Exploring Ethnic Disparagement Humor from a Benign Violations Perspective

An Honors Thesis for the Department of Psychology.

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Abstract

Participants were simultaneously in a within/between subjects design measuring perceived humor across two conditions: one in which a joke-teller told five ethnic stereotype jokes and one in which the joke teller told five neutral jokes. The experiment was double blind. For each joke and scenario participants indicated whether they were amused, disgusted, laughed, smiled, thought the scenario was wrong, and thought the scenario was not wrong. There were two main effects found across joke teller conditions, such that participants were less likely to smile and more likely to call a Jewish joke wrong ($p<.05$). We also found a significant interaction for laughter, such that participants that were not Jewish were more likely to laugh at a Jewish joke told by a Jew than they were when the joke was told by a Christian ($p<.05$). These results indicate that not only is joke teller key in perceived humor (i.e. laughter) of an ethnic disparagement joke, but so is the audience. Further research could determine if the audience being an in-group verse an out-group would change these outcomes.

Keywords: humor, violation, experiment, Qualtrics

Disparagement and Benign Violations Humor

Benign Violations Theory

Would disparaging humor differ in effect if told about the group which the comedian is a member of? Might it be seen as less harmful and perhaps reasonably humorous if this were the case? The present study seeks to examine whether Jewish disparaging humor differs in this context, formulated from the Theory of Benign Violations (McGraw & Warren, 2010), which states that a joke or scenario will be viewed as humorous when it contains a social violation that is simultaneous viewed as benign. McGraw and Warren (2010) specify three situations where a behavior will be deemed benign and funny and they are when "the presence of an alternative norm suggesting that the situation is acceptable, weak commitment to the violated norm, and psychological distance from the violation" (McGraw & Warren, 2010). To test these situations, they ran five studies to investigate whether a benign violation would be seen as more funny than a situation where there was no violation present or whether there was a violation present, but it was not benign. They tested these ideas using scales of amusement, disgust, and wrongness. What they found was that benign moral violations were seen as both amusing and disgusting, whereas malign violations were only seen as disgusting. They also found that benign violations have the potential to elicit amusement. They however, did not investigate ethnic disparaging humor in this framework.

McGraw, Warren, Williams and Leonard (2012) extended and re-defined the psychological distance aspect of the benign violations of humor more recently. They compared tragedies, which they defined as "features severe violations" to mishaps,

which they defined as “mild violations” and that their humorous aspect depended on whether the stimulus was close or far (i.e. the psychological distance). They argued that psychological distance should increase the humor in a tragedy, because it makes it seem less threatening, while it should decrease the humor in a mishap as a mishap has a low level of threat which would be eliminated through decrease in threat level associated with mishap, making it appear benign.

Over five studies they examined this theory, extending it to cover all four types of psychological distance: temporal, social, hypothetical, and spatial—to see if it held true for all of them. They used a variety of tests to accomplish this from free-thought up situations to pictures on a computer screen that are closer and farther (smaller and bigger). The results of all five studies were consistent with the hypothesis and consistent with the “benign-violation account of humor and the threat-reductions account of psychological distance” (Mobbs et al., 2007; Williams & Bargh, 2008).

Disparaging Humor

Jewish humor embodies elements of disparaging humor. Disparaging humor is “humorous material in which one party is victimized, belittled, or suffers some misfortune or act of aggression”(Hobden & Olsen, 1994). Like in Jewish humor, a group is specified and victimized. However, incongruous to Jewish humor, in disparaging humor the joke teller typically does not belong to the group whom the joke is about (Hobden & Olsen, 1994).

Hobden and Olsen (1994) investigated the affects of disparaging humor on the joke-teller. They believed, parallel with aspects of Cognitive Dissonance Theory,

that telling a joke should change the attitude of the joke teller in certain cases. They believed that as follows the reasoning of Cognitive Dissonance Theory, that people told to introduce, learn more, or explain a divisive concept to people would alter their beliefs in line with that of the concept unto which they are sharing with others, which in this case is a harmful, disparaging joke. They investigated this by having participants record jokes about lawyers. Half of the participants were put into a condition where they could choose to record the joke and the other half were placed into a condition where they were told they must record the jokes. Participants who freely told the joke were found to have significantly higher negative attitudes towards lawyers afterward than their forced counterparts. The researchers attributed this disparity to cognitive dissonance felt by the experimental group, changing their attitudes to level their dissonance. This begs the question: are disparaging jokes harmful to society? Also pertinent is whether the joke-teller is perceived to have an attitude change based on the joke itself?

Maio, Olson, and Bush (1999) further explored the implications of disparaging humor on societal perceptions. Rather than looking at the effects of telling a disparaging joke on the solely the attitude of the joke teller, this study sought to see how disparaging humor influenced the stereotypes held by the joke teller. They argued that Hobden and Olsen (1994) only investigated and found that telling disparaging jokes lead to a negative attitude shift in the teller about the disparaged group. They refocused their research to discern whether reading or telling a joke would make stereotypes more readily accessible in people's minds, so they looked at the accessibility of stereotypes after the telling or reading of a

disparaging joke, rather than the attitude in itself. This study took place in Canada and investigated disparaging humor with Newfoundlanders as the victims, a group specifically known to be disadvantaged in Canada. Participants were given either a disparaging or non-disparaging about Newfoundlanders to joke to recite and then asked to fill out various measures assessing the stereotypes and their attitudes towards Newfoundlanders. Their findings differed from those of Hobson and Olson (1994), in that participants' attitudes were not significantly altered. Disparagement humor did appear to increase stereotypes about Newfoundlanders, but only ones that were relevant traits. Although this study concluded that stereotype relevant traits increased in individuals telling disparaging humor, thereby reinforcing them, they do not appear to create stereotypes on their own. It is clear the attitudes of joke-teller are influenced when reciting a disparaging joke, influencing their attitudes toward the targeted group through Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Maio, Olson, & Bush, 1999). However, is the audience's perception of the joke-teller excluded from this attitudinal shift?

