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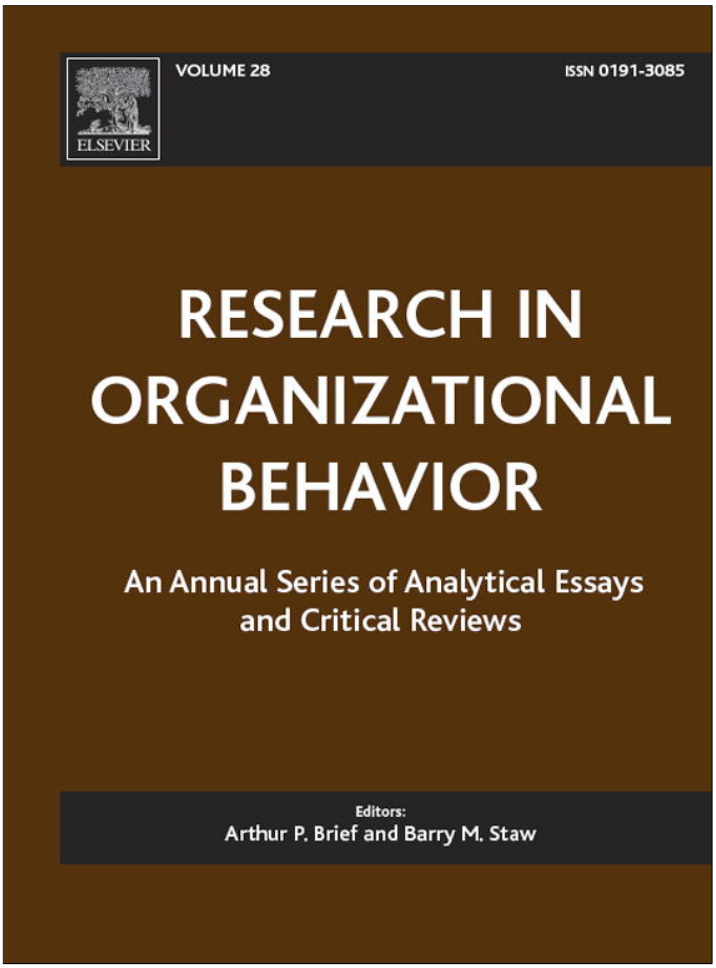

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Backlash effects for disconfirming gender stereotypes in organizations

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Abstract

Backlash effects are defined as social and economic reprisals for behaving counterstereotypically (Rudman, L. A. (1998). Self-promotion as a risk factor for women: The costs and benefits of counterstereotypical impression management. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74,* 629–645). The present chapter outlines an impression-management dilemma that women face and describes the literature on backlash effects in organizations. Because women are perceived to be less competent, ambitious, and competitive (i.e., less agentic) than men, they may be overlooked for leadership positions unless they present themselves as atypical women. However, the prescriptive nature of gender stereotypes can result in negative reactions to female agency and authority (i.e., backlash). This dilemma has serious consequences for gender parity, as it undermines women at every stage of their careers. It also has consequences for organizations, as it likely contributes to female managers' higher rates of job disaffection and turnover, relative to male counterparts. In addition to specifying the consequences of backlash for women and organizations, we consider potential moderators of backlash effects and the role that backlash plays in maintaining cultural stereotypes. Finally, we outline potential avenues for future research.
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Since the advent of the Women's Movement, women have made enormous strides toward equal opportunity in the workplace. At present, women now make up 46% of the U.S. workforce, and 36% of managers are female (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). Egalitarian norms and economic pressures (e.g., the need for families to have dual incomes) have radically altered attitudes toward working women (Spence, 1999). Moreover, legislative changes now prohibit sex discrimination and render workplace behaviors that have disparate impact on women (e.g., sexual harassment and hostile work environments) actionable. In recent years, women have begun to crack the glass ceiling and gain entry into the upper levels of organizational power (Stroh, Langlands, & Simpson, 2004).

Nonetheless, there are sobering indicators that gender inequities stubbornly persist (for reviews, see Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Lips, 2003). Within Fortune 500 companies, only 15.7% of all corporate officers and 1.4% of all CEOs are women (Catalyst, 2002). Within politics, women make up only 15% of congressional representatives, 14% of senators, and 16% of state governors (White House Project, 2006). Moreover, women earn 73 cents for every dollar earned by men (US Census Bureau, 2002). Women wait longer than men for managerial promotions (Maume, 1999), and the gender wage gap widens over career spans (Olson & Frieze, 1987). After tracking the advancement of over 30,000 managers, Lyness and Judiesch (1999) found that this disadvantage increases in higher-level positions, with women in upper levels of management receiving fewer promotions and salary increases than comparable men. Indeed, women in top paying jobs earn 68 cents for every dollar earned by comparable men (Catalyst, 1999). In addition, while the ratio of men to women in positions with salaries in the $25,000–35,000 range is roughly equal, the ratio at the highest salary bracket ($1 million or more) is around 13 men to every one woman (Sailer, Yao, & Rehula, 2002). Despite a dramatic increase of women in the workforce, there is little evidence that the economic gender gap is narrowing (Lips, 2003). The US General Accounting Office (2001) found that in 7 of the 10 industries investigated, the earnings gap between men and women widened between 1995 and 2000.

In this chapter, we describe an impression-management dilemma that women face which helps to explain why their economic advancement has been surprisingly slow (Valian, 1999). Specifically, we consider (a) the need for women to disconfirm female stereotypes in order to be perceived as competent leaders and (b) how negative reactions (i.e., backlash effects; Rudman, 1998) towards ambitious and capable women present a difficult barrier for women in performance settings. The picture that emerges depicts a catch-22 for women, such that they may be damned if they disconfirm feminine stereotypes and damned if they do not. Although men also suffer backlash for disconfirming masculine stereotypes, they are not required to do so in order to advance their careers. Thus, penalties for stereotype disconfirmation are more problematic for women than men.

We begin our chapter by positing that gender stereotypes act as normative expectancies that contain both descriptive and prescriptive elements. When actors violate gender prescriptions, they can suffer reprisals that undermine their social influence and financial health. We then delineate the impression-management dilemma that women face, and describe the literature on backlash effects for both genders. In particular, we outline how backlash can undermine women at every stage of their career, from hiring to salary negotiations to promotion considerations. Subsequently, we consider potential moderators of backlash effects and the role that backlash plays in maintaining cultural stereotypes. Finally, we outline potential avenues for future research.

