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Gender and leadership in corporate and non-profit positions

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GENDER AND LEADERSHIP IN CORPORATE AND NON-PROFIT POSITIONS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Adriana Manago

December 2006

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arlene G. Asuncion", written over a horizontal line.

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ABSTRACT

GENDER AND LEADERSHIP IN CORPORATE AND NON-PROFIT POSITIONS

By Adriana Manago

Research suggests women may be disadvantaged when evaluated for leadership positions especially in male gender-typed jobs. To address this issue, a 3 x 2 x 2 between-subject design was used with a sample of 310 participants who read descriptions of female and male leaders, embodying agentic or communal traits in a Fortune 500 corporation or a non-profit institution. Participants rated the manager's competency and likeability. Data show that in corporate positions, women were perceived more competent when behaving agentially rather than communally, but men were perceived as competent regardless of behavior. In non-profit positions, female leaders were perceived as competent regardless of behavior; however, males behaving communally were seen as less competent than males behaving agentially. Contrary to likeability predictions, agentic women were found to be more likeable than agentic men in corporate positions and equally likeable to agentic women in non-profit job positions.

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Introduction

Despite advances in gender equality in the United States workforce over the past 35 years, the disproportionate distribution of men and women in powerful leadership roles continues to be evident and well documented. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005), women comprise 46% of the workforce but are absent at the top, most influential levels of business and government institutions. Women comprise only 15.7% of corporate officer positions, 7.9% of those individuals holding highest corporate officer titles, 5.2% of the top earners, and six of the CEOs in Fortune 500 Companies (Catalyst, 2002). In government domains, women occupy 15.2% of House of Representative seats and 14% of U.S. senator seats, and hold 8 of the 50 state governor positions (Center for American Women and Politics, 2005). This research endeavors to address social psychological factors that contribute to gender inequality manifesting particularly within the most powerful roles in our society.

Social psychological approaches to gender inequality and leadership focus on features of person perception and impression formation that affect the ways in which men and women ascend into the upper echelons of influential positions in American society. The “glass ceiling” is one well-known theory that describes “artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified women from advancing in their organization into upper management positions” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1997). Social psychological perspectives build on this idea of bias, positing that women may be at a disadvantage when they are evaluated for these powerful positions due to gender and leadership stereotypes that operate on subtle, rather than overt, discrimination processes

(e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002). From a social psychological point of view, the disparity between men and women in leadership positions can be, at least partly, attributed to gender bias in performance evaluations.

This gender bias functions because of the content of gender stereotypes that guide our perceptions of men and women. Research has found evidence that we tend to associate men with agentic characteristics such as tough, independent, and achievement oriented while women tend to be associated with communal characteristics such as gentle, nurturing and interpersonally oriented (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson & Rosenkrants, 1972). These assumptions of what men and women are like influence our impressions of people; for example, if we assume women are caring and empathetic, we might perceive Susan as especially appropriate and competent in tasks and roles that require these characteristics (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994).

Competency Evaluations

Various studies demonstrate that people are evaluated differently in workplace settings based on gender, with males perceived more positively in leadership performance assessments. Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, and Tamkins (2004) found that ambiguous descriptions of men and women in workplace settings resulted in higher ratings of competency of men over women. However, when success was explicitly clear, this bias disappeared. Another study found a male gender bias in evaluations of male and female applicants when minimal individuating information was provided but only when the effects of social desirability were removed (Harvie, Marshall-McCaskey, Johnston, 1998). In other words, Harvie and colleagues found evidence of gender discrimination

only when participants were sufficiently convinced of their anonymity. A meta-analytic study on gender bias in employment contexts found that women's performance was rated less favorably specifically in male gender-typed jobs but this effect decreased as more job relevant information was provided (Davison & Burke, 2000). Eagly and Mladinic (1994) have also found that the devaluation of women's competency is particularly profound in traditionally male-dominated fields.

These studies indicate that job context, either male or female gender-typed, is important when measuring competency perceptions of male and female leaders; however the definition of "male gender-typed" job has been inconsistent across the literature. Many studies determine a job's sex type by considering the gender that tends to predominate in that job, for example, nurse and secretary are female sex-typed occupations but engineer and carpenter are male gender-typed jobs because of the percentages of women and men who populate those jobs (e.g., Heilman, 1983). On the other hand, some studies have defined all top management and executive level jobs as male gender-type because of the high status accorded to the role (Heilman, 2001). Others have defined male gender-typed jobs as those with higher prestige and salaries (Glick, 1991). Heilman (1983) has defined male occupational roles as work that is important, demanding, and lucrative. The lack of consistency in gender-typed job definitions leaves us with an imprecise concept of the contextual factors of an occupational role that may increase our reliance on communal and agentic stereotypes in evaluations of leaders. This study aims to more clearly define the contextual factors affecting leadership

evaluation, but first a discussion of likeability ratings of male and female leaders is required.

Likeability Evaluations

Whereas gender bias in competency ratings can be reduced by including individuating information and explicit success, these results are qualified by likeability ratings that persist in putting women at a disadvantage in leadership evaluations. In other words, capable women are often considered competent but unlikable. A variety of studies have demonstrated that capable women have lower social approval ratings than equally capable men (e.g., Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). For example, Heilman and colleagues (1995) have found that successful women are more likely than successful men to be perceived as quarrelsome and devious. This suggests that even when men and women are equally competent, only women face the risk of social rejection for their aptitude. Further, studies have found that assertive behavior enacted by a woman is perceived as more extreme than when a man behaves in an identical manner (Biernat, Manis, & Nelson, 1991).

Moreover, a clearly competent woman is more likely to be personally derogated when she is successful in a male gender-typed job rather than a female gender-typed job (Heilman et. al., 2004). Heilman and others found that when the descriptions of male and female managers are explicitly competent, female managers are more disliked than male managers only when they are described as Assistant Vice-Presidents of Financial Planning (male gender-typed job) rather than Assistant Vice-Presidents of Employee

Assistance (female gender-typed job). Clearly, job context is critical in understanding likeability as well as competency ratings of male and female leaders.

Theories Accounting for Gender Bias

Two similar theories of prejudice attempt to explain why women are rated as less competent than men in ambiguous circumstances and why clearly competent women are more likely to be socially rejected than competent men. Both assert that gender bias is the result of the incongruity between female gender stereotypes and leadership stereotypes (Eagly & Krau, 2002; Heilman, 2001).

In Heilman's Lack of Fit model (2001), the descriptive and prescriptive nature of stereotypes operate together to create gender bias. Descriptive stereotypes tell us what men and women are generally like. It is these descriptive stereotypes of women as communal, caring and relationship-oriented and descriptive stereotypes of leaders as agentic, tough and competitive that convey a "lack of fit" between women and leadership roles. This phenomenon creates expectations about what a potential female leader is like, predisposing us to see communal behaviors that are not compatible with the leadership role.

At the same time, the prescriptive nature of gender stereotypes tells us what men and women *should* be like (Heilman, 2001). Prescriptive stereotypes tell us that women should be communal, caring and relationship-oriented and *should not* be tough and aggressive. A woman who does demonstrate agentic characteristics will be socially rejected and evaluated negatively because she is violating expectations for her gender, behaving in ways "unsuitable to a woman." In other words, the prescriptive nature of

gender stereotypes tell us that assertiveness and independence is positively valued for a man but prohibited for a woman, therefore a tough and assertive woman is perceived as undesirable.

The Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002) accounts for gender bias in similar ways, however, focuses more on stereotypes functioning within social roles in society. This theory says that we see women as communal, caring, and relationship-oriented because these characteristics are perceived as necessary for a motherhood role. We see men as agentic, tough, and achievement-oriented because these characteristics are perceived as necessary for a provider role. At the same time, we perceive these agentic qualities as necessary for a leadership role. As a result, a mismatch occurs between what we think women are like (communal) and what we think leaders are like (agentic). Because we expect women to be communal to fulfill her gender role, we perceive her as not having the skills necessary to succeed in a leadership role that requires strong, tough, and independent characteristics. On the other hand, perceptions of men as agentic lead to an easy conclusion that men are most appropriate for leadership roles. Therefore, in ambiguous circumstances, men are more likely than women to be rated as competent in leadership roles.

The Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice explains the hostility toward agentic females as a violation of behaviors appropriate for her social role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). A woman clearly embodying agentic characteristics receives less favorable likeability evaluations of leadership behavior because her behavior is in opposition to traits that are necessary for successful performance of her gender role. In other words, a tough and

assertive woman fails to fulfill the nurturing and caring characteristics necessary to be successful in a motherhood role. As a result, women who fail to perform successfully in their gender role are disliked.

Limitations of Current Theories of Gender Bias

Both the Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice and the Lack of Fit model explain gender inequality in the workplace in terms of a cognitive discrepancy in how we expect women to behave (communally) and how we expect our leaders to behave (agenticity). However, both theories fail to account for the implications for social power and group-based inequality associated with these gender stereotypes. Basow (1992) has found that male hostility toward successful women in male gender-typed jobs derives from a perceived threat to the power and dominance of men. This is consistent with Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RCT) (Campbell, 1965) which asserts that hostility, prejudice, and discrimination can originate in the competition between groups for scarce resources. In RCT, female success in male domains creates hostility from males because of perceptions that the out-group (females) is depriving the in-group (males) access to economic power and resources.

From the perspective of RCT, gender bias is not just about cognitive discrepancies in stereotype expectations, but about a violation of group-based inequalities. Female success in a male role is perceived as a threat to the traditional power structure because we expect men to be successful in roles that are afforded greater access to resources. As mentioned earlier, women are more likely to be negatively evaluated when they are fulfilling a male gender-typed job (e.g., Heilman et.al., 1995;

Heilman et.al., 2004; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). It is possible that a male gender-typed occupation creates more hostility toward a successful female because the job role gives her access to the kind of power that is traditionally associated with males and this presents a heightened threat to the power structure. In sum, cognitive violations can not tell the whole story in leadership gender discrimination; gender bias must be considered in the context of a social system that consists of group-based inequalities.

In order to understand perceptions of female threat to the “traditional power structure,” we must be clear about defining the nature of this power structure and the nature of “male gender-typed job.” How does the traditional power structure delineate occupations that are appropriate for males and females? What are the characteristics associated with male and female gender-typed jobs? How does a male or female gender-typed job communicate one’s place in the power structure? Social Dominance theory can provide answers to these questions so that we can understand the sociostructural context in which gender bias exists.

Social Dominance Theory

The Social Dominance Theory of Prejudice provides a theoretical model for delineating occupations as male or female gender-typed within a context of hierarchically stratified societies (Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius, Siers, 1997). This theory describes occupational role stereotypes for men and women in terms of their consequences for inter-group relations, either maintaining the social hierarchy that exists in society by pursuing dominance and competition, or challenging the dominant hierarchy by pursuing egalitarianism. Research on social dominance has found that women are more likely to

pursue job with goals that incorporate egalitarian values but men are more likely to pursue jobs with goals that incorporate competition values.

Research using the social dominance orientation scale has found that women are more likely to hold egalitarian values and will therefore pursue jobs that fulfill these values by helping the underprivileged and disadvantaged (Pratto et. al., 1997). This leads to social expectations that women will fulfill occupational roles that help to channel positive resources down the social hierarchy and serve the poor and oppressed. Thus, jobs such as social worker, educator, public defender, and elder or child care worker can be classified as female gender-typed. These jobs are labeled *hierarchy-attenuating* because they challenge the hierarchical stratification between groups by working to create universal equality. These job roles are not associated with economic or social power because the objective is to challenge unequal distribution of power.

At the same time, the theory predicts that men are more likely to hold values that are status and dominance oriented and more likely to pursue jobs that match these values (Pratto et. al., 1997). Thus, jobs such as business management, law enforcement, finance, corporate or prosecution law, and military service are classified as male gender-typed. Pratto and colleagues classify law enforcement as dominance and status oriented because studies that show the criminal justice system discriminates against the poor and people of color (e.g., Reiman, 1990). Because men hold these dominance values, they are therefore expected to fulfill occupational roles that maintain the social hierarchy, channeling positive resources up to the privileged elites. These jobs are labeled *hierarchy-enhancing* because they support and perpetuate hierarchical stratification between groups. These job

roles are associated with economic and social power because the objective is to increase unequal distribution of power in favor of the privileged. Data on occupational segregation support at least the outcomes predicted by Social Dominance theory; for example, almost 75% of the non-profit workforce is made up of women (Preston, 1990). Consequently, gender stereotypes and gender roles have implications for social structure: the appropriate target for female skills is nurturing egalitarianism whereas the appropriate target for male skills is competitive dominance.

Why do men and women differ in values regarding inter-group relations? While Sidanius and Pratto (1999) have pointed to sociobiological explanations for gender differences in hierarchy values, Dambrun, Duarte, and Guimond (2004) found that gender identification mediated the effect of gender on social dominance orientation. Dambrun and colleagues have demonstrated that it is not necessarily biology that determines the differences in male and female hierarchy values, but the ways in which gender is culturally constructed, in other words, the ways in which our culture tells us the nature of men and women. American culture influences individuals' values, socializing men to identify with hierarchy-enhancing (dominance oriented) values and women to identify with hierarchy-attenuating (egalitarianism oriented) values. Building on Social Identity Theory, Dambrun and colleagues (2004) demonstrated that the more participants (male and female) identified with the male gender category, the higher they scored on social dominance orientation. Dambrun and colleagues suggest that the reason men score higher on social dominance orientation is because theirs is the higher status group and endorsing the current hierarchy maintains their positive social identity. These findings

support the idea that gender stereotypes are embedded in a social system of power dynamics that are culturally constructed; men and women who violate gender norms are violating cultural expectations about who occupies certain roles in power structure.

Social Dominance Theory provides a framework for understanding how we define male and female type jobs within our hierarchical social system. Not only are women seen as communal and therefore inappropriate for leadership positions, they are further boxed into social roles that are seen as compatible with communal stereotypes, hierarchy-attenuating positions helping the poor and oppressed. As Eagly and Wood (1991) suggest, the ideology of the motherhood martyr may not be endemic to the home; we also expect women to fulfill an objective of helping the underprivileged within the greater domain of society, a role in which communal characteristics are perceived as most appropriate. On the other hand, we expect men to fill hierarchy enhancing roles, embodying strong and powerful characteristics that help them compete for access to privilege and wealth so that they fulfill the “father as provider” role.