Jewish Humor

"In nothing is Jewish psychology so vividly revealed as in the Jewish joke" (Oring, 1983). Jewish humor has been observed over the past centuries, but is unique in its style and form. Oring (1983) defines Jewish humor as "humor, which has been conceptualized as uniquely, distinctly or characteristically reflective of, evocative of, or conditioned by the Jewish people and their circumstances". It was born in despair and has been described as "laughter through tears". It is distinct from other forms of humor, because of the fact that Jew's are able to laugh at a

humor born purely from the despair (i.e. the persecution and desolation) of their people. Jewish humor's roots stem from the historic persecution faced by the Jewish people and for that, it is an interesting form of humor. (Oring, 1983)

Another article written by Samuel Juni, Bernard Katz, and Martin Hamburger (1996) reiterates this conclusion, that Jewish humor has a certain masochism and that Jew's "laugh… so [they] don't cry". They claim that this humor came to be in settings where Jews were oppressed and could not escape—Jews found it easier to make fun of themselves, thereby inhibiting those oppressing them from making fun of them. This tactic stopped the Nazis from using another more psychological form of torture against the Jewish people, who were already undergoing much physical and emotional torture in the concentration camps. Although, some theorists: Sadan (1951) and Landman (1962), claim that certain Jews who felt they could assimilate into Nazi, Christian, or Catholic society used this type of humor to distance themselves from their own group, thereby identifying with an aggressor. However, what is interesting is that in both cases, it is the Jew whom tells the joke about themselves, whether seemingly appropriate or not (Juni, Katz, & Hamburger, 1996). They raised the issue of appropriateness after reading several Jewish jokes from the World War II era and questioned whether Jews took more offense to jokes told by themselves and about themselves or whether Jews would take more offense to a non-Jew making a Jew joke.

Further reiterating the idea of masochism in Jewish jokes, Davies (1991) supports this Jewish perception of humor by claiming that Jewish humor does indeed masochistically attack its own group. But he mentions what truly separates

Jews from other minorities is the combination of their history of hostility and persecution, along with the fact that they also now have found lots of success in employment and achievements. Jokes, he argues, differ in meaning based on the tone and hostility of the joke-teller. Does this not make the joke teller paramount in whether an ethnic Joke is perceived to be humorous or harmful? Would the joke differ if told by a Catholic rather than a Jewish person? He goes on to expand this idea to ethnic humor as a whole. He argues that ethnic humor is perceived as funny because it shows ways people can fail to conform; as people can distance them from their ethnicity and the harm the joke may inflict by categorizing themselves as more American than Jewish when telling a harmful ethnic joke (Davies, 1991). This is what this research study seeks to investigate: what it is about Jewish humor that makes it unique and how this disparaging humor fits within a specific humor framework.

The Present Study

All of the aforementioned studies by McGraw and Warren (2010) regarding benign violations explicitly build a framework of humor that declaratively states that any type of humor should fit within it. Jewish, humor although not stated explicitly, is a form of disparaging humor as a group is victimized: the Jews. However, Jewish humor is unique in that the ones typically doing the victimizing are primarily the Jews themselves. Does this by nature alter the effects of the disparaging humor? This unique ethnic humor is still humor by definition and should therefore fit into the benign violations framework. The present study seeks to study specifically this, whether ethnic disparaging humor does indeed fit into

benign violations. We investigate this by looking at disparaging humor in situations where there is a benign moral violation, the participant has a weak commitment to the norm, and where the participant is psychological distant from it.

We also utilize the Humor Styles Questionnaire[1] created by Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir (2003) in our investigation of disparagement humor within the benign violations framework. The Humor Styles Questionnaire:

> "assesses four dimensions relating to individual differences in uses of humor… relatively benign uses of humor to enhance the self (Self-enhancing) and to enhance one's relationships with others (Affiliative), use of humor to enhance the self at the expense of others (Aggressive), and use of humor to enhance relationships at the expense of self (Self-defeating)" (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir, 2003).

We use this Questionnaire to Asses whether the humor style of an individual will play a role in whether people find a disparaging situation along the benign violations framework to be funny. If this is found to be so, then individual characteristics impact the validity and credibility of the Benign Violations Theory of Humor.

We hypothesize that Jewish disparaging humor will result in amusement ratings similar to those found in MacGraw and Warren (2010), but we believe the disgust ratings will be inversely proportional to what they discovered. We believe

[1] We have not utilized the Humor Styles Questionnaire in the previous study, but it may be used for future analysis.

this is because the funnier situation in disparaging humor can be simultaneously the more harmful or "disgusting" one.

We specifically hypothesize that Jewish humor will differ from neutral humor. We hypothesize that participants reading neutral jokes will laugh and smile more than when reading Jewish jokes, and find them to be less wrong due to their nature. We also hypothesize that the religion of the joke teller should not impact the laugh, smile, and wrongness ratings of a neutral joke. For a Jewish joke, however, we hypothesis that the joke will be seen as more amusing (i.e. laugh, smile) when told by a Jew, but also potentially more wrong.

Method

Participants & Design

Participants (59 females, 28 males, Mage = 19, age range years 17-22) were recruited for this experiment from the Tufts University undergraduate population. The religious break down of participants was 45 Christian, 2 Islam, 8 Hindu, 15 Jewish, 7 agnostic, 8 atheist, and 13 none (i.e. don't know). A 2 (joke type: Jewish, neutral) × 2 (joke teller: Jew, Christian) mixed design ANOVA was used to analyze the data.