1. Stereotypes as normative expectancies

Stereotypes have been defined as "cognitive structures that contain the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and *expectancies* about some human group" (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986, p. 133, italics added). As a powerful source of

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social influence, expectancies have long been a topic of study for social psychologists (for reviews, see Hamilton & Sherman, 1994; Hamilton, Sherman, & Ruvolo, 1990). They are known to bias social interactions through numerous mechanisms, including perceptual and behavioral confirmation processes (Merton, 1948; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978; Snyder, 1984; Snyder & Haugen, 1994; Snyder & Swann, 1978). Similarly, the biasing effects of stereotypes have been amply documented (for reviews, see Fiske, 1998; Kunda & Spencer, 2003; Wheeler & Petty, 2001). Like expectancies, stereotypes act as working models (Bartlett, 1932) or heuristics (Bodenhausen, 1993; Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989) regarding what to expect during social interactions. Whether or not stereotypes are accurate has been a point of some debate in the literature (e.g., Judd & Park, 1993; Jussim, 1991), but there is no debate that they are consensually held beliefs, and thus act as normative expectancies for group members' attributes and behaviors.

1.1. Gender stereotypes

Research on gender stereotypes generally shows that women are perceived to be more communal (e.g., caring and interdependent) than men, whereas men are perceived to be more agentic (e.g., ambitious and self-reliant), compared with women (Basow, 1986; Williams & Best, 1990). These stereotypes are thought to stem from traditional gender roles (domestic for women, bread-winning for men; Eagly, 1987). The expectation that women would perform wifely and maternal duties, whereas men would compete in the workplace, led to differences in gender socialization that encouraged men and women to behave like "the opposite sex." Although it is no longer true that professions are a "man's world" whereas "a woman's place is in the home," gender stereotypes remain extremely powerful because (a) they are evoked by highly visible, biological characteristics and (b) they are based on selective information and myth acquired throughout people's lives (Fiske & Stevens, 1993; Medin, 1989; Prentice & Miller, 2006; Spence, 1993). In addition, as discussed below, they may be more influential than other stereotypes because of their heavily prescriptive nature.

1.2. Prescriptive versus descriptive stereotypes

Because gender stereotypes define desirable traits, behaviors, and roles for men and women, they serve as a class of expectancies that contain both descriptive and prescriptive elements (Fiske & Stevens, 1993). In addition to a descriptive component reflecting how men and women are typically perceived, gender stereotypes also contain a strong prescriptive component which reflects how men and women "should be" and importantly, how they "should not be" (Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Fiske & Stevens, 1993; Gill, 2004; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Indeed, prescriptive and descriptive stereotypes tend to overlap, with the communal qualities viewed as typical of women seen as ideal for women (but proscribed for men) and the agentic qualities viewed as typical of men seen as ideal for men (but proscribed for women).

If gender-role based expectancies largely account for gender stereotypes (Eagly, 1987), we might expect them to fade away (or at least, lessen their grip) now that women have moved into the workplace in numbers commensurate with men. Recent research has examined the effect of women's occupying more agentic roles on gender stereotypes. The evidence suggests that while descriptive beliefs may be changing to reflect the more agentic roles women now possess, prescriptive beliefs have remained static (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Spence & Buckner, 2000). For example, when developing the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), Bem (1974) assessed the 20 traits deemed most desirable for women and men, thus providing a measure of the content of prescriptive gender stereotypes. Although constructed over three decades ago, recent investigations of the BSRI have shown that the same traits deemed most desirable for women in the 1970s continue to be viewed as most desirable for women today (Auster & Ohm, 2000; Harris, 1994; Holt & Ellis, 1998). Prentice and Carranza (2002) provide further evidence for the persistence of traditional gender prescriptions, despite changes in descriptive gender stereotype content. In particular, although traits pertaining to competence (e.g., intelligent, rational, and worldly) were rated as equally typical for men and women (descriptive stereotype), they were rated as less desirable for women than men (prescriptive stereotype). Thus, even when descriptive stereotypes are in flux, traditional gender prescriptions remain intact. Moreover, many traits required for leadership (leadership ability, self-reliant, assertive, competitive, strong personality, forceful, and persuasive) were rated as both less desirable and less typical for women, compared with men. Finally, Gill (2004) found that while individuating information can successfully undercut bias due to descriptive stereotyping, people who possess strong gender stereotype prescriptions are still likely to show bias against female job applicants even when

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descriptive stereotypes have successfully been thwarted. Thus, despite dramatic changes in women's career opportunities and work roles, perceptions that women *should* differ from men in ways that negatively reflect on their ability to perform high-powered jobs persist as a barrier to gender equity.

2. Women's impression-management dilemma

Historically, women have been perceived to be less competent and competitive than men (e.g., Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, & Vogel, 1972). Moreover, the attributes that characterize successful managers (e.g., assertive and decisive) are stereotypically male (not female) qualities, resulting in a ''lack of fit'' between female gender and leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 1983; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Therefore, when women compete against men (e.g., for employment) it may be incumbent upon them to manage an atypical impression or risk losing to rivals who will be deemed better qualified (Glick, Zion, & Nelson, 1988). This situation is due to perceptions that women are less agentic than men, and therefore not suited for prestigious, male-dominated occupations (Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Eagly, 1987; Glick, Wilk, & Perreault, 1995; Heilman, 1983). Consequently, in order for women to break the glass ceiling, it seemed obvious to gender researchers that they would have to actively disconfirm the female gender stereotype by acting ''more like men'' (Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). Research confirmed this, showing that only when women were described as *successful* managers were they viewed as equally competent as identically described men (Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995; see also Dodge, Gilroy, & Fenzel, 1995). Indeed, unless she provides strong, counterstereotypical information, a female candidate for a masculine-typed occupation is likely to be judged as less suitable than a man (Glick et al., 1988).

These findings are consistent with impression formation models, which emphasize the need for clear, unambiguous information about a person's counterstereotypical attributes in order to undermine stereotypes (e.g., Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). From this perspective, to impede the influence of gender stereotypes in the workplace, women need only to present themselves as competent, independent, and assertive (i.e., as possessing the requisite agentic qualities necessary for leadership). Although research supports the notion that clear evidence of a woman's agency counteracts gender-stereotypical inferences (Dodge et al., 1995; Glick et al., 1988; Heilman et al., 1995), unintended negative consequences of stereotype disconfirmation have subsequently been revealed.

2.1. Backlash effects for disconfirming gender stereotypes

Given the prescriptive component of gender stereotypes, it is not surprising that actors who violate gender stereotypes are likely to elicit negative reactions (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976; Cherry & Deaux, 1978; Costrich, Feinstein, Kidder, Maracek, & Pascale, 1975; Derlega & Chaiken, 1976). Although men are also subject to gender-role constraints, the prescriptions of the feminine stereotype are especially problematic for women in the workplace. As noted in Eagly's role incongruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), men's social roles overlap with the roles required in organizational leadership, but women's roles do not. As with the violation of any social norm (Cialdini & Trost, 1998), women who transgress prescriptive norms by enacting agency, even if it is to succeed in a traditionally masculine domain, may elicit negative reactions.

