

# **Social Psychology of Prejudice:**

*Historical and  
Contemporary Issues*

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*Lewinian Press*

*B=F(P,E)*

For Charlotte and Jasper

PUBLISHED BY LEWINIAN PRESS  
1415 Jayhawk Boulevard  
Lawrence, Kansas 66045

Printed in the United States of America.

*Cover photo* © Doug Hitt, 1996.

*This book is based on a conference supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 9910732. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.*

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## Implicit Power Brokers: Benevolent Barriers to Gender Equity

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Gender prejudice research began serendipitously, with a cocktail party and a *New Yorker* cartoon (Helmreich, 1999). Janet Spence and Robert Helmreich met at the party, and both were struck by a cartoon in which a man said to a woman during a dinner date, “You are really stupid. I like that in a woman.” Helmreich had recently found that competent men were liked more than incompetent men, and the two wondered whether the effect would generalize to women. The result was their seminal study, “Who likes competent women?” (Spence & Helmreich, 1972a). To test their hypothesis that only gender egalitarians would like competent women, they designed the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (ATWS; Spence & Helmreich, 1972b), which assesses attitudes toward the rights and roles of women. The romantics among us might picture these pioneers scribbling items on cocktail napkins as they shaped the first individual difference measure of gender prejudice. However the instrument came about, Spence and Helmreich not only found support for their hypothesis, they effectively launched gender research within social psychology.

Their initial endeavor set the stage for gender prejudice researchers’ concern with two broad themes for the next thirty years. The first theme is a focus on attitudes toward gender equality rather than attitudes toward women per se. The second theme concerns perceptions that men and women are different, resulting in a wealth of literature on sex stereotypes. These two themes are linked by the common assumption that sexism involves anti-female attitudes that stem from the belief that men are superior to women (e.g., more capable intellectually and physically). Thus, historically, gender prejudice research has focused on negative attitudes toward gender equality and beliefs about women. This approach has viewed prejudice toward women as “antipathy,” in the venerable tradition of conceptualizing prejudice as negative attitudes toward individuals based on their group membership (Allport, 1954).

Although this approach has been fruitful, the limitations of treating sexism purely as antipathy toward women are two-fold. First, it does not take into account the fact that people often hold positive attitudes toward and beliefs about women. Second, it does not explain why women themselves are prone to maintaining the status quo. In this chapter, I will briefly overview the historical approach to gender prejudice. I will then note recent advances in social structural theories of prejudice that address

how seemingly benevolent forms of prejudice undermine women's socioeconomic progress. Finally, I will present data that support the existence of two types of benevolent barriers to gender equity.

### The Historical Approach

#### *Gender Prejudice as Antipathy Toward Women*

*Anti-female attitudes.* The ATWS (Spence & Helmreich, 1972b) assesses blatantly sexist attitudes regarding women's status in society (e.g., "Women should be concerned with their duties of childbearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers"). Consistent with the argument that it reflects antipathy toward women, high ATWS scores are associated with male aggression toward women (Nirenberg & Gaebelin, 1979; Scott & Tetreault, 1987) and favorable perceptions of those who aggress toward women (e.g., rapists; Weidner & Griffitt, 1983; and domestic abusers; Hillier & Foddy, 1993). However, the measure is limited in the scope of its predictive utility (see Spence, 1999, for a review). For example, it does not predict gender identity (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975), women's career choices (Basow & Howe, 1980), or gender stereotypes (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989), perhaps because the ATWS measures attitudes toward women's rights, not attitudes toward women per se.

A further limitation is the measure's transparency, which may result in contamination from social desirability concerns. Not surprisingly, scores on the ATWS have consistently decreased over time; indeed, the measure no longer shows appreciable variability in college student samples (Spence, 1999; Spence & Hahn, 1995). To counter social desirability bias, researchers have developed more subtle instruments that tap antipathy toward women's progress and the policies that support it (e.g., affirmative action). Modeled after McConahay's (1986) approach to assessing racism, the Modern Sexism Scale (Swim, Aiken, Hall, & Hunter, 1995) and the Neo-Sexism Scale (Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995) assess opposition to feminist demands, including the belief that women are no longer discriminated against and therefore do not need affirmative action. Nonetheless, like the ATWS, these instruments are more concerned with attitudes toward gender equality than attitudes toward women per se.