Materials & Procedure

The researcher in the study was an honors thesis student working in a social psychology laboratory at Tufts University. The researcher worked to recruit a pool of data from 80 people utilizing the Tufts' undergraduate participant pool. The participants were brought in one at a time into the testing area. The participants were then led to one of the testing cubicles where they were asked to read and sign a consent form (Appendix A) that informed them that they were to be part of an experiment regarding social

assessments of humorous scenarios. They were then instructed to complete a web-based survey that took place on a computer in a cubicle in the Tufts Psychology Building. The computer-based survey was one of two conditions: Jewish or Christian, which they were randomly assigned to be in by the web-based survey program itself. There were three parts to the Humor Styles Portion of the survey, which were presented to them in a randomized order (Appendix B).

In the "first" part of the survey, participants read five religious and five neutral jokes that were explained to be told by either a minority in-group member (i.e. Jewish person) or a majority out-group member (i.e. Christian person). After reading each scenario, participants answered questions regarding the character telling the joke in the scenario. These questions assessed the participant's amusement, disgust, physical response (laugh/smile), and perceived wrongness of the situation—these responses were used to observe whether participants perceived a situation where a conflicting norm was present to be different from one where there was none.

[2]In the "second" part of the survey, participants were randomly assigned to read one scenario regarding the actions of a Jewish fraternity that was to take place either "in the U.S." or "outside the U.S." After reading the scenario, participants answered questions regarding it. These questions assessed the participant's amusement, disgust, physical response (laugh/smile), and perceived wrongness of the situation.

In the "third" part of the survey, participants were randomly assigned to read one scenario regarding the food choices of a Jewish man at a buffet table, as to whether he

[2] The methods described for the second and third study, M.E.I.M., and the Humor Styles Questionnaire are included for explanatory purposes only; they are not being analyzed in this investigation.

selected to eat free "pork" or "chicken". After reading the scenario, participants answered questions regarding the character telling the joke in the scenario. These questions assessed the participant's amusement, disgust, physical response (laugh/smile), and perceived wrongness of the situation.

After the completion of the Humor Styles portion of the study, the participants were required to fill out a variety of scales measuring religiosity, prejudice, and humor styles. The participants first completed a Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (M.E.I.M.; Roberts et al., 1999), which measured the participants' individual levels of commitment to ethnicity (Appendix C). After completing M.E.I.M., participants were then instructed to complete the Internal Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice Scale (IMS) and the External Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice Scale (EMS; Devine, 1988; Appendix D). This scale was modified to measure internal and external motivation and to control prejudice in religious contexts. Next, the participants completed a Humor Style Questionnaire, which was used to predict the humor style of the participant (Appendix E). Participants will then fill out a short demographic questionnaire within the survey before being debriefed (Appendix F), thanked for participating, and released by the experimenter.

Results

A 2 (joke type: Jewish, neutral) × 2 (joke teller: Jew, Christian) mixed design ANOVA was used to analyze the data. Eighty-eight of the one hundred and three participants were used in the analysis, as we decided to not include the Jewish (n = 15), sample and the Islamic sample (n = 2), in the analysis. We decided to not the Jewish population specifically, because the amount of participants we recruited was small and

without these participants we could do the analysis on the out-group members responses to the jokes. The Islamic population was also cut from the analysis due to a very small participant pool.

The ANOVA indicated that there were significant main effects for wrong and smile across joke type, as well as a significant interaction for laughter. As was expected, the significant main effect for wrongness found that a participants were significantly more likely to call a Jewish joke wrong (M=.59, SD=.41) than they were to call a neutral joke wrong (M=.17, SD=.20), $F(1,86) = 130.82$, $p<.05$, displayed in Figure 1. Also as was predicted, the significant main effect for smile found that participants were significantly less likely to smile when reading a Jewish (M=.25, SD=.29) than they were to smile when reading a neutral joke (M=.42, SD=.25), $F(1,86) = 25.07$, $p<.05$, displayed in Figure 2. Vital to our hypothesis was the discovered interaction for laughter between joke teller and joke condition $F(1,86) = 4.75$, $p<.05$, displayed in Figure 3. We used simple effects tests to explore this interaction.

Laughter

Consistent with our hypothesis, there was a significant simple effect for laughter in the jokes about Jewish stereotypes as participants in the Jewish joke teller condition (M=.19, SD=.29) laughed significantly more than those in the Christian joke teller condition (M=.08, SD=.20), $t(86) = 2.18$, $p<.05$. Also expected, there was no significant simple effect for laughter in the neutral jokes as participants in the Jewish joke teller condition (M=.15, SD=.20) did not laugh significantly more or less than those in the Christian joke teller condition (M=.13, SD=.21), $t(86) = .29$, $p>.05$.

Smile

Contrary to our hypothesis, there was no significant simple effect for smile in the jokes about Jewish stereotypes as participants in the Jewish joke teller condition (M=.29, SD=.30) did not smile significantly more or less than those in the Christian joke teller condition (M=.21, SD=.27), $t(86) = 1.31$, $p>.05$. However, as expected, there was no significant simple effect for smile in the neutral jokes as participants in the Jewish joke teller condition (M=.39, SD=.25) did not smile significantly more or less than those in the Christian joke teller condition (M=.45,
SD=.25), $t(86) = -1.06$, $p>.05$.

Wrong

Contrary to our hypothesis, there was no significant simple effect for wrongness in the neutral jokes as participants in the Jewish joke teller condition (M=.19, SD=.19) did not find the jokes significantly more or less wrong than those in the Christian joke teller condition (M=.16, SD =.20), $t(86) = .70$, $P>.05$. Consistent to our hypothesis, there was no significant simple effect for wrongness in the jokes about Jewish stereotypes as participants in the Jewish joke teller condition (M=.52, SD=.41) did not find the jokes significantly more or less wrong than those in the Christian joke teller condition (M=.65, SD=.41), $t(86) = -1.5$, $p>.05$.