Further, nonconforming gendered behavior is not just a violation of cognitive expectations; it is a violation of a power structure designating women to less economically powerful helping roles and men to more economically powerful achievement roles. Therefore, the hypotheses of this study rest on the idea that the social rejection of an agentic woman or furthermore, a communal male, derives not just from the nonconformity, but from the threat to the power structure. We might excuse a woman for portraying agentic behaviors if her ultimate goal is to help the underprivileged because she is fulfilling her role in the hierarchy. However, a woman portraying agentic

behaviors in a hierarchy-enhancing job might make her violations of typical feminine behavior more salient. The assertive woman, in the context of a non-profit institution may be seen as effective, fiery, passionate, and likeable but that same woman in the context of a Fortune 500 company might be perceived as a surly witch. For example, Martha Stewart and Oprah Winfrey might be equally assertive but Martha is more likely to be perceived as a “battle ax” because she pursues corporate profits, whereas Oprah might be more likeable because of her philanthropic pursuits. On the flip side, a caring and compassionate man in the context of a hierarchy-enhancing occupation might be seen as a cordial gentleman but that same man in a hierarchy-attenuating occupation might be seen as a spineless pushover.

A hierarchy-enhancing position, high in status and power, may highlight a woman’s stereotype violation resulting in personal derogation, whereas an agentic male’s behavior may be almost invisible because it is common to his gender category. For example, the assertiveness of Martha Stewart might be more conspicuous and evoke more hostility than the assertiveness of Donald Trump. Along the same lines, a communal male in a hierarchy-enhancing position might be seen as nice in addition to being competent; however that communal male in a hierarchy-attenuating position might be perceived as “too soft” and therefore would be socially rejected for failing to live up to the potential power of masculinity.

Overview of Current Study and Hypotheses

To examine how gender bias operates within occupational roles set within a context of a hierarchical power structure, participants were asked to judge the

competency and likeability of male, female, and gender neutral leaders behaving agentically or communally in either hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating jobs. A corporate leadership role was used to symbolize a hierarchy-enhancing job and a non-profit leadership role was used to symbolize a hierarchy-attenuating job. A gender neutral leader (Person X) was utilized as a control to determine the baseline of leadership evaluations.

The goal of this current investigation is to examine possible interactive effects between violations of gender stereotypical behavior and violations of gender stereotypical occupational roles. Overall, it is predicted that perceptions of competency and likeability will be different for male and female leaders depending on whether they are violating their gender stereotypes in a hierarchy-enhancing role (a Fortune 500 corporate job) or a hierarchy-attenuating role (a non-profit job). The goal of a job, either helping the poor or helping the wealthy, has implications for group status and economic power that make gender violations more or less threatening to the current power structure.

Competency.

In a hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job context, it is predicted that men will be perceived as competent regardless of whether they behave agentically or communally because they are unquestionably appropriate for roles that involve competition for dominance and maintenance of the hierarchy. For women, it is expected that they are perceived as competent only if they behave agentically, demonstrating that they can “act like a man” to be successful in a leadership role. In addition, communal males should be more competent than communal females in the corporate world, but no difference will

exist when the female manager and the male manager are both clearly agentic. These predictions derive from studies (e.g., Heilman et. al., 2004) that show females are rated as competent as men only if they are clearly agentic and competent in the male domain. It is predicted that participants will assume that leaders whose gender is not specified are men (because hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) jobs are male gender-typed) and therefore will perceive them as competent regardless of whether they behave agentially or communally.

In the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job role, the situation is reversed. Women are now most appropriate for this job role, so it is expected that regardless of their agentic or communal behavior, they will be perceived as competent. For men, it is expected that they are only competent if they behave communally, demonstrating that they have communal skills necessary to be successful in this job role. Agentic females should be more competent than agentic males in the non-profit world, but no difference will exist when the female manager and the male manager are both clearly communal. These predictions are based on the perception that hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) jobs are not appropriate for men and so they must be clearly communal to be considered as skillful as women for this job type. Similar to the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job, it is predicted that participants will assume that leaders whose gender is not specified in hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job are women, and therefore will perceive their competency similarly to female managers. Considering that other studies did not find participant gender differences in competency ratings (Heilman et al., 2004), this study does not predict participant gender differences in competency evaluations.

Likeability.

In likeability ratings, this study predicts that women will be more disliked for violating communal stereotypes when they are also violating occupational power expectations in the corporate world. On the other hand, men will be more disliked for violating agentic stereotypes when they are also violating occupational power expectations in the non-profit world.

In hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job roles, it is predicted that men will be equally likeable regardless of their agentic or communal behavior because they are seen as appropriate for this job role. However, in this corporate job role, it is expected that agentic women will be disliked more than communal women and more disliked than agentic men because an agentic woman is violating expected communal behavior whereas an agentic man is behaving in a gender stereotypical manner. Further, it is predicted that agentic women in a corporate position will be disliked more than the agentic women in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) position. This result should occur because agentic women in a corporate role are not only violating their gender stereotypes for behavior they are also violating gender roles in the social hierarchy.

In the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job role, it is predicted that women will be equally likeable regardless of their agentic or communal behavior because they are seen as appropriate for this job role. Men acting communally in the non-profit job role are expected to be disliked more than men acting agentially in non-profit jobs, more disliked than communal women and more disliked than communal men in hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job roles. This is because communal men in non-profit job roles

are not only violating their expected agentic behavior but are also seen as failing to live up to the expectations of their higher status group in the hierarchy.

Method

Participants

Participants from the San Jose State Psychology 001 subject pool took part in this study in exchange for class credit. The sample consisted of 311 undergraduates, a sample size that satisfies power requirements according to Cohen's model, assuming a medium effect and targeting a .05 significance level.

The sample was composed of 93 male and 217 female students. Ninety-five percent of participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 years old. The sample consisted of 102 Asian, 98 Caucasian, 47 Latino, and 22 African-American participants. The most frequent academic major reported by students was "undeclared" (60%), followed by psychology (26%), business (8%), and engineering (5%).

Design

This study used a 3 X 2 X 2 between subjects factorial design, the first independent variable being gender of leader, male, female, or no gender indication. The second independent variable was leadership style with two levels, agentic or communal. Agentic characteristics were defined as traits that have traditionally been associated with males and indicate task orientation, assertiveness, decisiveness, and a striving for achievement. Communal characteristics were defined as traits that have traditionally been associated with women such as the desire to foster relationships, to be sensitive, caring, and to get along with others.

The third independent variable was job position with two levels, either a management position described as hierarchy-enhancing or as hierarchy-attenuating. The hierarchy-enhancing job was defined as Fortune 500 corporate Vice-President job role with an end goal of channeling positive resources upward in the social hierarchy, defending the privileges of the elite. The hierarchy-attenuating job was defined as a non-profit Vice-President job role with an end goal of channeling positive resources downward in the social hierarchy, helping the poor, oppressed, and underprivileged. The two main dependent variables of interest were perceptions of competency and perceptions of likeability.

Materials

One of 12 manager descriptions was given to participants who were told that they were going to be tested on their recall and impression formation of a person, place, and object. The person description consisted of a male, female, or gender neutral (Person X) Vice-President of New Business Development. This VP either worked at a major brokerage house, “H & T Investments,” which targeted investments with Fortune 500 companies and large multinational corporations (the hierarchy-enhancing role) or the VP worked at a non-profit brokerage and lending house, “H & T Investments,” which targeted investments and provided low interest loans to socially responsible corporations, women and minority owned businesses and public funds (the hierarchy-attenuating role). The manager was described as either possessing tough and achievement oriented traits (agentic) or relationship oriented and sensitive traits (communal). Each manager was described in a positive light because the aim of the study was to assess impression of

male and female leaders who are succeeding with counter stereotypical behavior. See appendix A for manager descriptions.