*Anti-female beliefs.* By contrast, gender stereotype research has more directly targeted beliefs about women as a group. Compared with men, women have historically been perceived as less intelligent, competent, self-determining, independent, achievement-oriented, and ambitious (e.g., Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Hacker, 1951)—in a word, *agentive* (Bakan, 1966). The putative absence of female agency underscored the (once prominent) misconception that women lacked intrinsic motivation to succeed (Horner, 1972). Today, we understand that women do not "fear success" so much as they avoid the appearance of deviance (as do men; Cherry & Deaux, 1978). Women are also likely to strive to succeed in areas in which

they are culturally supported (Eccles, 1987). Because men and women have traditionally been socialized to assume different roles in society, with men serving as breadwinners and women as homemakers, expectations for their behavior differ (Eagly, 1987). As a result, agency continues to be more associated with males than with females (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000; Spence & Buckner, 2000).

The socioeconomic implications of this discrepancy were immediately clear to gender researchers. Gutek (1985) argued that “sex-role spillover”—the tendency for gender-based expectations to leak into work roles—was costly for women. For example, female supervisors are expected to be more nurturant and sympathetic than men in the same positions, which may undermine their authority. Heilman’s (1983) “lack of fit” hypothesis argued that women were not considered to be suitable managers because they were perceived as insufficiently agentic. As a consequence, for women to gain entry into male-dominated positions, it was necessary for them to disconfirm gender stereotypes—in short, to act more like men (Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). In fact, unless a woman provides disconfirming evidence that she is not a “typical” female, she may not be seriously considered as a candidate for jobs that require leadership skills (Forsyth, Schlenker, Leary, & McCown, 1985; Glick, Zion, & Nelson, 1988; Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989). Writing in the 1970’s, Seyfried & Hendrick (1973) optimistically forecast the following solution to gender inequity:

“At present, the role of women in society is hotly debated by members and students of the various women’s liberation movements. The central issue hinges on a redefinition of the role of woman as a person—on what she should be. There are only two traditional models of the person readily available, that of the male and that of the female, and the traditional model of the female is under attack. The great difficulty in constructing a viable third model...suggests a simple answer to the debate. The modern female of the future will be very much like the male—in sex-role attitudes, general value orientation, and philosophy of life” (p. 20).

In sum, to undermine gender hegemony, women need only present themselves as independent, competitive, and forceful creatures (i.e., “act like men”). Although this solution indeed sounds simple, at present it is untenable for women because agency is not only more expected of men, it is more accepted in men. For example, women who self-promote (Powers & Zuroff, 1988; Rudman, 1998), argue assertively (Carli, 1990; Costrich, Feinstein, Kidder, Marecek, & Pascale, 1975), or defend themselves aggressively (Branscombe, Crosby & Weir, 1993) are viewed less favorably than identical male counterparts. Likewise, agentic women (but not men) are discriminated against when vying for leadership positions, even though agency is necessary for being viewed as competent and qualified (Rudman & Glick, 1999; see also Forsyth, Heiney, &

Wright, 1997). When women do obtain leadership positions, they have a difficult time balancing the requisites of the work role with their gender role (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991; Gutek, 1985; Riordan, Gross, & Maloney, 1994). For example, female bosses who lead in a task-oriented (versus a people-oriented) style are evaluated more negatively than male counterparts (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). These findings have led gender researchers to posit that sex stereotypes are not only descriptive (delineating what men and women are), but also prescriptive (delineating how men and women should be; Eagly, 1987; Fiske & Stevens, 1993). At this nexus, gendered beliefs overlap with attitudes. As a consequence, the remedy for gender inequity in the workplace is not as straightforward as was once presumed.

### **The Contemporary Approach**

#### *Gender Prejudice as Benevolence Toward Women*

As noted above, conceptualizing sexism as antipathy toward women does not take into account the favorable attitudes that people have toward women. For example, Eagly & Mladinic (1989) found that people rate women as nicer, more supportive, and interpersonally sensitive, compared with men—in a word, more *communal* (Baken, 1966). As a result, people reported liking women more than they liked men. That is, female communality beliefs were associated with more positive attitudes toward women than men. This pattern has come to be known as “the women are wonderful” effect (see also Eagly, Mladinic, & Otto, 1991).

Similarly, Glick & Fiske (1996) found that women were rated as more moral, culturally refined, and worthy of protection, compared with men. They refer to this as “benevolent sexism.” How can benevolence be bad? First, Glick & Fiske argue that it represents paternal prejudice—an assumption that women are child-like and weak. Second, Glick & Fiske find evidence cross-culturally that benevolent sexism positively correlates with hostile sexism (Glick et al., 2000). Thus, people who have anti-female attitudes (e.g., who view women as trying to gain control over men) also view women benevolently. The authors interpret this pattern as suggesting ambivalence toward women; consistent with this view, they named their scale The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). But there is also evidence that female subtypes can explain the coincidence of hostile and benevolent sexism. Specifically, hostile sexism is directed toward career women and feminists, whereas benevolent sexism is directed toward traditional women (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997). Thus, a way of synthesizing the above research is to dub it “the women are wonderful when” effect—when they are not in power. That is, women are wonderful provided they are communal and stick to traditional female roles.