In fact, evidence now abounds that female agency can result in backlash effects, defined as social and economic repercussions for disconfirming prescriptive stereotypes (Rudman, 1998; see also Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Although women must present themselves as self-confident, assertive, and competitive to be viewed as qualified for leadership roles, when they do so, they risk social and economic reprisals. Specifically, agentic women are rated as highly competent and capable of leadership, but they are also viewed as socially deficient and unlikable by both male and female perceivers (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). For example, successful female managers are perceived to be more hostile, selfish, devious and quarrelsome, compared with male counterparts (Heilman et al., 1995). This type of bias is evident in the epithets often applied to powerful women, such as ''dragon lady,'' ''battleaxe'' and ''iron maiden'' (Kanter, 1977; Tannen, 1994). As Fiske and Stevens (1993) elucidate:

> Women are [in] a double bind. Do they behave in a way that meets the sex stereotypic prescriptive demands to be feminine? Or, do they act competently and aggressively in order to fill job-specific demands? If they work to fill the job-specific demands they run the risk of being evaluated negatively for displaying behavior antithetical to

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> the stereotypic expectation for women. On the other hand, if they fill the gender-prescriptive demands they run the risk of being viewed as incapable of having a successful career. Interestingly, both of these scenarios could result in sexual discrimination. In one case, discrimination would result from not behaving like a woman should, and, in the other case, from behaving too much like a woman (p. 181.)

In other words, ambitious women may have to choose between being liked but not respected (by displaying communal qualities) or being respected but not liked (by displaying agentic qualities), a dilemma not faced by men. As reviewed below, evidence of backlash effects exists at every stage of employment, from hiring and salary negotiations to promotion and leadership evaluations.

2.2. Backlash effects on hiring

To obtain a leadership position, applicants need to project a confident image to would-be employers by engaging in self-promotion (e.g., highlighting past accomplishments and emphasizing one's skills). Self-promotion during job interviews is important for both genders, but it matters especially for women, who face a double standard (Rudman, 1998). In order to counteract stereotypical expectations of female subordination and incompetence, women must present themselves as confident and capable. However, in a series of experiments, Rudman (1998) showed that while self-promotion is necessary for high competence ratings, it decreases women's likeability ratings and consequently, their likelihood of being hired (see also Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). By contrast, self-promoting men were viewed as highly competent, likable, and hirable, suggesting that only women face normative pressures to be modest (Daubman, Heatherington, & Ahn, 1992; Gould & Slone, 1982; Heatherington et al., 1993). It is noteworthy that results were similar whether self-promoting men and women used the same or different scripts, and whether live or videotaped applicants were employed (Rudman, 1998). Similarly, Buttner and McEnally (1996) found that women who used a direct and assertive strategy when applying for a job were less likely to be recommended for it than men who used the same strategy. Thus, agentic women (but not men) may pay a price for behaviors that are necessary to embark on a successful career.

In the recent past, corporations have begun to recognize the value of an inclusive, participatory approach to leadership (Offermann & Gowing, 1990; Peters, 1988; Rosener, 1990). The trend towards "feminization" of management, with corporations increasingly valuing interpersonal skills, would seem to be a positive development for women. By softening the traits required of managerial positions, the discrepancy between female stereotypes and requisite job characteristics is somewhat ameliorated. However, when communal qualities are required for the job, hiring discrimination against agentic women may be especially likely (Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Essentially, agentic women (but not men) are viewed as insufficiently feminine for the position. Although agentic men are not seen as particularly nice (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989), they are judged less harshly on interpersonal skills than agentic women are (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Because agentic men do not violate prescriptions for communality, they are viewed as more likable than identically described women, and thus, are more likely to be hired for a management position, even when it is feminized (Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). In support of this interpretation, negative evaluations of agentic women were predicted by evaluators' implicit gender stereotype beliefs, such that people who more strongly associated female gender with communality and male gender with agency also rated an agentic female applicant as socially unattractive (Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Finally, it should be noted that feminization trends in management are largely consigned to lower and mid-level management positions, in which communal skills such as fostering cooperation and motivating subordinates are deemed important, in addition to competence. However, in top executive positions (Martell, Parker, Emrich, & Crawford, 1998), and high-powered arenas such as politics (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993) and the military (Boyce & Herd, 2003), the emphasis is solely on agentic qualities, such as ruthlessness, competitiveness, and decisiveness. Thus, the perceived incongruity between female stereotypes and leadership qualities still hinders women's ability to ascend to the upper echelons of power. As a result, women's impression-management dilemma is particularly problematic for success in occupations that carry the highest economic and social rewards.

2.3. Backlash effects on salary negotiations

Even when women are hired, the risk of sanctions for agency can put women at a serious financial disadvantage. Although assertiveness is necessary for success in the business world, it is viewed negatively in women (Costrich et al.,

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1975; Crawford, 1988; Powers & Zuroff, 1988), even when it involves self-defense (Branscombe, Crosby, & Weir, 1993). This constraint on women's behavior can have serious economic effects during salary negotiations (Janoff-Bulman & Wade, 1996). For example, even when controlling for other factors that may influence salary negotiations, female MBAs routinely accept lower salary offers than male MBAs (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005; Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993), especially when the appropriate salary range is unclear (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005). In a study of professional school graduates, only 7% of female graduates attempted to negotiate their initial salary offers (as compared to 57% of male graduates; Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

Women's unwillingness to negotiate for more compensation is likely explained by differential treatment of male and female negotiators. Bowles, Babcock, and Lai (2005) found that male evaluators were more inclined to work with "nice" women who accepted their compensation offers, compared with women who attempted to negotiate for more money; by contrast, negotiating for a higher salary had no effect on men's willingness to work with male candidates. These findings suggest that women "do not ask" (e.g., for higher pay, more responsibility, or greater recognition; Babcock & Laschever, 2003) because they (correctly) fear negative reactions from others.

2.4. Backlash effects on promotion

Whereas women traditionally encounter a "glass ceiling" (an invisible barrier preventing career advancement), men are more likely to ride a "glass escalator" that accelerates them into management positions (Maume, 1999; Williams, 1992). Research investigating promotion opportunities suggests that sanctions for female agency can play a role in this discrepancy. The classic example is Ann Hopkins, a successful accountant who was denied promotion to partnership in her firm for being too masculine. Her evaluators suggested she needed a course in charm school, where she might learn to speak and dress more femininely, even though masculine qualities were necessary for her job (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991). In other words, violating feminine niceness prescriptions can result in poor performance evaluations and adversely affect promotion considerations (Heilman, 2001; Lyness & Judiesch, 1999). In a series of experiments, agentic women vying for the role of vice president were viewed as interpersonally hostile (e.g., abrasive, pushy, and manipulative); as a result, they were not recommended for the higher paying, prestigious position (Heilman et al., 2004). Computer simulation studies have shown that even small amounts of gender bias can have cumulative effects on female representation in high-power positions. For example, one simulation found that even if only 5% of variance in promotion decisions is due to negative attitudes towards women, when women and men are equally represented at the entry level, the proportion of women at seven levels further up in the organization (i.e., more prestigious positions) would be reduced to 29% (Martell, Lane, & Emrich, 1996).

