

# Marketing Colloquia

## 2021 Spring

### **Rima Toure-Tillery**

*Associate Professor of Marketing*

Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management

**Thursday, February 18, 2021**

Zoom

12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

### **GOOD ON PAPER:**

#### **HOW THE DECISION CONTEXT INFLUENCES PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR**

*ABSTRACT:* Recognizing the importance of the medium through which an action is performed, prior research has compared the effects of using digital devices to using paper on reading, learning, and test-taking performances—with mixed results. The present research broadens these lines of inquiry to the domain of prosocial decisions. Seven studies show people are more likely to make prosocial decisions on paper than on a digital device (e.g., tablet) because they perceive choices on paper as more real (i.e., actual rather than imaginary or fictitious), and hence as more representative of who they are (i.e., more self-diagnostic). We first show people express more interest in donating (Study 1), are more likely to donate (Study 2), and put more effort into helping a charitable cause (Study 3) when these decisions occur on paper (vs. tablet)—a pattern of decision-making we label the “good-on-paper effect.” A large dataset of university alumni donors replicates these findings (Study 4). We then provide evidence for the sequential mediating roles of perceptions of realness and self-diagnosticity on this effect (Study 5a and 5b). Finally, we show dispositional levels of self-diagnosticity moderate the good-on-paper effect (Study 6), further demonstrating the underlying role of perceptions of self-diagnosticity.