The notion that women receive positive reinforcement for communal behaviors and adopting traditional roles is consistent with social structural theories of sexism (Eagly, 1987; Gutek, 1985) and other forms of

prejudice (Glick & Fiske, 1999; Glick & Fiske, 2001). In particular, Jackman (1994) argues that benevolence toward subordinates in general (not only women) serves to reinforce dominants' position of superiority and control. Whites in the Old South once stereotyped Blacks as cheerful and loyal, but also as ignorant, submissive, and in need of protection. Most perniciously, these beliefs were internalized by Blacks, and resulted in their helping to maintain a system of own-group oppression. Similarly, stereotyping women as nice (but weak) and treating them benevolently (but patronizingly) serves to maintain gender hegemony in at least two ways. First, it undermines perceptions of female competence and authority, relegating women to low-status, nurturing roles. Second, it may lead women themselves to uphold the status quo. Certainly oppression is more palatable for subordinates when it is sugar-coated, compared with when it is overtly hostile (Jackman, 1994). Moreover, women may not recognize that a prescription for female niceness underscores their subordinate status in society. Instead, they may view it as a means of positively distinguishing themselves from men (Brewer, 1991), as well as a means of receiving positive reinforcement (Kilianski & Rudman, 1998). As a result, women may be just as susceptible to forming attitudes based on prescriptive stereotypes as are men. For example, in the foregoing research on prejudice toward female agency (e.g., Costrich et al., 1975; Powers & Zuroff, 1988), including female job candidates (e.g., Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999) and supervisors (Eagly et al., 1989), women were no less prejudiced than were men. Moreover, women and men are equally likely to favor male over female bosses (Gallup, 1996; Rubner, 1991; Sherman & Spence, 1997), and to show an automatic preference for male over female authority figures in general (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). Finally, research using the ASI shows that women often report higher levels of benevolent, compared with hostile, sexism (although they routinely report lower levels of each than do men; e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996). Each of these findings is consistent with the argument that sexism cannot be fully explained by viewing prejudice solely as antipathy toward women, in the Allportian tradition. Instead, a perhaps more insidious form of prejudice, involving benevolent and paternalistic beliefs about and attitudes toward women, is necessary to account for the pervasiveness of gender hegemony, including the role that women themselves play in maintaining the status quo (Jackman, 1994; Glick & Fiske, 1999).

#### **Evidence for Benevolent Barriers to Gender Equity**

In this section, I will briefly present two lines of research that support the hypothesis that pro-female beliefs and attitudes can undermine gender equity. The first focuses on favorable stereotypes that people possess about women, whereas the second focuses on romantic attitudes that women themselves possess. In each case, a seemingly positive belief will be seen to have negative implications for women's ability to achieve

social and economic parity with men. Moreover, the operation of each was observed only when the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) was used. By contrast, self-reported stereotypes and romantic attitudes did not predict the critical outcome variables. For these reasons, I refer to these barriers as “implicit power brokers.”

*Female Communitary Beliefs and Prejudice Toward Agentic Women*

Research using simulated job interviews has revealed that female agency represents a double-edged sword for women (Rudman, 1998). On the one hand, female applicants who present themselves as strong and self-confident are viewed as highly qualified for positions that require agency (e.g., leadership skills, competitiveness, and ambition). On the other hand, these women are less likely to be hired, compared with agentic male counterparts, for a very important reason—because they are not liked (Rudman & Glick, 1999; 2001). I have termed social repercussions for female agency “the backlash effect” because it undermines women who strive for gender equity (Faludi, 1992).

Because agentic men are viewed as both competent and socially attractive, backlash clearly represents gender prejudice. In this case, it takes the form of a double standard such that behaviors that are acceptable for men—and that lead to an impression of competence—create sanctions when adopted by women. Moreover, it seemed likely that backlash stemmed, at least in part, from violating the prescriptive female stereotype. Agentic women may be rejected for being perceived as insufficiently communal, in other words. If this hypothesis was correct, then people who endorse the female communality stereotype ought to show more prejudice toward agentic women (i.e., backlash). The researcher’s job appeared to be simple: measure belief in the stereotype along with backlash, and see if they correlate. However, despite several attempts to support what seemed like an obvious hypothesis, the data were uncooperative (Rudman, 1995; Rudman, 1998). It wasn’t until Peter Glick and I turned to an implicit measure of gender stereotypes (the IAT) that support was found (Rudman & Glick, 2001).