Each description was pre-tested to ensure that corporate managers were perceived as hierarchy-enhancing, non-profit managers were perceived as hierarchy-attenuating, agentic leaders were perceived as agentic, communal leaders were perceived as communal, and none of the descriptions were more positive than the others.

On a scale from 1-7, 34 participants in the pre-testing were more likely to agree that corporate managers helped the privileged ($M = 6.19$) than non-profit managers ($M = 3.05$), $F(1, 32) = 30.43$, $p < .001$. They were also more likely to agree that corporate managers helped the wealthy ($M = 5.86$) than non-profit managers ($M = 2.00$), $F(1, 32) = 58.35$, $p < .001$. Participants were more likely to agree that non-profit managers helped the disadvantaged ($M = 6.28$) than corporate managers ($M = 1.88$), $F(1, 31) = 164.20$, $p < .001$. Participants agreed that non-profit managers were more likely to help the poor ($M = 5.11$) than corporate managers ($M = 1.63$), $F(1, 32) = 102.94$, $p < .001$. There were no differences between corporate and non-profit managers in ratings of positive characteristics, $F(1, 32) = .319$, $p = ns$, negative characteristics, $F(1, 32) = 1.08$, $p = ns$, or success, $F(1, 32) = 3.13$, $p = ns$.

On a scale from 1-7, participants in the pre-testing rated agentic managers as more assertive ($M = 5.83$) than communal managers ($M = 5.00$), $F(1, 32) = 3.97$, $p < .05$ and agentic managers as more forceful ($M = 5.12$) than communal managers ($M = 2.82$), $F(1, 32) = 20.98$, $p < .001$. Participants rated communal managers as more relationship-oriented ($M = 6.06$) than agentic managers ($M = 4.17$), $F(1, 32) = 15.20$, $p < .001$ and

communal managers as more sensitive ($M = 6.29$) than agentic managers ($M = 3.29$), $F(1,32) = 78.82, p < .001$. There were no differences in the pre-testing of communal and agentic descriptions on ratings of success, $F(1,32) = 1.23, p = ns$. However, agentic descriptions ($M = 4.59$) were rated as having less positive characteristics than communal descriptions ($M = 6.35$), $F(1,32) = 16.94, p < .001$.

In summary, pre-tests confirmed that descriptions of hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) leaders helped the wealthy and privileged while descriptions of hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) leaders helped the poor and disadvantaged but neither description was more positive or negative than the other. In addition, pre-tests confirmed that agentic managers were perceived as more assertive and forceful but communal managers were perceived as more sensitive and relationship-oriented. Hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) and hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) descriptions were rated no differently in positive or negative characteristics, however communal descriptions were rated as more positive. Because, by definition, communal characteristics are more interpersonally oriented and pro-social, it is logical that these descriptions would be perceived as more positive. This effect cannot be avoided but must be considered in the context of interaction effects within the main study; in other words, what happens when men and women behave more or less prosocial in different occupational contexts.

In the main study, the dependent variables of competency and likeability were measured using a 7-point likert scale that assessed participants' opinions of the described manager with higher numbers indicating more positive responses (e.g., more competent and more likeable). Competency was assessed with three questions asking participants to

rate their opinions of the leader's success in the job (1 = *not very successful* 7 = *very successful*), likelihood for promotion (1 = *not very likely* 7 = *very likely*), and overall competency (1 = *not very competent* 7 = *very competent*). Cronbach's reliability for the competency index was .73.

Likeability was measured with three questions asking the participants to rate their opinions on how likeable the leader is (1, not very likeable to 7, very likeable), how much the participant would like to work with the leader (1, not very much to 7, very much), and how much they think others would like to work with the leader (1, not very much to 7, very much). Cronbach's reliability for the likeability index was .85. See Appendix B for likert scale measures.

In order to conceal the nature of the study under the guise of a memory test for person, places, and things, participants also received a detailed description of a MP3 player following the person description and likert questions.

Procedures

Students signed up for the research experiment after reading a general description of the experiment posted on the announcement board. The posting stated that the experiment involved memory tests investigating how we recall information about people places and objects.

Before beginning the experiment, participants read and signed an informed consent form that included information about the general purpose of the study, efforts to protect their anonymity, the minimal risks and benefits involved with the study as well as the students' rights to withdraw from the study at any time without incurring a penalty.

Next, they filled out a demographic questionnaire. Then, they were told that they would receive descriptions of a person, place or object and then tested on their impressions of these descriptions. One of the 12 manager descriptions was randomly distributed to each student and they were then given two minutes to read the description. Participants were then asked to rate their opinions, including competency and likeability, on the person they just read. Next, students received a description of the MP3 player and rated their impressions for that description. Finally, participants were debriefed about the true nature of the experiment and given contact information for researchers in case they had further questions.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Manipulation Checks

Table 1 lists the descriptive statistics for the means and standard deviations of the competency ratings in each condition. The descriptive statistics show that, overall, the competency ratings are above average, as expected from the positive manager descriptions. The table also suggests that competency ratings of agentic managers are consistently higher than competency ratings of communal managers in both job positions. The highest competency rating is for the agentic female manager in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job ($M = 6.79$), whereas the lowest competency rating is for the communal male manager in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job ($M = 5.76$).

Table 2 lists descriptive statistics for the likeability ratings in each condition. The means indicate that communal managers appear more likeable than agentic managers, with consistently higher scores across the conditions, reversing the pattern found in the competency scores. The highest likeability score here is for communal males in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job condition ($M = 5.85$). The lowest likeability score is for agentic males in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job condition ($M = 3.70$).

Because the pre-testing overwhelmingly demonstrated the hierarchy-enhancing characteristics of the corporate job and the hierarchy-attenuating characteristics of the non-profit job, these characteristics were not tested again in the main study. However, to ensure that agentic leaders were perceived as agentic and communal leaders were perceived as communal, manipulation checks were conducted in the main study. Agentic leaders ($M = 6.43$) were rated more aggressive than communal leaders ($M = 4.03$), $F(1,$

309) = 246.25, $p < .001$. Agentic leaders ($M = 6.61$) were rated as more confident than communal leaders ($M = 5.88$), $F(1, 309) = 46.89$, $p < .001$. Agentic leaders ($M = 6.21$) were rated as more achievement-oriented than communal leaders ($M = 4.69$), $F(1, 309) = 112.38$, $p < .001$. Agentic leaders ($M = 5.08$) were rated as more independent than communal leaders ($M = 3.59$), $F(1, 309) = 59.73$, $p < .001$. Aggression, confidence, achievement-orientation, and independence are all characteristics attributed to agentic attributes.

In addition, communal leaders ($M = 6.16$) were rated more sensitive than agentic leaders ($M = 3.72$), $F(1, 309) = 255.66$, $p < .001$. Communal leaders ($M = 6.19$) were rated more helpful than agentic leaders ($M = 5.41$), $F(1, 309) = 47.70$, $p < .001$. In addition, communal leaders ($M = 5.97$) were rated more interpersonally cooperative than agentic leaders ($M = 4.25$), $F(1, 309) = 135.07$, $p < .001$. Sensitivity, helpfulness and interpersonal cooperation are all characteristics attributed to communal attributes. Communal managers ($M = 6.45$) were again rated more positively than agentic managers ($M = 5.64$), $F(1, 309) = 46.89$, $p < .001$, a logical result considering communal characteristics, by definition, are more interpersonally oriented and pro-social.