Discussion

There were two main effects found for smile and wrong. The data supported the idea that ethnic disparagement humor differs from general humor, as participants found the ethnic Jew jokes to be more wrong than the neutral jokes about animals. Participants were also more likely to smile at a neutral animal joke than they were to smile at an

ethnic Jew joke. Most importantly, there was an interaction, key to our hypothesis of this report. Participants likeliness to laugh at an ethnic disparagement joke differed based on the joke teller, such that they were more likely to laugh at a Jewish joke told by a Jew than at a Jewish Joke told by a Christian.

This idea supports the basis of Jewish humor as described by Samuel Juni, Bernard Katz, and Martin Hamburger (1996) and Davies (1991) that Jews were the ones telling the jokes to outsiders. Wouldn't it then make sense that humor that stems from the Jewish people themselves to specifically be told to an outside audience would therefore be seen as more funny (aka laugh worthy) than when it was told by an outsider? The data appears to support this idea, although, it does not give us a clear indication of whether the humor would be seen translated in the same way if the audience was the in-group. To test this, further replications could be performed in which there was a bigger amount of Jewish participants were used, so that the outsider versus insider phenomena could be examined at a more significant level.

Another limitation observed in the data analysis, was that the question wording might have impacted responses. For several of the scales, participants were asked yes or no, as to whether they were amused or disgusted. However, for laughter and smile, and wrong and not wrong, they were asked to select all that apply, rather than yes or no for each as a separate entity on it's own. This may have caused them to be less likely to choose yes for both as they may have thought that like the preceding yes or no questions, they should only select one.

Although there are many things that could be improved upon in a future study, our study did contribute to the psychological literature and research on humor. By combining ethnic disparagement humor and the benign violations theory of humor, it was unique in its approach. And although not all the data found was significant, the experiment did show an important interaction between joke teller and joke type for laughter, such that laughter is more easily given to Jewish jokes told by a Jew than Jewish jokes told by a Christian. Joke teller is therefore key in ethnic disparagement humor, but is the audience? Further research could determine this and extend the findings of this study.

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Appendix A

Consent Form – Social Assessments

Purpose. This study seeks to examine how you assess various social scenarios.

Procedures. In this study, you will be asked to complete a computer-based survey. In this survey, you will through a series of jokes and scenarios and asked to assess them. You will do this for many different scenarios and then fill out a scale assessing your attitudes. You may skip any question you wish in this survey. Your participation in this study will take between 15-30 minutes.

Confidentiality. Data collected from your involvement in this study will not be associated in any way with personally identifiable information, and will only be used for the purpose of scientific research, which may include publication of results in a report for a scholarly journal or other scientific outlet, use of the results as teaching material, or other similar pursuits. Your name and other identifiable information will be kept confidential and not included in such reports.

Compensation. If you signed up for this study through Mechanical Turk, you will be remunerated with the amount listed on the survey's description.

Risks and Benefits. Your participation in this study is not anticipated to involve any significant risks to you, either physical or psychological. However, the nature of the jokes and scenarios presented in this study may be considered to be explicit or disturbing by some individuals because of their controversial nature. Participating in this study will help you to learn about the process of scientific research and gain insight into the theories and measures of social psychology. Your involvement will help the experimenters test psychological theories about human behavior that may provide society with a better understanding of interpersonal interactions.

Refusal or Withdrawal of Consent. Participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind and drop out at any time.

Request for More Information. You may ask for more information about the study at any time. You may contact the principle investigators, Alex M. Borgella (alex.borgella@tufts.edu) and Jessica L. Fenton (jessica.fenton@tufts.edu), or the faculty advisor, Professor Keith Maddox (keith.maddox@tufts.edu) with any concerns, or the Tufts University IRB administrator, Lara Sloboda.

Signature. I confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, and the possible risks and discomforts as well as potential benefits that I may experience have been explained to me. I am also at least 18 years of age. All my questions have been answered. I have read this consent form. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study.

_____
Name (printed)

_____ _____
Signature Date

_____ _____
Experimenter's Signature Date

Appendix B

Religious Humor Survey Items

Part 1 – Conflicting Norm Interpretation

Participants responded to these questions after each of the following scenarios:

Did you find this behavior amusing? (Yes/No Response)
This behavior made you: (select all that apply) (Laugh/Smile Response)
Did you find this behavior disgusting? (Yes/No response)
Is the behavior wrong or not wrong? (select all that apply) (Wrong/Not Wrong Response)

Jewish Condition Scenarios:

1. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "What's yellow and too greedy to buy his own honey?"
Friend: "I don't know. What?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Winnie the Jew"
2. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "How do you start a Jewish parade?"
Friend: "I don't know. How?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Throw a penny down main street"
3. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Why are Jewish synagogues round?"
Friend: "I don't know. Why?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "So they can't hide in the corner when the collection box comes around"
4. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "What is a Jewish bird call?"
Friend: "I don't know. What?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Cheap, cheap, cheap"
5. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Why do Jewish men like to watch porno movies backward?"
Friend: "I don't know. Why?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "They like the part where the hooker gives the money back"
6. Imagine a [Christian] Jewish person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Why did the ant fall off the toilet seat?"
Friend: "I don't know. Why?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Because he was pissed off"
7. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "What do you call a cow that's had a abortion?"
Friend: "I don't know. What?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "De-calf-i-nated"

8. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "What's the similarity between penises and fishes?"
Friend: "I don't know. What?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "You throw back the small one, you keep the medium ones, and you mount the large ones"
9. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Why did the blond become a big basket ball fan?"
Friend: "I don't know. Why?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "Because every time they stopped the clock, she though she stopped aging"
10. Imagine a Jewish [Christian] person telling the following joke to a friend:
Jewish [Christian] Person: "What happens to a frog's car when it breaks down?"
Friend: "I don't know. What?"
Jewish [Christian] Person: "It gets toad away"