Once a woman breaks through the glass ceiling, her career trajectory is likely to differ from male counterparts in substantial ways. Compared with men, women promoted to senior management have less authority, less opportunity for advancement, and receive fewer tangible rewards (Jacobs, 1992; Lyness & Thompson, 1997). This is likely because they tend to obtain positions that involve dealing with other staff (e.g., human resource management) rather than with production (Frankforter, 1996), suggesting that communality stereotypes prevent women from obtaining the core business positions that are associated with career advancement and the highest economic and social rewards.

Even when women reach the top executive level, the type of company they are appointed to lead may handicap them. Using archival data from FTSE 100 companies in Great Britian, Ryan and Haslam (2005) found that women were more likely than men to be hired as CEOs when organizations were in financial crisis (e.g., when the company's stock had consistently fallen in the months prior to appointment). By contrast, men were more likely than women to step into leadership roles when companies were economically robust. Because this phenomenon places female leaders at increased risk for failure and criticism, the authors termed this form of bias the "glass cliff." Although the precise causes of the glass cliff remain to be investigated, one possibility is that people are more willing to risk the reputations of female, as compared with male, business leaders—a form of backlash. But even if women are hired to manage organizational units in crisis for putatively positive reasons (e.g., because these positions require communal traits such as fostering morale and teamwork), the cumulative effect on opportunities for female leaders is likely to be negative.

2.5. Backlash effects on leadership evaluations

Once a woman navigates the double standard for agency to obtain a high-powered job, she may continue to pay a price for stereotype disconfirmation, even though it may be required for career success (Eagly et al., 1992; McIlwee &

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Robinson, 1992). Women are expected to be nice, and when their leadership behavior deviates from this expectation, their evaluations suffer. For example, business students evaluated female managers who led in a stereotypically feminine style positively, but those who led in a stereotypically masculine style were rated more negatively then men (Bartol & Butterfield, 1976). In a meta-analysis, Eagly et al. (1992) found a small overall tendency for male leaders to receive more positive evaluations than female leaders; however, when women led in a stereotypically masculine style, this gender difference was exacerbated. Further, they found that only women were penalized for leading in a stereotype inconsistent fashion (i.e., men who led in a stereotypically feminine style did not receive correspondingly low evaluations). An additional meta-analysis showed that stereotype inconsistency influenced effectiveness; the more female supervisors strayed from stereotypically feminine leadership styles (e.g., by leading autocratically), the less effective they were as leaders (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995).

Women leaders are also evaluated more negatively than male leaders when they use intimidation strategies as a method of accomplishing goals (Bolino & Turnley, 2003), or when they deliver discipline (Atwater, Carey, & Waldman, 2001; Brett, Atwater, & Waldman, 2005). Further, Sinclair and Kunda (2000) found that after receiving negative feedback from a female instructor, participants viewed her as less competent than when she administered praise, whereas male instructors were free to criticize without penalty. These findings are consistent with considerable research demonstrating that women have less latitude in their communication style, compared with men (Carli, 1990, 2001; Carli, LaFleur, & Loeber, 1995). As Tannen (1990) notes: ''Women in authority find themselves in a double bind. If they speak in ways expected of women, they are seen as inadequate leaders. If they speak in ways expected of leaders, they are seen as inadequate women. The road to authority is tough for women, and once they get there it's a bed of thorns'' (p. 244).

2.6. Backlash effects on the job

Even when not directly affecting promotion considerations, backlash on the job from co-workers can negatively impact women's work experiences. As Heim (1990) noted, female coworkers and subordinates often react negatively to other women's successes. Female nurses are often reluctant to follow the orders of female doctors, thereby undermining their authority (Heim, 1990). Ely (1994) showed that female subordinates in male-dominated law firms had generally negative attitudes toward the female partners in the firm. They criticized the female partners for acting like men, rated them as having unpleasant personalities, and viewed their authority as illegitimate (despite high competence ratings). Only when women comprised at least 15% of the firm's partners did these effects disappear. Because most positions of power are male-dominated, these findings indicate that even when women successfully obtain leadership roles, they still have the negative attitudes of coworkers to contend with. Therefore, it is not surprising that women often perceive their work environments to be socially exclusive and difficult to navigate (Catalyst, 2001; Martin & Meyerson, 1988; Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998; Pfeffer, 1989).

Women who violate prescriptive stereotype norms not only face economic sanctions, as described above, but may also be more likely to have their opportunities for future success sabotaged. In a laboratory investigation, people tended to undermine the ability of female deviants to compete for financial rewards (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Specifically, participants who lost either a masculine or feminine knowledge contest to a woman subsequently were allowed to program a computer task that she needed to succeed at in order to win a cash prize. They could either program the task to be helpful (by providing effective clues to help answer the questions) or they could sabotage her success (by providing clues that were unhelpful and distracting). As expected, participants chose less helpful clues for the deviant women, as compared to the normative woman. Follow-up measures ensured that participants realized that, by their actions, they were likely to either help or hinder the woman's financial success (e.g., they rated her as less likely to win the prize if they had engaged in sabotage).

Although backlash research has focused primarily on reactions to women who enact agency, recent work suggests that women who do not enact communality also suffer reprisals. Heilman and Chen (2005) showed that (non-required) helping on the job (termed organizational citizenship behavior) was evaluated differently for men and women. Being helpful is central to the communal female stereotype. Therefore, when women do not engage in helping behaviors, they are viewed less favorably than identically behaving men. Furthermore, when they do behave altruistically, it is less noted and applauded than when men behave altruistically (see also Kidder & Parks, 2001). In a survey of employees from a variety of work settings, Allen (2006) found that individuals who reported engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors also reported receiving more promotions, but that gender moderated this

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relationship. Specifically, while non-required helping was associated with promotion for men, this relationship was much weaker for female employees. Taken together, these findings indicate that helping behavior is less ''optional'' for women, with women benefiting less from helping and being penalized more for not helping than men. The likely result is that women will be expected to engage in more service-oriented activities, but will be less likely to be noticed and rewarded than men (see Allen & Rush, 2001).