Method

Undergraduate men and women ( $N=179$ ; 109 female) participated in an “Interview Skills Assessment” project. They believed they were rating applicants for a computer lab management position. The job was described as requiring both agency (e.g., competitiveness and the ability to perform under time pressure) and communality (e.g., willingness to help new computer users).<sup>1</sup> Participants then watched a videotaped job interview that featured either a male or female applicant. In addition, the applicants presented themselves as agentic or communal. The script for each condition did not differ by applicant gender. Thus, agentic male and female applicants performed exactly the same script (as did their

communal counterparts). In response to job-related questions, agentic applicants described themselves as competitive and gave strong examples of their ability to perform under pressure and master computers. By contrast, communal applicants described themselves as cooperative and gave somewhat weaker examples of job-related skills. Following this, participants rated the applicant's competence, likability, and hireability (on Likert-type scales, using several items to tap each dimension).

### Results

#### *Applicant Ratings*

Figure 1 shows the applicant ratings results, presented as effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) such that high bars represent higher ratings for male, as opposed to female, applicants (i.e., sex discrimination). Communal applicants are presented on the left side of Figure 1. As can be seen, communal males were rated as more competent and hireable, compared with communal females. By contrast, there were no differences between communal targets' likability ratings. This pattern suggests that when women present themselves as cooperative and communal, they may be overlooked for leadership positions on the basis of perceived incompetence. Agentic applicants are presented on the right side of Figure 1. Here we see the double-edged sword of female agency. Although agentic female applicants were rated as highly competent—slightly more so even than agentic male applicants—the men received significantly greater likability scores and, as a result, they were more likely to be hired for the computer lab manager position. Indeed, Rudman & Glick (1999; 2001) found that likeability scores wholly mediate the effect of agentic target gender on hireability ratings, suggesting that agentic female targets are less likely to be hired *because* they are not liked (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

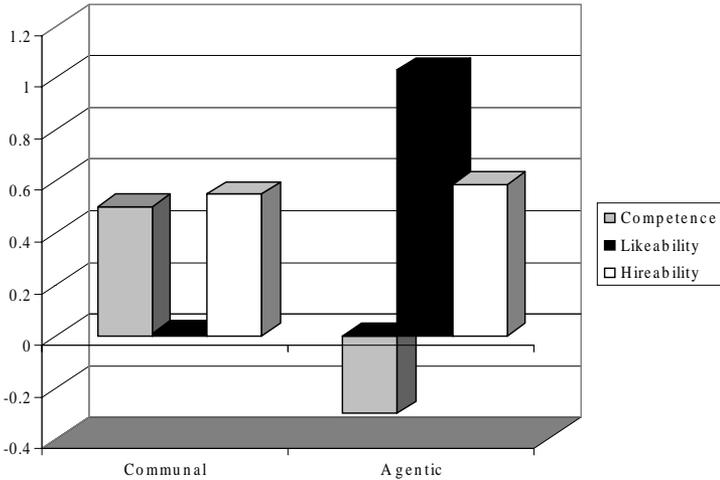


Figure 1. *Applicant Ratings Gender Typicality of Applicants.* Applicant rating results are collapsed across job condition (Rudman & Glick, 2001) and shown in effect sizes (Cohen's  $d$ ) that contrast males with females. High scores represent bias in favor of male applicants (whether communal or agentic). By convention, small, medium, and large effects correspond to .20, .50, and .80 (Cohen, 1988).

Given its role as a mediator in hiring discrimination, uncovering correlates of prejudice toward female agency (backlash) is an important research task. As noted above, it seemed likely that people who endorsed the female communality stereotype would also show backlash. However, self-reports of gender stereotypes (and gender-related attitudes) failed to conform to hypotheses. These null results may be due to the fact that respondents are unwilling to report their gender beliefs (Dovidio & Fazio, 1992). Alternatively, people may be unable to introspect about their gender beliefs, particularly if they have become so ingrained as to be virtually automatic (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). In either event, the possibility that the hypothesis was correct but the measurement strategy flawed led us to an implicit measure of gender stereotypes. Therefore, in addition to rating job applicants, participants performed a gender stereotype IAT (used in prior research; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). They also completed a self-report stereotype measure and the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Before presenting the remaining results, a brief explanation of these measures is provided.