Part 2 – Psychological Distance from Violated Norm

Participants responded to these questions after each of the following scenarios:

Did you find this behavior amusing? (Yes/No Response)
This behavior made you: (select all that apply) (Laugh/Smile Response)
Did you find this behavior disgusting? (Yes/No response)
Is the behavior wrong or not wrong? (select all that apply) (Wrong/Not Wrong Response)

Scenarios (randomized):

1. Imagine the following scenario:
A Jewish fraternity in the U.S. hacks into google maps and renames a rival Jewish fraternity's house "Auschwitz".
2. Imagine the following scenario:
A Jewish fraternity from outside the U.S. hacks into google maps and renames a rival Jewish fraternity's house "Auschwitz".

Part 3 – Commitment to Violated Norm

Participants responded to these questions after each of the following scenarios:

Did you find this behavior amusing? (Yes/No Response)
This behavior made you: (select all that apply) (Laugh/Smile Response)
Did you find this behavior disgusting? (Yes/No response)
Is the behavior wrong or not wrong? (select all that apply) (Wrong/Not Wrong Response)

Scenarios (randomized):

1. Imagine the following scenario:

A Jewish man approaches a buffet table labeled “FREE CHICKEN” at a dinner event. He pauses, looks around the room to see if anyone notices, and then decides to put some in his bag to take home and eat.

2. Imagine the following scenario:

A Jewish man approaches a buffet table labeled “FREE PORK” at a dinner event. He pauses, looks around the room to see if anyone notices, and then decides to put some in his bag to take home and eat.

Appendix C

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (M.E.I.M.; Roberts et al., 1999) Modified

Instructions:

Please fill in: In terms of my religion, I consider myself to be…

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my religion, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own religion.
3. I have a clear sense of my religious background and what it means for me.
4. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my religious group membership.
5. I am happy that I am a member of the religion that I belong to.
6. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own religion.
7. I understand pretty well what my religions membership means to me.
8. In order to learn more about my religious background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.
9. I have a lot of pride in my religion.
10. I participate in cultural practices of my religion, such as special food, music, or customs.
11. I feel a strong attachment to my own religion.
12. I feel good about my cultural and religious background.

Appendix D

External Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice Scale (EMS) and Internal Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice Scale (IMS; Devine, 1988) Modified

Instructions:

Please fill in: Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

EMS

1. Because of today's PC (politically correct) standards I try to appear nonprejudiced toward people who do not share my religious affiliation.
2. I try to hide any negative thoughts about people who do not share my religious affiliation in order to avoid negative reactions from others.
3. If I acted prejudiced toward people who do not share my religious affiliation, I would be concerned that others would be angry with me.
4. I attempt to appear nonprejudiced toward people who do not share my religious affiliation in order to avoid disapproval from others.
5. I try to act nonprejudiced toward people who do not share my religious affiliation because of pressure from others.

IMS

1. I attempt to act in nonprejudiced ways toward people who do not share my religious affiliation because it is personally important to me.
2. According to my personal values, using stereotypes about people who do not share my religious affiliation is OK.
3. I am personally motivated by my beliefs to be nonprejudiced toward people who do not share my religious affiliation.
4. Because of my personal values, I believe that using stereotypes about people who do not share my religious affiliation is wrong.
5. Because of today's PC (politically correct) standards I try to appear nonprejudiced toward people who do not share my religious affiliation.

Appendix E

Humor Styles Scale

Instructions:

Please fill in: Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. I usually don't laugh or joke around much with other people.
2. If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor.
3. If someone makes a mistake, I will often tease them about it.
4. I let people laugh at me or make fun at my expense more than I should.
5. I don't have to work very hard at making other people laugh--I seem to be a naturally humorous person.
6. Even when I'm by myself, I'm often amused by the absurdities of life.
7. People are never offended or hurt by my sense of humor.
8. I will often get carried away in putting myself down if it makes my family or friends laugh.
9. I rarely make other people laugh by telling funny stories about myself.
10. If I am feeling upset or unhappy I usually try to think of something funny about the situation to make myself feel better
11. When telling jokes or saying funny things, I am usually not very concerned about how other people are taking it.
12. I often try to make people like or accept me more by saying something funny about my own weaknesses, blunders, or faults.
13. I laugh and joke a lot with my closest friends.
14. My humorous outlook on life keeps me from getting overly upset or depressed about things.
15. I do not like it when people use humor as a way of criticizing or putting someone down.
16. I don't often say funny things to put myself down.
17. I usually don't like to tell jokes or amuse people.
18. If I'm by myself and I'm feeling unhappy, I make an effort to think of something funny to cheer myself up.
19. Sometimes I think of something that is so funny that I can't stop myself from saying it, even if it is not appropriate for the situation.
20. I often go overboard in putting myself down when I am making jokes or trying to be funny.
21. I enjoy making people laugh.
22. If I am feeling sad or upset, I usually lose my sense of humor.
23. I never participate in laughing at others even if all my friends are doing it.
24. When I am with friends or family, I often seem to be the one that other people make fun of or joke about.
25. I don't often joke around with my friends.

26. It is my experience that thinking about some amusing aspect of a situation is often a very effective way of coping with problems.
27. If I don't like someone, I often use humor or teasing to put them down.
28. If I am having problems or feeling unhappy, I often cover it up by joking around, so that even my closest friends don't know how I really feel.
29. I usually can't think of witty things to say when I'm with other people.
30. I don't need to be with other people to feel amused – I can usually find things to laugh about even when I'm by myself
31. Even if something is really funny to me, I will not laugh or joke about it if someone will be offended.
32. Letting others laugh at me is my way of keeping my friends and family in good spirits.