2.7. Emotional and implicit reactions to agentic women

Research has also demonstrated negative responses to agentic women using less controlled indicators, including emotional responses (Butler & Geis, 1990; Carranza, 2004; Koch, 2005) and implicit attitudes (e.g., Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). For example, using facial EMG, Carranza (2004) found that women were likely to frown in response to self-promoting women, whereas men were likely to smile at them derisively. Being laughed at or frowned upon reflects severe social punishment, and is likely to curb women's ability to speak in a confident, assertive manner. Butler and Geis (1990) and Koch (2005) examined nonverbal reactions towards female leaders, including facial display and body language. In both the initial study (Butler & Geis, 1990) and replications in the lab and field (Koch, 2005), results indicated that negative affect was displayed more frequently to female leaders than male leaders.

In addition to negative emotional reactions, female leaders may elicit more negative implicit attitudes (Carpenter & Banaji, 1998; Richeson & Ambady, 2001; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). For example, Richeson and Ambady (2001) found that men showed negative implicit attitudes toward women when they anticipated working with a female superior. By contrast, men showed positive implicit attitudes toward women when they anticipated a superior role, or an equal status interaction. In addition, Rudman and Kilianski (2000) found more negative implicit attitudes toward female than male authority figures (e.g., doctors and professors), particularly on the part of respondents who automatically associated male gender with high status roles (e.g., leader, boss) and female gender with low status roles (e.g., subordinate, helper). These results suggest that deeply ingrained beliefs about gendered status hierarchies can contribute to spontaneously negative reactions to female leaders.

2.8. Consequences of backlash for gender parity

Thus far, we have shown how violating prescriptive stereotypes can negatively impact women's financial health by influencing their ability to obtain employment, fair compensation, career promotions, and positive performance evaluations. They can also create workplace environments that are hostile to female leaders. Because backlash effects are common, it is not surprising that women are aware of penalties for stepping outside gender bounds (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). As a result, women are less willing and able to ask for and receive promotions (Wade, 2001). Although women are encouraged to advocate on behalf of others, they are socialized to believe that self-advocacy is not appropriately feminine (Bowles, Babcock, & Lai 2005; Janoff-Bulman & Wade, 1996; Wade, 2001). The threat of backlash effects may help to explain why women are less likely to negotiate equitable salaries (Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005) and why they wait longer than men for managerial promotions (Maume, 1999).

The cumulative effects of sanctions for female agency are likely to have far-reaching effects on women's ability to achieve the highest levels of leadership. Moreover, they can undermine individual women's job satisfaction and career trajectories. In their study of senior executives, Lyness and Thompson (1997) found that women's satisfaction with their positions was significantly lower than that of men; the authors concluded that subtle forms of bias were responsible for this disaffection. In a study of Fortune 500 companies, more women than men left their management positions over a 2-year period (Stroh, Brett, & Reilly, 1996). The reasons women absconded did not involve family issues; instead, women were dissatisfied with their role in the company. Because the type of labor female managers are expected to perform often involves stress from interpersonal conflict (i.e., dealing with personnel), researchers have pointed to the costs of emotional labor as a factor in female management turnover (Guy & Newman, 2004; Pugliesi, 1999). The overall picture suggests that backlash effects prevent masterful women from taking on leadership roles that would bring them more tangible and psychological rewards, and consign them to the ''women's world'' of personnel management, which is fraught with emotional stress and economic paucity. Not surprisingly, women become disaffected with these roles and abdicate them, exacting an economic loss for organizations.

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2.9. Backlash effects for men

Because of its consequences for gender parity, we have focused on negative reactions to agentic women. However, counterstereotypical men also risk backlash effects. For example, compared with agentic counterparts, communal male applicants are rated as less competent and hireable for managerial roles (Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Men who simply show proficiency in feminine domains may be sabotaged by their peers, and thereby prevented from earning financial rewards (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). These findings are consistent with earlier research showing that men who violate gender stereotypes are likely to experience backlash (Cherry & Deaux, 1978; Costrich et al., 1975; Derlega & Chaiken, 1976). For example, a man described as being at the top of his nursing class was perceived to be at risk for future victimization (Cherry & Deaux, 1978). Further, when a man was described as having disclosed an emotional problem to a stranger, he was rated as more psychologically disturbed than a self-disclosing woman (Derlega & Chaiken, 1976).

Turning to the developmental literature, cross-sexed behavior in boys is judged more negatively than is cross-sexed behavior in girls (Cahill & Adams, 1997; Martin, 1990; Sandnabba & Ahlberg, 1999), with the result that more boys than girls are diagnosed with gender identity disorders (Zucker, Bradley, & Sanikhani, 1997). Thus, backlash can be more severe for boys than for girls, likely because parents and teachers fear that cross-sexed behavior signals latent homosexuality (Kite & Deaux, 1987). This fear may pertain more to boys, given that girls can be ''tomboys'' without raising doubts about their sexuality. By contrast, the social psychological literature (and this chapter) has primarily focused on backlash for agentic behavior in women because of its implications for the glass ceiling.

3. Role congruity theory of prejudice

We have described how women must overcome negative stereotypes about their competence and leadership ability in order to obtain positions of power, but risk being perceived as unlikable and insufficiently ''feminine'' when they do so. Eagly and Karau (2002) combined these two barriers to gender parity in their role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. The model consists of two types of prejudice. First, descriptive stereotypes lead evaluators to perceive that men are better suited to leadership positions than women. This type of prejudice stems from the ''lack of fit'' between female attributes and requisite leadership attributes, and prevents equal access to leadership opportunities for women—a consequence of descriptive stereotyping. At the same time, prescriptive stereotypes cause more negative reactions to female, as opposed to male, authority. This type of prejudice is illustrated by backlash toward ''masterful'' women and is particularly intractable. Thus, even when a woman manages to overcome the first type of sexism (e.g., by ''acting like a man''), she still faces the second type. As a result, it is not surprising that women remain disadvantaged with respect to positions of status and power.

The treatment of powerful women by the media is an example of the second type of prejudice in Eagly and Karau's (2002) theory. For example, when Margaret Thatcher was Britain's Prime Minister, journalists referred to her as ''Attila the Hen'' and ''Her Malignancy.'' Similarly, when Hillary Rodham Clinton began to exert power within her husband's administration (e.g., by proposing a plan for universal health coverage), American journalists were disdainful. The cover of *Spy* magazine went so far as to depict her with her skirt blown up, a la Marilyn Monroe—but in this case, to reveal a large penis. Attacks on powerful women often target their sexual attractiveness while casting them as destroyers of male virility (e.g., ''iron maiden,'' ''ice queen,'' ''ball-breaker'' and ''castrating bitch''). Such epithets signal the extent to which powerful women violate gender prescriptions for women to be subservient to men across the board—economically, politically, and sexually. Because people's notions of power and gender are so intertwined as to be inseparable, powerful women incite discomfort and derision. When people behave ''out of role'' (Goffman, 1959) they are punished.