#### *Gender-Belief Measures*

*The gender stereotype IAT.* The IAT used 42 stimulus words: 15 female names (e.g., ANN, LINDA) 15 male names (e.g., BRIAN, DAVID), 6 communal-meaning words (communal, attached, cooperative, together, kinship, and commitment) and 6 agentic-meaning words (independent, competitive, autonomous, individual, hierarchical, and self-sufficient).

The five steps of the gender stereotype IAT are as follows. (1) Subjects distinguish male and female names by pressing right or left keys on the computer keyboard. (2) Subjects similarly distinguish the agentic and communal words. (3) They respond to female names and communal words with the left key, and male names and agentic words with the right key (combined categorization task). (4) They repeat Step 1 but with responses reversed. (5) They respond to male names and communal words with the left key and female names and agentic words with the right key (combined categorization task). The IAT effect is computed by subtracting the mean response latency for performing the *stereotype compatible* task (Step 3) from the *stereotype noncompatible* task (Step 5). Thus, positive difference scores reflect an automatic association between female gender and communality and male gender and agency (i.e., implicit stereotyping). The order in which subjects perform Step 3 and Step 5 is counterbalanced across subjects.<sup>2</sup>

On average, men and women showed IAT effects of +87 ms and +55 ms, corresponding to effect sizes (Cohen's  $d$ ) of .59 and .37, respectively. The IAT effect did not differ for men and women,  $F(1, 156)=2.49$ , *ns*. Finally, this effect was significantly greater than zero for both genders, both  $t_s > 3.60$ ,  $p_s < .001$ .

*The gender stereotype index.* Participants rated five communal (communal, cooperative, supportive, kinship-oriented, and connected) and six agentic (individualistic, competitive, independent, hierarchical, self-sufficient, and autonomous) traits on scales that were anchored -3 (*more true of women*) to +3 (*more true of men*). The index was formed by subtracting mean judgments of communal traits from mean judgments of agentic traits so that high scores indicated more traditional gender beliefs, yielding a possible range of -6 (nontraditional judgment) to 6 (traditional judgment). In contrast to the IAT data, men scored higher than women on the gender stereotype index,  $t(170)=2.19$  ( $M_s=1.65$  vs. 1.28, respectively).

*The ASI.* The ASI consists of two 11-item subscales that assess hostile sexism (e.g., "Feminists are seeking for women to have more power than men") and benevolent sexism (e.g., "Women should be cherished and protected by men"). Participants rated ASI items on a 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale. High scores reflect more hostile sexism (HS) or benevolent sexism (BS). Consistent with prior research (Glick & Fiske, 1996), men scored higher than women on both HS ( $M_s=2.59$  vs. 1.98) and BS ( $M_s=2.84$  vs. 2.46), both  $t_s(170) > 2.96$ ,  $p_s < .01$ .

In sum, male and female participants showed similar evidence of possessing implicit gender stereotypes, whereas men scored higher than women on self-report measures of stereotypes and sexism.

#### *Correlates of Prejudice Toward Agentic Women*

The principal aim was to examine the relationship between agentic females' likeability ratings and implicit gender stereotypes. If IAT scores are negatively linked to these ratings, results would be consistent with the

hypothesis that agentic women are sanctioned because they violate prescriptive stereotypes (i.e., are viewed as insufficiently nice). Table 1 shows the focal results. Agentic male applicants' ratings are included for comparison purposes.

Table 1. *Likeability Ratings as a Function of Implicit and Explicit Gender Beliefs.*

	Experiment 1		Experiment 2	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Gender Stereotype IAT	-.30*	.07	-.33**	-.16
Gender Stereotype Index	-.09	.17	-.17	.07
Hostile Sexism	.08	-.01	-.06	-.11
Benevolent Sexism	.24	-.25	.05	-.21

*Experiment 1 reports the results from Rudman & Glick (2001). Experiment 2 reports the results from Rudman & Glick (1999b). Mean n=52 per cell. The gender stereotype IAT assessed implicit associations between female gender and communality and male gender and agency. High scores indicate greater implicit stereotyping. High scores on the gender stereotype index indicate greater reported stereotyping. High scores on Hostile Sexism indicate more negative attitudes toward women. High scores on Benevolent Sexism indicate more favorable attitudes toward women. \*p<.05. \*\*p<.01.*

The left half of Table 1 shows the findings presented in Rudman & Glick (2001). The right half shows the results of a replication experiment (Rudman & Glick, 1999b). As can be seen, both experiments yielded a similar pattern of results. People who scored high on the gender stereotype IAT also showed less liking for agentic female job applicants. By contrast, the self-report measures, whether they assessed stereotypes or sexism, were weakly related to backlash. Finally, agentic male applicants' likeability ratings were unreliably correlated with either implicit or explicit gender beliefs, perhaps because he confirmed (rather than violated) gender stereotypes.