Appendix F

Debriefing Form – Benign Violations and Religious Defamation Humor

Thank you for your participation in this study. This study was designed to examine whether a psychological theory of humor called Benign Violations (McGraw & Warren, 2010) is applicable in humor involving religious defamation. Broadly, Benign Violations Theory posits that humor stems from a violation of a social norm accompanied with a benign interpretation of the context in which the norm was violated. In this study, we were interested in its relation to a specific type of moral violation – the use of humor relating to Judaism. The researchers hypothesized that scenarios in which a Jewish person, or a member of the ingroup, was the Jewish joke-teller would be interpreted as more "benign" than scenarios where a Christian person, a member of the outgroup, was the Jewish joke-teller.

You may be wondering why we did not share the full purpose of the study with you prior to your participation, but we did this for a very good reason. Sometimes in research, important questions cannot be answered unless some aspects of the hypothesis are hidden from participants because full awareness would skew the results and make our data less valid. In a laboratory, sometimes people will behave in ways that they normally would not if they are aware of the purpose of the study. In this case, we could not tell you the full scope of the study because we were interested in your automatic judgments, and to inform you of this would have risked bringing them into conscious awareness. This would have made them willful (explicit) rather than automatic (implicit).

In order to let you know the true intentions of the study, this debriefing will go through each part of the experiment and let you know exactly what was manipulated and when this occurred. This experiment was composed of three components, all assessing whether your perception of a humorous situation varied depending on context. The first component was about conflicting norm interpretation – in this case, whether the joke-teller influences the humor found in an ethnic joke. Roughly half of the participants in this part of the study were randomly placed into either an ingroup (Jewish) or outgroup (Christian) condition. These conditions were created in order to assess whether perceptions of amusement and disgust as well as your appraisal of whether or not the joke was "wrong" varied between the two groups.

The second component of the study was assessing whether psychological distance from a humorous scenario impacted your judgment of the humor in that scenario. In this part, you were randomly placed into either a scenario where you were psychologically far or near from a situation. Specifically, the phrases "in the U.S." were used to imply that you were closer to the situation at hand versus the "outside the U.S.," which would imply a farther psychological distance. We manipulated this in order to compare judgments across the same scenario.

The third situation involved assessing your interpretation of a humorous situation as well as your commitment to the norm being violated in the situation. In this part, you

were randomly placed into either a scenario where there was or was not a moral violation. In this instance you either were exposed to a Jew eating pork or chicken. In addition to this, you were asked to fill out a scale relating to your religiosity. This scale was designed to measure your attitudes toward your religious background, and we will use the information therein to distinguish between individuals with varying levels of commitment to their religiosity in order to see if there are commitment-dependent differences in perceptions of humor.

In the final part of the experiment, you were asked to fill out a scale relating to humor style. This scale was used in an attempt to label your sense of humor. The data gathered from this scale will help us decide if an individual's primary humor style impacts what they find humorous in relation to the Benign Violations theory.

You may be concerned that this study sought to "bypass" your conscious goals and to instead probe your unconscious ones. You may also be uncomfortable that we did not inform you of this at the beginning of the study. Please remember the importance of some deception in producing meaningful research, as stated above, and in addition, we assure you that researchers will not use your data to make judgments about you personally. There is a large difference between unconscious mental associations (resulting from societal exposure) and explicit, consciously held beliefs and opinions. Additionally, data like these are only informative when averaged across many subjects, and no conclusions can be drawn about the behavior of any particular individual. We also assure you that your data will be kept completely confidential and will not be traceable back to your name or identifiable information. Even considering these precautions, however, if you feel distressed by your participation in this study you may choose to have your data withdrawn at this time. If you feel discomfort after leaving the study, you may contact the Tufts University Health Service at 7-3350 or the Counseling Center at 7-3360.

We hope that you have found this study enjoyable and have gained insight into the operation of automatic egalitarian goals. If you develop an interest in this topic and seek more information, please see the list of keywords and researcher names below. If you have additional questions about this particular study, you may leave your contact information with the experimenter, contact the Principal Investigator (alex.borgella@tufts.edu) or contact the faculty advisor at (keith.maddox@tufts.edu).

Table 1
Scenario and Results From Study 1

Joke	Joke Teller	Wrong	Laugh	Smile	Both Wrong & Laugh	Both Wrong & Smile
"What's yellow and too greedy to buy his own honey?" "Winnie the Jew"	Jew	62%	19%	17%	12%	10%
	Christian	72%	7%	13%	4%	7%
"How do you start a Jewish parade?" "Throw a penny down main street"	Jew	45%	10%	32%	5%	7%
	Christian	67%	7%	22%	4%	7%
"Why are Jewish synagogues round?" "So they can't hide in the corner when the collection box comes around"	Jew	48%	17%	34%	12%	10%
	Christian	63%	7%	13%	2%	7%
"What is a Jewish bird call?" "Cheap, cheap, cheap"	Jew	50%	20%	27%	10%	10%
	Christian	61%	9%	28%	4%	13%
"Why do Jewish men like to watch porno movies backward?" "They like the part where the hooker gives the money back"	Jew	55%	29%	32%	20%	10%
	Christian	63%	9%	33%	4%	9%
"Why did the ant fall off the toilet seat?" "Because he was pissed off"	Jew	0%	14%	60%	0%	0%
	Christian	2%	20%	61%	2%	2%
"What do you call a cow that's had a abortion?" "De-calf-i-nated"	Jew	29%	10%	36%	2%	2%
	Christian	26%	9%	26%	0%	2%
"What's the similarity between penises and fishes?" "You throw back the small one, you keep the medium ones, and you mount the large ones"	Jew	31%	21%	33%	2%	10%
	Christian	15%	28%	46%	7%	4%
"Why did the blond become a big basket ball fan?" "Because every time they stopped the clock, she though she stopped aging"	Jew	33%	4.8%	26%	0%	7%
	Christian	35%	0%	24%	0%	7%
"What happens to a frog's car when it breaks down?" "It gets toad away"	Jew	0%	24%	41%	0%	0%
	Christian	0%	11%	67%	0%	0%
Average for Jewish Jokes	Jew	52%	19%	28%	12%	9%
Average for Jewish Jokes	Christian	65%	8%	22%	4%	9%
Average for Neutral Jokes	Jew	19%	15%	39%	1%	4%
Average for Neutral Jokes	Christian	16%	14%	45%	2%	3%