It is important to note that *role* incongruity for female leaders in fact represents a *status* incongruity between their powerful role and their second-class sex. Sociologists distinguish between status based on achievement (earning your way to the top) and ascribed status based on personal characteristics (e.g., sex, race, and age; Berger, Webster, Ridgeway, & Rosenholtz, 1986). Women automatically possess lower status than men (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000)—so much so, that when they enter an occupation, the status of the occupation can drop significantly (Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Touhey, 1974). Thus, a powerful woman makes people uncomfortable because of the discordance between her *ascribed* status as a woman and her *achieved* status as a leader (Lips, 1991). This incongruity jeopardizes pre-existing rules for gender roles, forcing people to do more mental work to reconcile the perceived contradiction. In the absence

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of clear rules, people may feel awkward during social interactions, and not know how to behave (e.g., ''Is it okay to call her by her first name?''). Moreover, when a woman achieves more standing than her sex would typically allow, men may resent her as a threat to their own position in the status hierarchy.

Recent research on emotional displays supports the notion that backlash effects may stem from differences between women's ascribed and achieved status. Although women are perceived to be more ''emotional'' than men, pride and anger are stereotypically masculine emotions (Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000) that convey high status when men display them (Tiedens, 2001). If anger signals that the person feels entitled to dominate, it may backfire on women. Using videotaped job applicants, Brescoll and Uhlmann (2008) manipulated anger by having candidates describe a botched work situation as having made them feel either angry, sad, or no emotion. Status was measured as evaluators' ratings of how much status, power, and independence applicants deserved in their future job, as well as hiring and salary recommendations. In three studies, they found that an ''angry'' woman was rated as lower in status on all indicators compared with an angry man (who received the highest status ratings), a sad man, a sad woman, and no-emotion control candidates. Perceptions that an angry woman had ''lost control of herself'' accounted for her unfavorable ratings, suggesting that when women are angry they are viewed as ''hysterical harpies.'' Real world examples are not hard to find. For example, Senator Clinton was dubbed ''too angry'' to be president when she harshly criticized the Bush administration's foreign policy (Nagourney, 2006), causing feminists to note that the attack ''handcuffs Hillary: If she doesn't speak out strongly against President Bush, she's timid and girlie. If she does, she's a witch and a shrew'' (Dowd, 2006, p. A 21). Brescoll and Uhlmann's results support this analysis and further suggest that backlash for anger applies to professional women in general. Because they found that anger increased male applicants' status (see also Tiedens, 2001), it appears that women face yet another double standard that can block their ability to advance their career.

4. Potential moderators of backlash effects

The research evidence clearly points to negative consequences for female agency, but there are also several moderator variables to consider. Below, we consider characteristics of the target, the organization, and evaluators as factors that have the potential to alleviate or exacerbate backlash effects.

4.1. Target characteristics

If women who display masculine characteristics suffer backlash because they violate feminine prescriptions to ''be nice,'' it seemed likely that displays of femininity would offer a way out of women's dilemma. In fact, women who temper their agentic qualities with a display of communal warmth can convey their competence and be influential with a much lower risk of backlash, as compared with women who solely display agentic traits (e.g., Carli, 2001; Carli et al., 1995; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Heilman and Okimoto (2007) found that when successful women managers were also described as communal they were rated as far more likeable than successful women managers for whom no communal information was provided. This is also consistent with the finding that female leaders who lead in an inclusive, democratic style were less likely to receive negative evaluations than women who led in a task-oriented or autocratic style (Eagly et al., 1992). Further, it seems that women are aware of this and tend to lead in more androgynous styles (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Although displaying communal qualities in addition to displaying competence may be an effective method of alleviating backlash, it is not an ideal solution as it presents an additional burden for female leaders. Men do not suffer repercussions for assertive behavior; therefore they have more freedom to lead without the risk of sanctions.

In addition, softening agency may carry a personal, emotional cost for women. Simpson and Stroh (2004) surveyed human resource managers (a role which women disproportionately occupy) to examine sex differences in emotion displays. Not surprisingly, women generally reported simulating positive emotions and repressing negative emotions (conforming to feminine display rules), whereas men generally reported simulating negative (and repressing positive) emotions to conform to masculine display rules. For both genders, feminine emotion displays negatively correlated with feeling personally authentic at work (see also Hochschild, 1983). By contrast, women who adopted masculine emotion displays reported feeling the most authentic of all. As a result, softening agency might place women at risk for feeling disingenuous. However, the personal benefits of a masculine emotion display may be offset by a greater risk of backlash for professional women, at least where anger is concerned (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008).

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Self-monitoring is another means by which women might overcome backlash. Self-monitoring refers to people's ability to effectively calibrate their behavior in accord with situational demands (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). High self-monitors are sensitive to other people's negative expectancies about them, and tend to behave in ways that thwart these (Snyder & Copeland, 1989). In accord with this principle, Flynn and Ames (2006) found that high self-monitoring women were able to effectively thwart gender-stereotypical expectations when performing a task in a mixed-sex group. Specifically, such women were judged as more influential than low self-monitoring women (e.g., they were perceived to have contributed more to the group's decisions and outcomes). They also performed better during dyadic negotiations because they matched their behavior to their partners' (e.g., they were more assertive when their partner was assertive), which led to more success. However, because approval and liking ratings were not assessed, it remains to be seen whether self-monitoring behaviors can help women avoid backlash; it does appear to improve their performance and evaluators' impressions of it.

Does a woman's status in the organization moderate backlash? The majority of the research has centered on reactions to female supervisors (Eagly et al., 1992; Eagly et al., 1995) or women vying for leadership roles (e.g., Heilman et al., 2004; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001) because these situations imply the two-pronged barrier that women must overcome to obtain prestigious positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Given that displays of agency might be viewed as illegitimate for people of low authority or expertise (French & Raven, 1959), one might expect a low-status woman to suffer more backlash than a high-status woman. To date, the only test of status differences revealed no differences for a woman described as a trainee versus a CEO—both suffered backlash when they displayed anger (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). It may be that anger proscriptions for women are sufficiently powerful to swamp the predicted status effect (Plant et al., 2000).

4.2. Organizational characteristics

Another potential moderating factor concerns attributes of the organization, including the sex composition of its hierarchy. For example, when women occupy at least 15% of an organization's leadership roles, perceptions of illegitimacy are reduced (Ely, 1994). As a general rule, work roles are more segregated and sex stereotypical when men are disproportionately represented in positions of authority (Ely, 1995; Gutek, 1985). In that event, status differences that reward men with greater respect and worth in the culture-at-large are reinforced within the organization. To the extent that backlash stems from a perceived incongruity between women's ascribed and achieved standing, it would be expected to increase when there are few women ''at the top.'' However, increasing their numbers alone is not likely to be sufficient. As Ely and Thomas (2001) note, there is evidence that men may attempt to limit women's power when they feel their advantage is being threatened (see also Yoder, 1991). Thus, while greater numbers of women in leadership roles should reduce the ''lack of fit'' barrier to female authority, backlash might actually increase.