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics for Competency Ratings.*

Gender of manager	<u>Hierarchy Enhancing</u>				<u>Hierarchy Attenuating</u>			
	Agentic		Communal		Agentic		Communal	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Male	6.26 (n=23)	1.01	6.33 (n=26)	.92	6.47 (n=28)	.88	5.76 (n=25)	1.05
Female	6.79 (n=29)	.49	6.00 (n=26)	.98	6.62 (n=26)	.64	6.41 (n=27)	.69
Neutral	6.44 (n=25)	.65	5.79 (n=24)	1.14	6.08 (n=26)	1.16	6.12 (n=25)	.88

Table 2 *Descriptive Statistics for Likeability Ratings.*

Gender of manager	<u>Hierarchy Enhancing</u>				<u>Hierarchy Attenuating</u>			
	Agentic		Communal		Agentic		Communal	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Male	3.70 (n=23)	1.52	5.85 (n=26)	1.06	4.86 (n=28)	1.18	5.36 (n=25)	1.75
Female	4.93 (n=29)	1.36	5.73 (n=26)	1.11	4.65 (n=26)	1.55	5.78 (n=27)	1.09
Neutral	4.32 (n=25)	1.68	5.46 (n=24)	1.53	4.54 (n=26)	1.61	5.44 (n=25)	1.53

Tests of Hypotheses

Competency ratings.

No significant participant gender differences were found in ratings of manager competency and likeability and so further analysis were conducted by combining results from male and female participants. It was predicted that for competency ratings, males would be competent in hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job roles, regardless of whether they acted agentic or communally, but women would be rated more competent if they behaved agentic rather than communally. In addition, communal males should be rated more competent than communal females in the corporate world, but no difference would exist when the female manager and the male manager are both clearly agentic. Descriptions of managers that did not indicate gender would be assumed to be males and therefore rated similarly to male leaders.

It was predicted that in hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job roles, females would be rated as competent regardless of whether they behaved agentic or communally but males would be rated as more competent when they behaved communally. Agentic females should be more competent than agentic males in the non-profit world, however, no difference will exist when the female manager and male manager are both clearly communal. Descriptions of managers that did not indicate gender would be assumed to be females and therefore rated similarly to female leaders.

To test the hypothesis that competency ratings are different for male, female, and neutral managers displaying agentic or communal characteristics in different job contexts, a three-way between subject analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted

comparing ratings across the groups. A main effect was found for leadership style with agentic managers ($M = 6.37$) rated overall more competent than communal managers ($M = 6.08$), $F(1, 310) = 11.41, p = .001$. There was no main effect for job position or gender of manager in competency ratings.

A three-way interaction in competency ratings was also found between job position, leadership style, and gender, $F(2, 310) = 4.90, p < .01$. This indicates that any main effects would be qualified by particular circumstances. To identify the circumstances that qualify these main effects, simple effects were conducted to paint a picture of perceptions in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job position and in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job position.

Figure 1 depicts the interaction effects of competency within the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) condition. In the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job position, the main effect of leadership style persists with agentic managers ($M = 6.41$) perceived as more competent than communal managers ($M = 6.09$), $F(1, 152) = 7.18, p < .01$. No simple effects for gender exist in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) condition. To further clarify the interaction effects, simple comparisons were conducted first looking at just male managers in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) condition. Comparing males who behaved agentially ($M = 6.26$) versus communally ($M = 6.25$), there existed no significant difference in competency ratings, as was predicted, $F(1, 48) = .00, p = ns$. For gender neutral managers who behaved agentially ($M = 6.33$) versus communally ($M = 5.96$) there also existed no significant difference in competency ratings, as was predicted, $F(1, 48) = .288, p = ns$. The story changes for female managers who are rated

Figure 1. Competency Ratings in Hierarchy-Enhancing (Corporate)Job.

significantly more competent when they behave agentially ($M = 6.60$) than when they behave communally ($M = 6.04$), $F(1, 53) = 13.87, p < .001$. These results confirm predictions.

In addition, it was also predicted that communal male managers would be perceived as more competent than communal female managers, however this prediction was not supported, $F(1,51) = 1.00, p = ns$, although male managers ($M = 6.26$) were rated slightly higher than female managers ($M = 6.04$). When all managers were agentic, we predicted that male and female managers would be equal, however there was a trend toward significance with agentic female managers ($M = 6.60$) rated higher than agentic male managers ($M = 6.26$), $F(1,50) = 3.70, p = .06$. It appears that females behaving agentially in a hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job were amplified in comparison to male managers. This presents an interesting and unexpected effect that will be discussed later in the paper.

The trends for competency ratings of agentic and communal managers in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job position suggest that agentic behavior is perceived as more competent than communal behavior and the effect of gender on perceptions of competency only exist when females violate gender role expectations serving to amplify her competency.

Figure 2 depicts the interaction effects of competency in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) condition. Looking at the simple effects in the hierarchy attenuating job position, agentic managers ($M = 6.33$) were rated still more competent than communal managers ($M = 6.07$), $F(1,155) = 4.37, p < .05$. This effect was surprising since

Figure 2. Competency Ratings in Hierarchy-Attenuating (Non-Profit) Job.

predictions for this study were based on an assumption that communal characteristics would be perceived as most appropriate for a non-profit job role. No simple effects exist for gender in the hierarchy attenuating (non-profit) condition.

Simple comparisons clarify the simple effects within the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) condition. Looking at female managers only in the hierarchy attenuating job position, results support predictions, showing no significant difference between communal managers ($M = 6.35$) and agentic managers ($M = 6.40$), $F(1,51) = .07$, $p = ns$. In other words, it didn't matter how the female behaved in a non-profit job role, she was equally competent. Results for neutral managers also support predictions that gender neutral managers would be perceived as females and therefore would be rated similarly. Communal neutral managers ($M = 6.08$) were not rated significantly different than agentic neutral managers ($M = 6.11$), $F(1,49) = .02$, $p = ns$. Predictions for differential ratings among male managers in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job are confirmed, but in the opposite direction than expected. Agentic male managers ($M = 6.46$) are significantly more competent than communal male managers ($M = 5.77$), $F(1,51) = 13.77$, $p = .001$. In other words, the competency of male managers in a non-profit job depended on whether they were acting agentially rather than communally.

Contrary to predictions, agentic males ($M = 6.46$) and agentic females ($M = 6.39$) were perceived as equally competent, $F(1, 51) = .13$, $p = ns$. However, when both genders displayed communal characteristics, communal males ($M = 5.77$) were significantly less competent than communal females ($M = 6.35$), $F(1, 50) = 8.31$, $p < .01$. Predictions that communal males and females would be equally competent but agentic

females more competent than agentic males were based on an assumption that communal characteristics would be perceived as more competent overall in the non-profit job and that a female is always competent in the non-profit world, but there would be no differences when both were clearly demonstrating the necessary (communal) skills for a non-profit job.

However, agentic managers were rated as overall more competent in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job and so this might have been a reason for results opposite to predictions. In other words, communal characteristics were not seen as necessary skills for a non-profit job so a communal male was not necessarily clearly satisfying the requirements for the job.

Likeability ratings.

For measures of likeability it was predicted that in hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job positions male and neutral managers would be equally likeable regardless of whether they displayed agentic or communal characteristics but female managers would be more likeable if they displayed communal characteristics. In addition, it was predicted that agentic males would be more likeable than agentic females. In the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job position, the opposite effects should occur with female and neutral managers equally likeable regardless of agentic or communal behavior but male managers would be more likeable if they displayed agentic characteristics. Communal females should be more likeable than communal males.