In sum, people who possessed implicit gender stereotypes tended to dislike agentic female job applicants, which, in turn, mediated sex discrimination in hireability ratings (Rudman & Glick, 1999; Rudman & Glick, 2001). As a result, a positive belief about women—that they are nicer and more communal than men—has negative consequences for gender equity. Indeed, if asked, many people would say that this belief represents a “good” stereotype about women. However, it clearly has repercussions for women who attempt to disconfirm negative female stereotypes by adopting agency. The implications of the research are that women may have to walk a fine line between acting sufficiently agentic

(to be perceived as competent) and communal (to be perceived as likable) in order to move into positions of leadership and authority—a delicate feat of impression management that, by comparison, men are not obliged to perform.

*Romantic Beliefs and Women's Interest in Personal Power*

Although women make up 46% of the workforce, they are underrepresented in positions of power and prestige (for a review, see Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gender prejudice helps to perpetuate this fact, as backlash research makes clear. However, self-selection bias may also be an important factor (Snyder & Ickes, 1985). Compared with men, women tend to shy away from positions that carry the highest rewards, both social and economic (Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius, & Siers, 1997). For as long as they do, gender hegemony will persist. Therefore, it is important to investigate why women might be less interested in positions of authority and leadership, compared with men.

Jessica Heppen and I (Rudman & Heppen, 2003) focused on romance, a putatively positive ideology for women. Romance idealizes femininity, and places women on a pedestal. However, it may also teach them (e.g., through romantic fairy tales) to depend on men for economic and social rewards. In particular, the romantic idealization of men as chivalric rescuers of women (e.g., “Prince Charming,” “White Knight”) might encourage “the fairer sex” to seek their fortune indirectly, through men. If so, romantic fantasies might be negatively linked to women’s interest in personal power. With this hypothesis in mind, we examined the potential costs of romantic socialization for women. Because we suspected that, as inheritors of the Women’s Movement, many college-aged women might be reluctant to report romantic fantasies, we used the IAT (as well as self-reports) to measure this construct.

Method

Undergraduate women ( $N=77$ ) participated in a project entitled “Attitudes Toward Relationships.” After providing demographic information (e.g., age, ethnicity, and their relationship status),<sup>3</sup> they reported their chosen occupation (or the occupation they were leaning toward, if they had not yet decided). Overall, participants showed a preference for medical occupations ( $n=20$ , 27%), including physician, pharmacist, and physical therapist. This was followed by business occupations ( $n=10$ , 13%), including executive, manager, and accountant. The third ranked preference was education ( $n=9$ , 12%), followed by the social sciences and the arts (both  $n_s=7$ , 9% each). The fifth ranked preference was shared by the legal profession and computer science (both  $n_s=6$ , 8% each). The sixth ranked preference was also shared by two categories—science and engineering, and miscellaneous (both  $n_s=3$ , 4% each). Six women did not respond to this item.

*Power-Related Outcome Variables*

Using a 1998 reference book (*America's Top 300 Jobs: A Complete Career Handbook*),<sup>4</sup> we assessed each occupation's earning potential, using the median income for that profession ( $M=\$63,129$ ,  $SD=\$58,700$ ). These *projected income* estimates ranged from \$12,400 (flight attendant) to \$349,000 (CEO). As a measure of *education goal*, we also noted the minimum amount of post-secondary education necessary for each job ( $M=5.58$  years,  $SD=2.7$ ; range=0-14 years).

Participants also reported their interest in several occupations on a scale from 1 (*no interest*) to 7 (*strongly interested*). Following Pratto et al. (1997), responses to five occupations (*business management, finance, corporate lawyer, politician, and education administration*)<sup>5</sup> were averaged to form the *high status job* index ( $M=3.07$ ,  $SD=1.21$ ). In sum, projected income, educational goal, and the high status job index provided three outcome variables. On each index, high scores reflect greater interest in personal power.

*Romantic Fantasies*

To measure explicit romantic fantasies, participants responded to five items on a scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). These items were, "I think of my lover as a Prince Charming," "I think of my lover as a White Knight," "My romantic partner is very protective of me," "I think of my lover as a hero," and "My romantic partner is an average man" (reverse scored). Responses were averaged to form the *romantic fantasies* index.