For this reason, backlash is likely to be exacerbated in male-dominated occupations because women are more likely to be viewed as ''intruders'' who threaten an exclusively male culture. As a case in point, sexual harassment is a form of backlash that serves as a powerful deterrent to women who occupy traditionally masculine roles (Bingham & Gansler, 2002; Gutek, 1985). Women in the police force and the military are frequent targets of sexual harassment (Parker & Griffin, 2002; Pryor, 1995), as were the first female cadets who entered the Virginia Military Institute (Nossiter, 1997). However, ''blue collar'' occupations are not alone in cultivating harassment, as the female pioneers who infiltrated Wall Street in the 1980s can attest. Perhaps the most salient example concerns the infamous ''boom boom'' room at Smith Barney, but there were many other egregious instances (Antilla, 2002). To overcome the tendency for men to collectively retaliate against ''female interlopers,'' the norms and culture of the workplace should foster professionalism and management should take a zero-tolerance approach to disrespect (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Pryor, Giedd, & Williams, 1995; Pryor, LaVite, & Stolle, 1993).

4.3. Evaluators' characteristics

From the standpoint of perceivers, research on factors that inhibit or increase backlash is in its infancy. Although individual differences in implicit gender stereotypes have moderated backlash (Rudman & Glick, 2001), other attempts to locate person-based factors have proved ineffective (e.g., attitudes toward women; Rudman & Glick, 2001). People who endorse benevolent attitudes toward traditional women or hostile attitudes toward career women

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are not more likely to show backlash toward agentic female job candidates, but other promising individual differences have not yet been examined (e.g., feminist orientations).

Are there gender differences in backlash effects? For the most part, research shows that men and women equally sanction counterstereotypical targets (Heilman et al., 2004; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). The routine absence of gender differences is consistent with the fact that backlash is thought to stem from prescriptive gender beliefs, and men and women score similarly on these measures (e.g., Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Similarly, implicit gender stereotypes predict backlash (Rudman & Glick, 2001), and sex differences are rarely found on these measures (Greenwald et al., 2002).

Nonetheless, there are a few exceptions. First, compared with women, men are more likely to judge assertive speech harshly in women (Carli, 1990, 2001; Carli et al., 1995). Thus, women who use powerful communication styles are more effective with female than with male audience members. However, in those studies women are speaking powerfully and persuasively about topics *other than themselves*. By contrast, backlash research using a hiring paradigm requires women to speak directly and assertively about their own qualifications, experience, skills, and success. These behaviors may still be taboo, even for female perceivers, despite their necessity for overriding negative female stereotypes concerning competence. Research by Powers & Zuroff (1988), in which an immodest female confederate was evaluated as competent but socially unattractive by female participants, supports this speculation. Second, Carranza (2004) found that women reacted more positively toward feminine male targets on measures of facial feedback, compared with men. However, measures of intelligence were not included in this research, and backlash effects for communal men generally take the form of low competence and hireability ratings; by contrast, their likeability ratings are high (Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Interestingly, there are some conditions in which women have shown more backlash than men toward agentic female applicants. In one study, men selected evenly between an agentic woman and an agentic man as a partner for a competitive task when they believed their own success was dependent on their partners' competence; by contrast, women uniformly chose the agentic man (Rudman, 1998, Experiment 3). These results are consistent with social identity research on the black sheep effect (Marques, 1990) suggesting that norm violations may be reacted to more harshly by in-group members than by out-group members. They also cohere with field researchers' observations that subordinates can be especially hard on superiors when both are female (Ely, 1994; Heim, 1990).

Heim (1990) argues that women automatically react negatively to power displays from other women, including legitimate displays (e.g., based on expert power; French & Raven, 1959). Observing a lack of support on the part of nurses for female doctors, Heim posits that gender differences in socialization are at the base of conflicts that erupt between women in the workplace:

> What is profoundly important is that we conduct ourselves at work the way that we learned to play as children. Men play business as a team sport. There are winners, losers, coaches, teams, strategies, and goals. Women, however, keep everything very one-on-one, are process oriented, and always keep the power dead even. Examining the dynamics between women physicians and nurses reveals that these old lessons, which should be obsolete in today's game, are perpetuating conflicts. The woman physician has the power. She has the power to make decisions and give directions..The nurse responds with the long ago learned lesson of keeping the power dead even. *It is not a conscious decision to react this way.*.[M]ost women are totally unaware that they are responding based on lessons they learned as children. (Heim, 1990, p. 233, italics added).

Whether women who respond to female agency punitively are doing so consciously or unconsciously, for reasons stemming from socialization or other factors, the implications of this type of backlash is that women may be engaged in an unconscious (i.e., involuntary and unintentional; Bargh, 1989) form of self-oppression. The optimistic view of this situation is that women may be particularly amenable to changing their behavior once they are apprised of backlash effects, given their negative impact on gender equity. By contrast, men may be less willing to refrain from backlash (even after being educated) if they view it as maintaining gender hegemony.

5. Consequences of backlash for cultural stereotype maintenance

In addition to contributing to gender inequities, backlash also plays a role in preserving cultural stereotypes (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). When atypical job applicants are devalued and discriminated against (e.g., for leadership roles and promotions), it curbs their ability to stand out as stereotype-disconfirming role models—an important

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mechanism that undermines stereotypes (e.g., Brewer, 1988; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990). By thwarting the ambitions of agentic women and communal men, evaluators contribute to preserving sex stereotypes in the culture-at-large. In this case, backlash on the part of perceivers (e.g., in the form of hiring discrimination or sabotage) renders atypical women and men less visible, effectively reducing their ability to challenge gender beliefs.

Moreover, to the extent that actors fear backlash for counterstereotypical behaviors, they are likely to deny or closet their actions, which prevents them from becoming stereotype-disconfirming exemplars. Recent research suggests how this process occurs (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Men and women were assigned to receive false positive feedback on gender knowledge tests. Participants were randomly assigned to believe they had scored high in their own gender test (normatives) or the opposite gender test (deviants). They were then afforded the opportunity to publicize their success in various ways (e.g., on a Web site advertising the project). They were also given the chance to win a lottery prize by depositing a ticket in a box clearly marked ''feminine'' or ''masculine'' knowledge test winners. Compared with normatives, deviants were more likely to hide their success by refusing publicity, deceiving the experimenter (by claiming success in the wrong test), and depositing their ticket in the wrong box. Moreover, deviants reported greater interest in gender-stereotypical occupations and activities, suggesting a need to increase their efforts to conform to gender norms. However, these effects were moderated by fear of backlash. That is, successful gender deviants engaged in these strategies (hiding, deception, and norm conformity) in response to the threat of being socially rejected. As Rudman and Fairchild (2004) note, ''To the extent that people hide their counterstereotypical behavior, feign normative achievement, or redouble their efforts to conform to gender norms, gendered beliefs are allowed to persist unchallenged'' (p. 169).

