrimination as well. We sent faculty members a CV of an ostensible assistant professor candidate whose gender, quality (average or excellent), and alma mater (same or different) was manipulated. We found that excellent female candidates sharing an alma mater were highly recommended for hire; whereas, average female candidates sharing an alma mater were denigrated (Skorinko, Ruggs, Miller, & Hebl, under review). Thus, subtle contextual factors, such as value and similarity, influence our decisions about stigmatized others.

Conclusion and Future Directions

My desire to understand how different, and often subtle, factors influence attitudes, decisions, and interactions will continue to fuel my future research endeavors. In addition, I am committed to conducting research that attempts to understand and develop efforts aimed at reducing social inequality and increasing diversity. I will continue conducting research, pursuing grants, presenting, and publishing in the areas of social tuning, perspective taking, culture, and stigmas/stereotypes. For instance, I recently submitted a positively received NSF grant proposal to continue examining cross-cultural differences in social tuning and attitude transmission. I am also working with colleagues at Columbia University to examine conflict resolution and diversity training programs in Sri Lanka. I am also developing new studies to continue examining the effects that perspective taking has on attitudes, behaviors, decisions, and courtroom decisions. For instance, we are examining how perspective taking influences the effects of victim impact statements in a trial. In addition, I am developing research to examine how the stigma of pregnancy, sexism, career choice, and aspirations affect workplace issues, such as hiring and promotion. In each of these research endeavors, I will continue to involve undergraduates in research, and encourage them to present at conferences, apply for graduate programs, and help with manuscripts (when appropriate). I will also continue to apply for funding to support my research and students. In conclusion, conducting research and working with undergraduates on these projects is something I truly enjoy. And I am excited to have the opportunity to continue to address, in various ways, how factors in our environment affect our attitudes, decisions, and interactions and how we can ultimately promote and enhance equality, diversity, and cultural understanding.