In this measure of likeability, there was a main effect for leadership style, with communal managers ($M = 5.89$) rated more likeable than agentic managers ($M = 4.44$),

$F(1, 309) = 137.82, p < .001$. There were no other main effects for gender or for job position. In addition, results failed to demonstrate the predicted interaction for the likeability index. However, when looking only at the likeability measure “how much would you like to work with this manager?”, a three-way interaction for likeability emerged between job position, leadership style, and gender, $F(2, 309) = 6.73, p < .04$. The interaction effects are examined to understand the circumstances that qualify the main effect of leadership style on this measure of likeability.

Figure 3 depicts the interaction effects of the one measure of likeability in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) condition. To identify the interaction effects for likeability, simple effects were conducted within the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) and hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) conditions. In the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) condition, the main effect of leadership style persists, with communal managers ($M = 5.69$) perceived as more likeable than agentic managers ($M = 4.36$), $F(1, 151) = 33.77, p < .001$. In the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) position there was no simple effect for gender between female managers ($M = 5.31$), male managers ($M = 4.86$), and neutral managers ($M = 4.88$), $F(2, 150) = 1.43, p > .05$.

To clarify the simple effects, simple comparisons were conducted, first looking only at male managers in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job condition. Male managers who were communal ($M = 5.85$) were more liked than male managers who were agentic ($M = 3.69$), $F(1, 48) = 34.53, p < .001$. Neutral managers who were communal ($M = 5.46$) were more liked than neutral managers who were agentic ($M = 4.32$), $F(1, 47) = 6.14, p < .05$. These data run counter to predictions that male managers

Figure 3. Likeability Ratings in Hierarchy-Enhancing (Corporate) Job.

and neutral managers (assumed to be male) would be liked regardless of their behavior in hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) jobs. As was predicted, female managers who were communal ($M = 5.73$) were more liked than female managers who were agentic ($M = 4.93$) in the hierarchy-enhancing job, $F(1,48) = 5.57, p < .05$. However, the prediction that agentic males ($M = 3.69$) would be more likeable than agentic females ($M = 4.93$) was significant but in the opposite direction than expected, $F(1, 49) = 9.34, p < .01$.

Figure 4 depicts the interaction effects of the one likeability measure in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) condition. Simple effects in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) condition reveal that participants again rated communal managers ($M = 5.53$) as more likeable than agentic managers ($M = 4.69$), $F(1,155) = 13.31, p < .001$. To understand the interaction effects, simple comparisons were conducted first looking at female managers only in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) condition. Contrary to predictions, it was found that communal females ($M = 5.78$) were more likeable than agentic females ($M = 4.65$), $F(1, 51) = 9.42, p < .01$ and communal gender neutral managers ($M = 5.44$) were more liked than agentic gender neutral managers ($M = 4.54$), $F(1,49) = 4.21, p < .05$. It was expected that males in the non-profit job would be liked more if they behaved agenticly however results showed no significant differences between communal males ($M = 5.36$) and agentic males ($M = 4.86$), $F(1, 51) = 1.53, p = ns$.

It was also predicted that communal females would be more liked than communal males because of the congruency for behavior and gender role, however, there were no differences between male ($M = 5.36$) and female ($M = 5.78$) when described as communal

Figure 4. Likeability Ratings in Hierarchy-Attenuating (Non-Profit) Job.

in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) condition, $F(2, 74) = .60$ $p = ns$. Finally, it was predicted that an agentic female would be more of a threat to the status quo in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job role and so would be more disliked than an agentic female in a hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job role. However, the likeability rating of agentic females in the corporate job ($M = 4.93$) was not significantly different from the rating of agentic females in the non-profit job ($M = 4.65$), $F(1, 52) = .48$, $p = ns$. In addition, communal males in the corporate world ($M = 5.85$) were no more likeable than communal males in the non-profit world ($M = 5.36$), $F(1, 50) = 1.52$, $p = ns$, although it was in the predicted direction.

Discussion

Summary of Results

Overall, agentic managers were seen as more competent, but less likeable, than communal managers. This main effect confirms prior research that shows our stereotypes of leaders are congruent with our stereotypes of males (agentic); we believe our leaders must be strong, tough, and independent rather than caring, cooperative and sensitive. This seems to mirror a stereotypical Western family structure where fathers, embodying agentic characteristics, are the patriarchs, and mothers, embodying communal characteristics, play the supporting role. At the same time, we tend to like those who are interpersonally oriented more so than those who are achievement oriented, suggesting that leaders are to be feared and admired rather than liked.

These perceptions of leaders were qualified by the gender of the person enacting these behaviors and the context in which they were behaving. In the corporate world where the goal is to channel resources toward the wealthy and privileged, there was an assumption of competency for men; perceptions of competency did not change whether they behaved agentially or communally, they were always perceived as competent when they were channeling resources toward the wealthy and privileged. Furthermore, in hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) positions, communal behaviors from men only added to their likeability but did not take away the respect for their competency and authority. These results supported the hypothesis that men are assumed to be agentic and possess the skills appropriate for a leadership position in a hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) role, so his actual behavior is less important in determining his competency and authority.

Perceptions of women in hierarchy-enhancing job roles in this study only partially supported our hypotheses. Women were perceived as more competent when they were behaving agentic rather than communally unlike men who were perceived as equally competent regardless of agentic or communal behavior. These results supported the hypothesis that women must go above and beyond to demonstrate that they possess the agentic skills required for a leadership position in a hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) role because we expect women to be communal and therefore not appropriate for leadership positions in this domain.

An additional effect occurred that was unexpected; agentic women were perceived as more competent than agentic men in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job role. This suggests that women behaving agentic in this role were unusual; therefore, this behavior was perceived as remarkable and served to boost women's success. The success of an agentic woman in a corporate job was amplified in a similar way to the amplification of a woman who knows a lot about sports. Because a woman who knows a lot about sports is more unusual than a man who knows a lot about sports, we perceive her knowledge as remarkable and therefore it is amplified compared to a man with an equal amount of knowledge in sports.

On the other hand, ratings of likeability for males and females in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job role did not confirm the hypothesis. It was expected that women, more so than men, would be disliked for behaving agentic in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job role because she would be violating the status quo for power in the social structure. However, results demonstrated that women were no more disliked

for behaving agentic in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job role than in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job role, and in fact agentic women were *more liked* in the hierarchy enhancing job role than agentic males.

This effect is perplexing but might be explained by the fact that these results were based on the one likeability measurement of “How much would you like to work with this manager?” Since our sample consisted of college age students, it is possible that they perceived themselves as subordinates to this manager and the communal stereotype of women persisted so that a woman, even if she is agentic, is still nicer than an agentic male. In addition, our sample was overwhelming female (70%), and so this study might have failed to capture the animosity from males that occurs when a female is successful in a male domain. This is an important shortfall of this experiment because the hypotheses were based on theories of prejudice rooted in conflict theory and threats to the power structure. It is males, more than females, who would embody the kind of prejudice this study was attempting to capture.

Another possibility for the failure to find a dislike for successful females is that females who embody masculine achievement characteristics might be becoming more acceptable in our society among younger generations. The results in this study might demonstrate the increasing admiration we have for women who can “do it all” by being just as smart and successful as men in the work domain. Future studies are necessary to unravel these possibilities.

In the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job role, the study’s hypotheses were again partially supported. For women who were helping the poor and underprivileged, it

did not matter whether they were behaving communally or agentically, they were always perceived as competent. This confirmed the hypothesis, suggesting that regardless of how a woman behaved, if she was fulfilling her role in the hierarchy by helping the poor, she was accepted.