In sum, backlash effects help to preserve gender stereotypes by keeping atypical men and women out of the spotlight (when evaluators sanction them), or dampening atypical actors' enthusiasm for publicizing their success (when they fear penalities). As a result, stereotypes are allowed to thrive in the culture-at-large. Because cultural expectancies are the reason why atypical individuals are perceived as deviants, the result is a vicious cycle. Until there is more latitude for stereotype-disconfirming behaviors, gender stereotypes and backlash effects are likely to remain strong.

6. Directions for future research

To date, backlash effects have been identified at many stages of women's careers, but their psychological explanation has not been clearly articulated. Although prescriptive stereotypes are thought to be causal, scant research has directly tested this assumption (cf. Gill, 2004). Given recent advancements in measuring prescriptive beliefs (e.g., Prentice & Carranza, 2002), future research should compare them to descriptive beliefs as moderators of backlash effects. In addition, the role of implicit gender beliefs has only begun to be addressed (Rudman & Glick, 2001; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). Given speculations that backlash is thought to be largely nonconscious (Heim, 1990), future research might fruitfully target these beliefs. Because sex differences are rare for both backlash effects and implicit gender beliefs, the latter might provide a general explanation for why people penalize female agency.

However, this does not preclude the possibility that men and women might engage in backlash for different reasons. System-justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994) argues that people internalize gender status beliefs as a means of protecting their just-world-beliefs (i.e., to legitimize the status quo). When societal systems are unstable and in flux, doubts about the legitimacy of the proposed changes are likely to arise (Jackman, 1994). Because women stand to materially gain from making inroads into leadership roles, whereas men may view this change as a threat to their historical advantage, it seems possible that men might engage in backlash for system-justification reasons more so than women. By contrast, women may have a more personally defensive reaction to masterful female ''role models.'' Instead of inspiring admiration, an agentic woman's self-confidence and competence may provoke upward social comparison processes that impugn women's own self-confidence and efficacy. As a result, women's self-image may suffer and backlash might reflect self-esteem preservation (Tesser, 1986).

Another area ripe for future research concerns whether physical characteristics moderate backlash. For example, a woman who is relatively tall with a masculine voice might be viewed as having ascribed status characteristics that are more consistent with male than female gender. If so, she may be able to exhibit agency without incurring penalties. By contrast, a woman who is feminine (or sexy) in appearance might provoke more stereotypical assumptions that, if violated, would lead to backlash. Although research has yet to test these assumptions, they are in keeping with industry

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consultants' advice to women to alter their clothing, body language, and presentation style, and to lower the pitch of their voices (Karpf, 2006; Tannen, 1994; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). They are also consistent with evidence suggesting that beauty is a disadvantage for female managers (e.g., Heilman & Stopek, 1985) and that sexy attire disqualifies women for high-status positions (e.g., Glick, Larsen, Johnson, & Branstiter, 2005). In their review of the hiring literature, Eagly and Karau (2002) suggest that physical attractiveness and feminine attire generally decrease the perceived fit between women and high status jobs. But how physical attributes "play out" vis-à-vis backlash, and how they might interact with varying high status job demands, are empirical questions. For example, it may be the case that female politicians need some measure of charisma to succeed, which may translate into "sex appeal" (broadly construed), whereas sexiness may be completely proscribed for female generals.

To date, research has demonstrated backlash effects in organizational settings (e.g., Atwater et al., 2001; Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Brett et al., 2005; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly et al., 1992; Ely, 1994; Heim, 1990), but additional field research is needed to shed light on how women cope with backlash in natural settings. For example, women who present themselves as both communal and agentic do not suffer backlash in hiring paradigms (e.g., Rudman & Glick, 2001), but how do women in real organizations manage this dual impression? One possibility is that self-monitoring skills might help women navigate the tightrope between being perceived as too dominant on the one hand, and too frilly on the other (Flynn & Ames, 2006). Self-monitoring is also helpful for establishing social networks that can escort people into high status positions (Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 2001), but whether self-monitoring can be used by women to effectively skirt backlash is unknown at present.

Researchers should also undertake organizational studies for insights into workplace cultures that might help or hinder women in authority roles. To date, investigations of workplace diversity have focused mainly on race (for a review, see Ely & Thomas, 2001); similar studies targeting gender remain to be conducted. However, it is important not to conflate gender with other types of prejudice because sexism is distinct for many reasons, not least because sex stereotypes are more likely to be prescriptive than other stereotypes (Fiske & Stevens, 1993). Because awareness of a problem is the first step to eliminating it (Wilson & Brekke, 1994), educating people about their prescriptive and implicit gender stereotypes should be investigated as a means of reducing backlash.

In particular, administrating the Implicit Association Test (IAT; available at http://www.implicit.harvard.edu) can be used as a means of "unconsciousness raising." A case in point concerns the saga of Larry Summers. In 2005, Summers, then Harvard University's President, suggested in public remarks that women in science lag behind men due to innate gender differences. This touched off a highly publicized maelstrom from female faculty (Dillon, 2005). At the behest of Mahzarin Banaji, one of the IAT's authors and a Harvard psychologist, Summers was educated about implicit gender stereotypes, including his own. As a result, he reversed his position completely and pledged $50 million dollars toward improving Harvard's climate for women (Sacchetti, 2006). In a public apology, Summers stated that "If a lawyer who defends himself has a fool for a client, any of us who thinks we can judge whether we are biased or not is probably making a serious mistake" (Bombardieri, 2005, p. B 3). We would optimistically predict similar epiphanies for people educated about implicit gender beliefs that provoke backlash effects, provided they were ready and willing to receive such insights (Rudman, Ashmore, & Gary, 2001).

7. Conclusion

Backlash effects have a pernicious, far-reaching influence on women's ability to achieve gender parity in performance settings. Although women must enact agency to offset negative stereotypes regarding their leadership ability, doing so can result in social and economic reprisals. This dilemma effectively forces women to choose between their gender identity and their career—a choice that men are not required to make. Moreover, the fallout from backlash effects likely increases women's dissatisfaction with their careers, leading to high turnover rates for female managers that are costly to organizations. Due to reprisals for counterstereotypical behavior, women may be consigned to fulfill only part of their human potential and, as a result, be psychologically and economically diminished. Moreover, to the extent that individuals conform to or pay credence to stereotypes, either by limiting their own skills and activities or by penalizing counterstereotypical role models, organizations are handicapped with respect to human capital. Because backlash effects likely stem from prescriptive and implicit gender beliefs, and may involve nonconscious processes, educating people about its causes and consequences is the best route to ameliorating it.

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