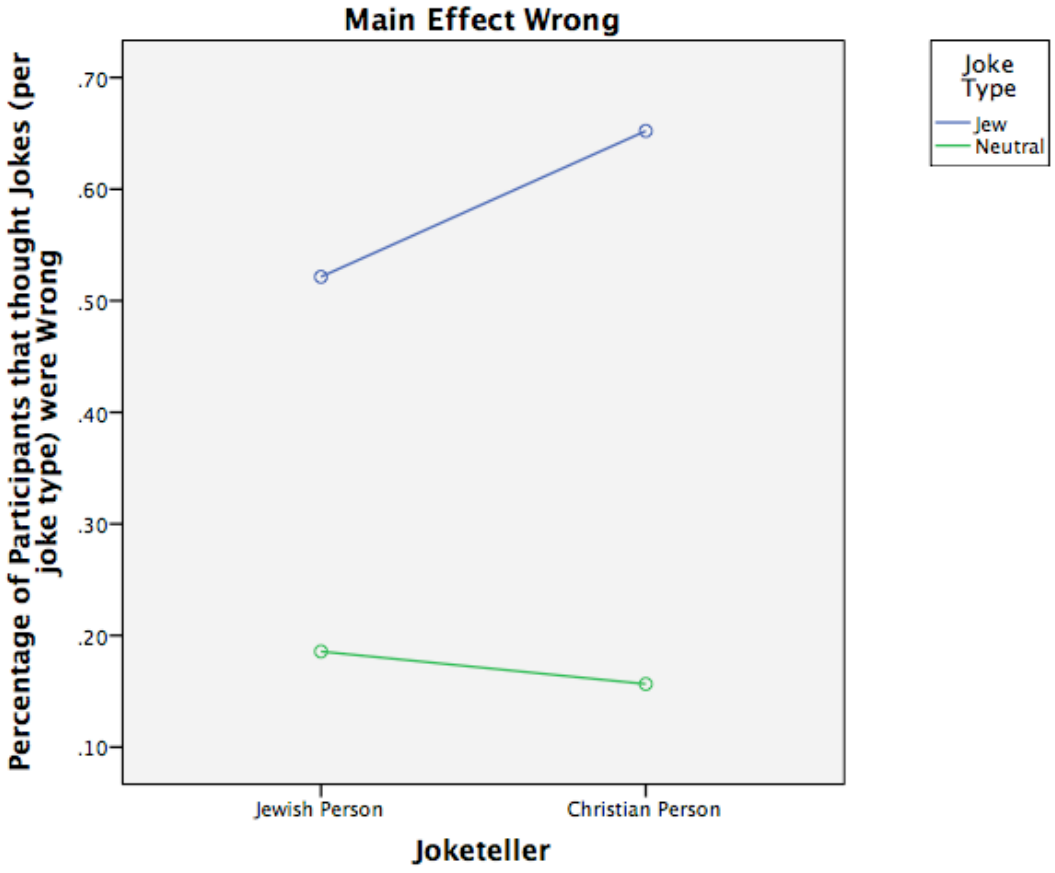

Figure 1. This figure displays the significant main effect for wrong $F(1,86) = 130.82$, $p<.05$