On the other hand, men violating their gender stereotype by acting communally in a job role that helps the poor and underprivileged seem to face severe social punishment in terms of competency, an effect that was not predicted. Although women who behaved agentically in the corporate job role were given a boost in competency, men fulfilling the characteristics necessary for a job role associated with females were negatively evaluated; they were perceived as less competent than communal females, agentic females, and agentic males in this job role. In fact, men behaving communally in hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) positions were perceived as the most incompetent of any other manager.

Furthermore, it was predicted that communal males in the hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) position would be disliked more than communal females and disliked more than communal males in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job role, an effect that only partially bore out. Communal men were not disliked more than communal females in the non-profit job but were more disliked than communal men in the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job role, although it did not reach significance. This study suggests that the social rejection for males manifests within competency ratings, rather than in likeability ratings, because communal males in the non-profit world garnered significantly lower scores than all other managers. This suggests that men were more positively evaluated in

general when they were behaving agentically and in job roles that perpetuate the hierarchy but it manifest more in perceptions of competency rather than likeability. This finding is consistent with Rudman and Glick (2001) who have found that male violations of stereotypes result in disrespect rather than dislike.

This negative competency evaluation of communal males in a non-profit job, although not predicted, has some interesting implications. Predictions in this study were based on the idea that male and female gender behavior violations in stereotypical and non-stereotypical job context would result in parallel patterns of social rejection in competency and likeability ratings. However, this study demonstrated that the unequal nature of gender roles and gender stereotypes creates opposite patterns of social rejection for males and females violating their gender stereotypes. For example, women who embodied characteristics necessary for the hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job role were perceived positively; they overcame barriers associated with their gender to achieve a higher status position in the social structure, and so therefore must possess outstanding excellence in competency and likeability. But males who behaved like females in a female role failed to live up to their position and instead descended to an inferior role associated with females. Rather than achieving a higher status, he fell to a lower status, and hence was perceived to possess inferior competency. We can find a parallel in a children's playroom; little girls playing with trucks might be admired for being "tough and independent like a boy" but little boys playing with dolls might be a cause for great concern.

Weaknesses

There were a number of limitations in this study that might have affected the results. First, social desirability is always a persistent problem when asking participants to give their opinions about their impressions of others. While this study did its best to mask the true nature of the experiment, it is possible that students made sure that they rated female leaders positively because they were aware of the offensiveness of sexism. Their awareness that sexism is unacceptable could have resulted in inflated ratings of the female managers. The smaller number of male participants compared to female participants could have also resulted in inflated ratings of female managers.

In addition, measures of likeability were assessed with a single likert-style question for the dependent variable. The index for likeability that included multiple questions to measure likeability resulted in non-significant interaction effects but this single question did show interaction effects. Indices are considered more broad and accurate in assessing participant impressions because they do not rely on just one answer. However, in this study, the likeability index seemed to be less sensitive to significant differences in ratings than the single question. Results reported in this study relied on one question “how much would you like to work with this manager?” and it is possible that college-aged participants perceived themselves as subordinates to these managers rather than colleagues. It would have been wise to include additional measures of likeability that asked “How much would you like to have this person as a boss?” and “How much would you like to work with this person as a colleague?”

Another weakness in this study was that descriptions were written to be overwhelmingly successful across conditions. This was done to assess perceptions of successful male and female managers in counter-stereotypical domains. However, this is problematic for two reasons. First, ratings of managers were positively skewed and therefore violated assumptions of normalcy when conducting ANOVA statistics. Second, successful descriptions fail to communicate enough ambiguity that allows for stereotyped perceptions to flourish. Previous studies show that the effects of gender bias are strongest when information is ambiguous (e.g., Heilman et. al., 2004). It is possible that too many capable descriptors were given about the managers so that the obvious information masked the differences in perceptions of leaders. Future studies should examine whether this is true by looking at the effects of ambiguous descriptions and also overwhelmingly incompetent manager descriptions.

Future Research

Future studies should not only incorporate ambiguous descriptions of managers but also assess individual differences that contribute to the variability in perceptions of male and female leaders. It is interesting to note that participant gender did not have an effect on manager ratings in this study and in other studies (Heilman et. al., 2004). If male participants are no more likely than female participants to feel hostility toward a successful female in a male-dominated domain then this finding contradicts the idea that gender bias is solely about inter-group competition for resources as Conflict Theory would suggest. Further research is necessary to examine how male and female participants perceive powerful men and women differently and for what reasons.

Continued research is needed to specifically assess whether or not male and female participants perceive powerful behavior from females as a threat to the power structure.

One way to understand participant differences is to examine the effect of social dominance orientation on competency and likeability ratings. It might be likely that those who are higher on social dominance would be more likely to reward women for behaving agentially in a hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) job and more likely to punish men for behaving communally in a hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) job. Also, participants' adherence to traditional sex roles might also determine how much they would perceive nonconforming gendered behavior to be unusual or in violation of expectations.

In addition, ratings of gender neutral managers did follow predictions that participants would assume them to be the gender most appropriate for the occupational context, hierarchy-enhancing for males and hierarchy-attenuating for females. Still, future research could more directly assess this assumption by asking participants to guess the gender of the manager.

Finally, future studies might examine different types of hierarchy-attenuating and hierarchy-enhancing jobs. In this study, the hierarchy-attenuating and hierarchy-enhancing constructs were operationalized in terms of corporate and non-profit jobs. While the pre-testing results of the descriptions did support the validity of these operationalizations, it might be also interesting to examine the effect of a variety of other hierarchy-attenuating or hierarchy-enhancing occupations. It is certainly possible that the effect of job context in hierarchy-enhancing jobs that involve law enforcement or the

military would produce even stronger effects in competency and likeability ratings.

Along the same vein, hierarchy-attenuating jobs that involve childcare might also amplify the effects of competency and likeability ratings because these jobs involve additional stereotypes about the domain of male and female work.

Implications

The results of this study suggest that gender bias and gender typed behavior might be broader than cognitive classifications and heuristic expectations for human behavior. When we examine how gender stereotypes function, we must also consider the context for social and economic power in which these stereotypes operate. It is important for us to understand that agentic women or communal men are perceived differently depending on whether they are violating the current hierarchical social structure that says men occupy positions where they compete for power and privilege and women occupy positions of cooperation and nurturance. Those (men) who are expected to compete for power will achieve higher status positions than those who are expected to be oriented toward cooperation and egalitarianism (women). It is not nonconforming gendered behavior by itself that violates gender norms, but it that nonconforming gender behavior within a context of social power that threatens the hierarchical status quo and results in more severe forms of social rejection and gender discrimination.