To measure implicit romantic fantasies, we constructed an IAT in which romantic partners were contrasted with other men, and fantasy was contrasted with reality. Romantic partners were represented by 8 words (e.g., boyfriend, lover, partner, sweetheart, date).<sup>6</sup> Other men were also represented by 8 words (e.g., brother, neighbor, peer, cousin, buddy). Fantasy was represented by an additional list of 8 constructs (e.g., Prince Charming, White Knight, castle, superhero, protector), as was reality (e.g., Average Joe, Regular Guy, ordinary, stable, predictable). The critical tasks obliged women to pair romantic partners with fantasy and other men with reality (abbreviated partner+fantasy) and to reverse these associations (abbreviated partner+reality). The difference between these was computed as the romantic fantasy IAT effect. High scores on this measure indicate stronger association of romantic partners with fantasy than with reality (i.e., implicit romantic fantasies).

## Results

Results for the romantic fantasy IAT revealed that, on average, women were faster when they associated romantic partners with fantasy than with reality,  $M=+74$  ms ( $SD=216$ ). This IAT effect was significantly greater than zero,  $t(76)=3.01$ ,  $p<.01$ . By contrast, women reported romantic fantasies about their partners that were not significantly greater than the neutral point,  $t(76)=1.60$ , *ns* ( $M=3.59$ ,  $SD=1.29$ ). Thus, women

reported associating their romantic partners about equally with fantasy and reality-based constructs, although their IAT scores showed greater association with fantasy.

*Correlations Among Measures*

Table 2 shows the relations among the measures of romantic fantasies and the outcome variables. As can be seen, the fantasy measures were unreliably (albeit positively) related, in support of each measure's discriminant validity. In addition, the outcome measures were not significantly related, with the exception of projected income and educational goal.

Table 2. *Correlations Among Implicit and Explicit Measures.*

	Fantasy IAT	Fantasy Index	Projected Income	Education Goal
Romantic Fantasy Index	.17			
Projected Income	-.38**	-.16		
Educational Goal	-.23*	.07	.34**	
High status Job Index	-.34**	-.08	.14	.17

*Note.* High scores on romantic fantasy measures indicate greater association of romantic partners with fantasy as opposed to reality. High scores on the remaining variables reflect greater interest in personal power. \* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$

Most important, Table 2 shows that women's implicit fantasies were negatively and significantly related to each of the outcome variables. First, women who implicitly romanticized their partners tended to choose occupations with reduced economic rewards. Dividing the sample by a median split on the romantic fantasies IAT, women who scored high showed a mean projected salary of \$53,818, whereas women who scored low showed a mean projected salary of \$75,895. Second, women who scored high on implicit romantic fantasies also chose occupations that required less education after high school. This finding suggests that idealizing men may dampen women's enthusiasm for educational achievement as well as financial gains. Third, women who implicitly romanticized their partners showed less interest in high status occupations (e.g., CEO, corporate lawyer). By contrast, the explicit

measure of romantic fantasies showed negligible covariation with each power-related outcome variable.

In sum, the findings suggest that implicit romantic fantasies may serve as a general predictor of women's strivings for personal power, including interest in high status occupations, and financial and educational aspirations. Taken together, the results provide tentative support for a possible "glass slipper" effect, such that women who implicitly idealize men may be more interested in pursuing power indirectly, through their romantic relationships, than by seeking their own fortunes. However, because the research is correlational, the direction of the fantasy-power relationship cannot be known. It is possible that women who are low in achievement motives romantically idealize men as a means of attaining social status. Nonetheless, because romantic ideologies are positive with respect to both women (placing them on a pedestal) and men (portraying them as chivalrous), they represent a second example of how benevolence can be harmful for gender equity.

### Summary and Discussion

Following a venerable tradition (Allport, 1954), the study of gender prejudice has historically centered on antipathy toward women, including resistance to their civil rights and negative female stereotypes. Although this approach has been productive, it has not been able to account for the positive attitudes and beliefs that people possess about women, or why women themselves might unwittingly perpetuate gender hegemony. To do so, we must begin to consider the role that benevolent beliefs play in maintaining the status quo (e.g., Jackman, 1994). To that end, I presented evidence for two benevolent barriers to gender equity—termed "implicit power brokers" because each has implications for women's progress and, in each case, their presence was revealed when implicit (but not explicit) beliefs and attitudes were assessed.