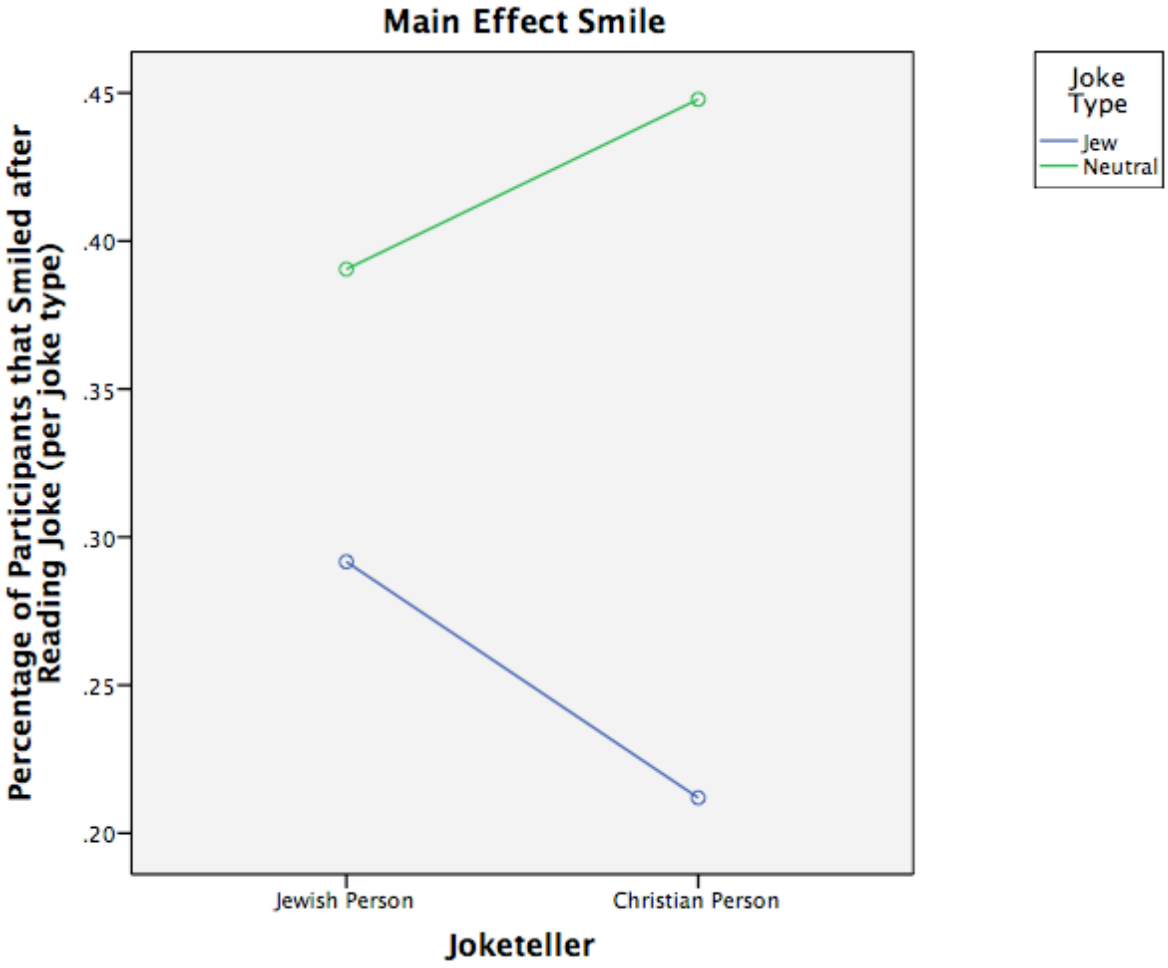

Figure 2. This figure displays the significant main effect for smile $F(1,86) = 25.07$, $p<.05$.

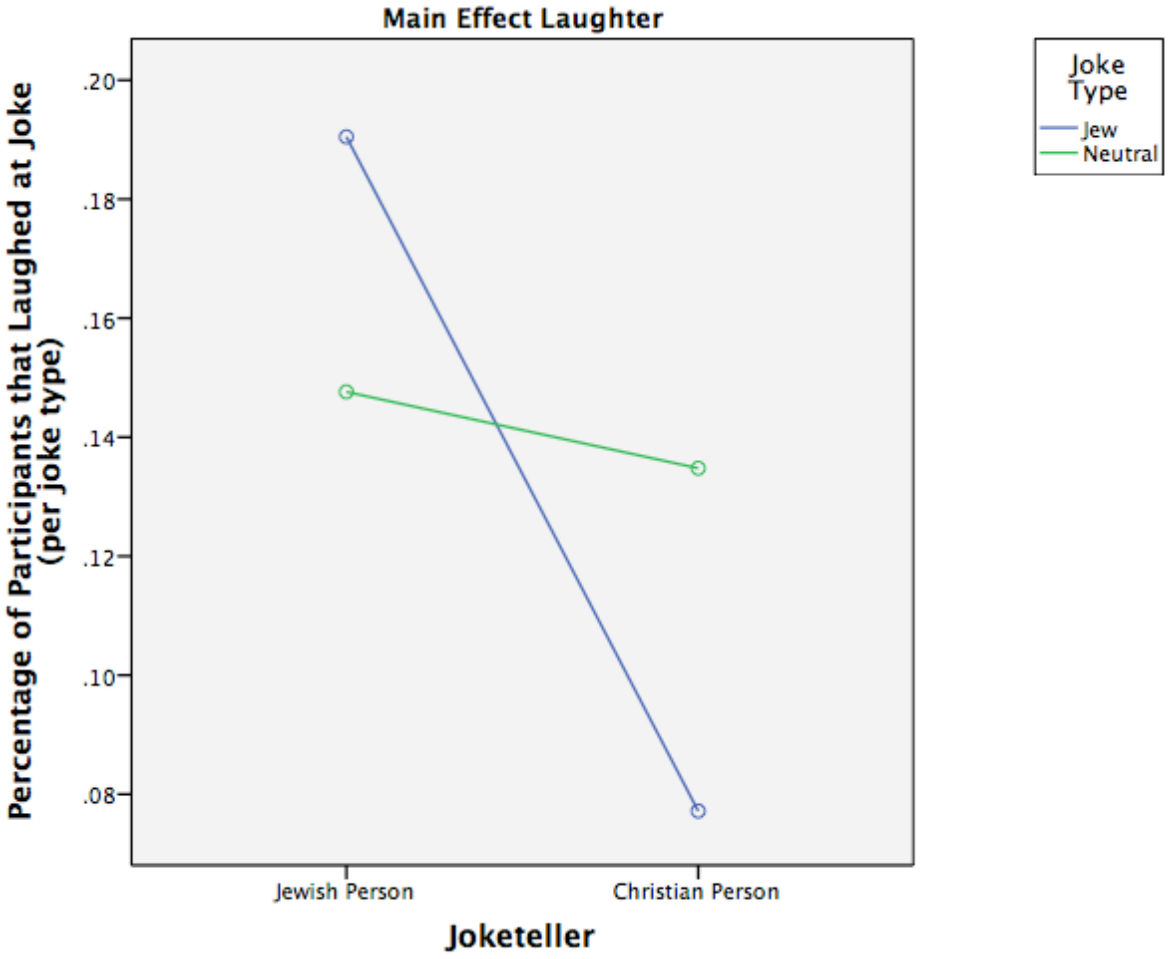

Figure 3. This figure displays the interaction for laughter between joke teller and joke condition $F(1,86) = 4.75$, $p<.05$.