In addition, even though most research looks at gender bias in terms of prejudice toward women, we must also investigate how perceptions of female inferiority are embedded in norms of masculinity. As we increasingly value achievement and competition from women, encouraging “special” women to excel and achieve a special

status as men, we must also consider how this subtly reflects a devaluing of characteristics such as sensitivity and nurturance associated with the female gender.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Sample of Leader Descriptions

Hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) & Agentic Description

“Person X” is the Vice-President of New Business Development for H&T Investments, a non-profit brokerage house that facilitates charitable investments to the needy. This person’s responsibility is to help minority and low status companies grow their businesses through low interest loans and other investment services. This is a manager who accepts nothing less than the best performances from junior executive subordinates. Over the past 10 years, this manager has decisively controlled a team that tries to build donation programs serving underprivileged communities. “Person X” has an aggressive business sense, approaching problems with strength, tenacity and confidence. “Person X” is assertive and is willing to go out on a limb to make independent decisions. “Person X” single handedly creates charitable giving designs and doesn’t back down from promoting ideas. This person uses a firm and forceful approach to acquire international funding grants, which channel money and positive resources towards lower socioeconomic classes. A self-sufficient and ambitious leader, “Person X” commands a team to work toward initiating minority business development and promote opportunities for the disadvantaged. This manager’s independence and self-reliance in risk taking is useful in developing minority-owned businesses and public funds to benefit the poor and middle classes. Many recognize this person’s commanding disposition and ability to earn compliance from subordinates. The self-assured personality of “Person X” is obvious when managing client relationships as an ongoing point person for many new charitable donors as well as disadvantaged minority clients in their first six months.

Hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) & Agentic Description

“Person X” is the Vice-President of New Business Development for H&T Investments, a large brokerage company that targets investments in Fortune 500 companies. This person’s responsibility is to help some of the wealthiest multinational corporations expand into international markets and resources. This is a manager who accepts nothing less than the best performances from junior executive subordinates. Over the past 10 years, this manager has decisively controlled a team that tries to build a blue chip client base within the top tier of wealth in the country. “Person X” has an aggressive business sense, approaching problems with strength, tenacity and confidence. “Person X” is assertive and is willing to go out on a limb to make independent decisions. “Person X” single handedly creates wealth management designs and doesn’t back down from promoting ideas. This person uses a firm and forceful approach to recruit elite business leaders in need of services that help to perpetuate and preserve their wealth. A self-sufficient and ambitious leader, “Person X” commands a team to work toward promoting continued corporate growth for wealthy business leaders. This manager’s independence and self-reliance in risk taking is useful in helping well-established and high-ranking corporations expand their command of the market. Many recognize this person’s commanding disposition and ability to earn compliance from subordinates. The self-assured personality of “Person X” is obvious when managing client relationships as an ongoing point person for many new Fortune 500 clients in their first six months.

Hierarchy-attenuating (non-profit) & Communal Description

“Person X” is the Vice-President of New Business Development for H&T Investments, a non-profit brokerage house that facilitates charitable investments to the needy. This person’s responsibility is to help minority and low status companies grow their businesses through low interest loans and other investment services. This is a manager who is sensitive to differing work styles, talents and abilities of junior executives. Over the past 10 years, this manager has guided a team that tries to build donation programs serving underprivileged communities. “Person X” has an open and helpful attitude, approaching problems with care, support and cooperation. “Person X” takes in different opinions and incorporates them into charity giving designs. “Person X” is accommodating and open to others’ ideas, changing an approach to a problem if better solutions are presented. This person uses interpersonal relationship skills to acquire international funding grants, which channel money and positive resources towards lower socioeconomic classes. A receptive and nurturing leader, “Person X” works with teams to integrate their skills in ways to initiate minority business development and promote opportunities for the disadvantaged. This manager’s ability to communicate and relate to others is useful in developing minority-owned businesses and public funds to benefit the poor and middle classes. Many recognize this person’s approachable and gentle disposition in the office. “Person X”’s affectionate personality is obvious when managing client relationships as an ongoing point person for many new charitable donors as well as disadvantaged minority clients in their first six months.

Hierarchy-enhancing (corporate) & Communal Description

“Person X” is the Vice-President of New Business Development for H&T Investments, a large brokerage company that targets investments in Fortune 500 companies. This person’s responsibility is to help some of the wealthiest multinational corporations expand into international markets and resources. This is a manager who is sensitive to differing work styles, talents and abilities of junior executives. Over the past 10 years, this manager has guided a team that tries to build a blue chip client base within the top tier of wealth in the country. “Person X” has an open and helpful attitude, approaching problems with care, support and cooperation. “Person X” takes in different opinions and incorporates them into wealth management designs. “Person X” is accommodating and open to others’ ideas, changing an approach to a problem if better solutions are presented. This person uses interpersonal relationship skills to recruit elite business leaders in need of services that help to perpetuate and preserve their wealth. A receptive and nurturing leader, “Person X” works with teams to integrate their skills in ways to promote continued corporate growth for wealthy business leaders. This manager’s ability to communicate and relate to others is useful in helping well-established and high-ranking corporations expand their command of the market. Many recognize this person’s approachable and gentle disposition in the office. “Person X”’s affectionate personality is obvious when managing client relationships as an ongoing point person for many new Fortune 500 clients in their first six months.

Appendix B

Sample of Likert Scale Measure

Leader Likert Scale Ratings

Instructions: Please rate your impressions of the person just described.

How competent do you think "Person X" is at the job?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
weak			neutral			Strong

"Person X" is an aggressive business manager.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

This passage describes positive personality characteristics about "Person X".

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

"Person X" is a manager who is sensitive to others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

How likely do you think "Person X" will get a promotion?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not likely			neutral			Very likely

"Person X" is a confident business manager.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

How likeable do you think "Person X" is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
unlikeable			neutral			Very likeable

"Person X" is a helpful business manager.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
How much would you like to work with "Person X"?						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all			neutral			Very much
How successful do you think "Person X" is at the company?						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
weak			neutral			strong
"Person X" is primarily concerned with achievement.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
This passage describes a manager with negative personality characteristics.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
"Person X" is an independent business manager.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
How much do you think others would like to work with "Person X"?						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all			neutral			Very much
"Person X" is primarily concerned with the welfare of others.						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

“Person X” is a manager who is interpersonally cooperative.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly			neutral			strongly
disagree						agree

How powerful is “Person X” in the company?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not very			neutral			very
powerful						powerful

Appendix C
Consent Form

Purpose of this Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study evaluating how we form impressions of people, places and objects. The study is being conducted by Dr. Arlene Asuncion, professor in the Department of Psychology, and Adriana Manago, experimental graduate student.

What Will Happen During the Study?

As a participant, you will be given a survey containing descriptions of various people, places and objects. You will be asked to recall information about these descriptions and rate your overall impressions of them. Once you have completed that task, you will be issued a demographic survey. There is no compensation or discernible benefits for participating in this study

Your Privacy is Important

Although the results of this study may be published, no information that could identify you will be included. We will make every effort to protect your privacy. The information obtained in the study will be recorded with a participant number, not your name. Since we will be making efforts to protect your privacy, we ask you to agree that we may use the information we get from this research study in any way we think is best for publication or education.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact

Dr. Arlene Asuncion (408) 924-5609; (asuncia@email.sjsu.edu)

Risks and Discomforts

There are no known risks or discomforts from participating in this study.

Your Rights

Your response to this questionnaire should take approximately 25 minutes. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without jeopardy. If you have any complaints about this study, you may contact the Chair of the Department of Psychology:

Dr. Sheila Bienenfeld (408-924-5642; sbien@sbcglobal.net)

Institutional Review Board Approval

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of San Jose State University has reviewed and approved this study. If you have any concerns about your rights in this study you may contact the Interim Associate Vice President, Graduate Studies and Research:

Dr. Pamela Stacks (408-924-2480; pstacks@jupiter.sjsu.edu)

Your consent is being given voluntarily. If you decide to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw at any time without any negative effect on your relations with San Jose State University or with any other participating institutions or agencies.

I have had the chance to ask any questions I have about this study, and they have been answered.

I have read the information in this consent form, and I agree to be in the study. I will get a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

(Participant Signature)

(Date)

(Investigator Signature)

(Date)