The first benevolent barrier concerns an automatic perceiver bias (Rudman & Glick, 2001; 1999b). People who associate women with communality (and men with agency) are also likely to discriminate against strong, self-confident female job applicants. In particular, they tend to view them as socially unattractive, which leads to hiring discrimination for positions that confer authority. Because agency is necessary in order to be viewed as competent, yet female agency results in social and economic sanctions, the result is a Catch-22 that hinders women from achieving power and influence. The second benevolent barrier concerns a bias in women themselves (Rudman & Heppen, 2003). Female college students who show automatic associations between male romantic partners and fantasy constructs (e.g., "Prince Charming") tend to choose occupations characterized by low financial rewards and educational requisites. They also report less interest in high status occupations.

Taken together, the findings are informative with respect to why women continue to be largely employed in low status occupations at the

turn of a new millennium. Perceivers who possess automatic gender stereotypes may devalue strong female candidates for leadership roles (the backlash effect). Women who implicitly rely on men for power and prestige may hinder their own aspirations, perhaps due to a belief that “someday their prince will come” (the glass slipper effect). Thus, each of these effects may directly contribute to gender hegemony. Less obvious, but equally important, are the ways in which these effects may be intertwined. For example, women who have experienced backlash may curb agentic behaviors in the presence of both prospective and actual employers, resulting in misperceptions of incompetence. To the extent that women are not able to disconfirm negative stereotypes by adopting agency, they may remain under the glass ceiling. As a result, they may be forced to depend on men in order to gain status and prestige. If so, romanticizing men may be a more palatable option for women than bitterness about sexism. In addition, men’s romantic and economic lives are more consistent with respect to agency than are women’s. For example, men are encouraged to be assertive (e.g., to promote themselves) whether they are interviewing for a job, negotiating a contract, or approaching potential dating partners. By contrast, women are encouraged to be more modest and self-effacing in romantic situations. If women in performance settings are judged by criteria more suited to romantic roles (Gutek, 1985), female agency may be viewed harshly by men and women alike. Thus, the observation that power and romance are more compatible for men might play a role in the possibility that, for women, romance may be viewed as a means of achieving power more so than it is for men.

Theoretically, the presence of benevolent barriers to gender equity is significant because it broadens our definition of prejudice, and forces us to consider that prejudice may be more heterogeneous than previously thought (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1999; 2001). From a practical standpoint, if prejudice is not monolithic, we are faced with a wider variety of potentially effective responses to it. In other words, thinking outside Allport’s antipathy box expands potential causes of prejudice and intervention strategies alike. However, the benevolent barriers discussed in this chapter are likely to be difficult to counteract. This is due to both the valence of the beliefs and the process by which they appear to influence judgments and behaviors. Because viewing women as nicer than men casts women in a favorable light, and because romantic ideologies idealize women and men alike, they are likely to be overlooked as potential causes of gender inequity. Awareness is the first step to counteracting bias (Wilson & Brekke, 1994), so the fact that positive ideologies are likely to “sneak past” even vigilant egalitarians as a source of oppression is a significant one. In addition, the fact that each benevolent barrier was evident only when measured implicitly suggests that nonconscious beliefs about female niceness or male chivalry may be

more powerful sources of influence, compared with beliefs that are more readily accessible (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Again, this represents a difficulty in overcoming benevolent barriers to gender equity by sheer virtue of their relative invisibility.

This is not meant to imply hopelessness. On the contrary, I believe that expanding theoretical frameworks to include patronizing (as well as antagonistic) forms of prejudice bodes well for the future. Furthermore, the growing interest in indirect assessment tools, including response latency techniques, is an exciting development for prejudice researchers. Uncovering potentially hidden sources of gender prejudice, and calling attention to the ways in which treating women differently from men can harm them—even when this appears, on the surface, to be benevolent—can only further the aim of conquering gender inequity.

### Notes

[1] In fact, we manipulated the job description so that it varied with respect to the communality required. Because the pertinent results were similar across the two job condition descriptions, I have collapsed them across this variable for this chapter (cf. Rudman & Glick, 2001).

[2] In addition, subjects perform a practice block ( $n=20$  trials) prior to each double categorization block ( $n=40$  trials).

[3] Because these variables were not correlated with the focal independent or dependent variables, they will not be further discussed.

[4] This reference is based on the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* by the U.S. Department of Labor, and is published by JIST Works, Inc.

[5] Pratto et al. (1997) used 7 occupations each to reflect hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating jobs. Because two of the former seemed less directly related to high status (military service and law enforcement), we eliminated subjects' responses to these two occupations for our high status job index.

[6] For participants who were in a romantic relationship, the name of their partner was included in this list.

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