

A Status Account of Gender Stereotypes: Beyond Communality and Agency¹

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Women's lower status relative to men can account for people's differential attribution to women and men, of the constructs of the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ; Spence, Helmreich, & Holahan, 1979). Ratings in all three studies were made on the EPAQ scales. In Study 1a, participants rated their perceptions of the stereotypes of women and of men. In Study 1b, participants reported their own perceptions of women and men. In Study 2, participants were presented a minimal status manipulation (Conway, Pizzamiglio, & Mount, 1996) for which status is unconfounded with gender; participants then reported their perceptions of low- and high-status individuals. The men in Studies 1a and 1b were perceived as were high-status individuals in Study 2. Except for (i.e., verbal passive-aggression nagging, whining), women in Studies 1a and 1b were perceived as were low-status individuals in Study 2. Results are discussed in terms of status accounts of gender stereotypes and gender differences in social behavior.

INTRODUCTION

A large body of research has examined gender stereotypes in terms of their content (e.g., Bem, 1974, 1981; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968; Spence, 1984). Initial research and subsequent cross-

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cultural research (Best & Williams, 1993) indicates that communality and agency are core features of gender stereotypes. Communality, a central feature of the female stereotype, refers to an emotional, interpersonal orientation. Agency, a central feature of the male stereotype, refers to an assertive, instrumental orientation (Bakan, 1966). Communality and agency can be assessed with measures such as the short and long forms of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI, BSRI-SF; Bem, 1974, 1981), the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974), and its extended form (EPAQ; Spence et al., 1979).

It has been argued that gender stereotypes in terms of communality and agency are based on the status difference between women and men (Conway et al., 1996; Geis, 1993). Status refers to “the differentiation of prestige and deference among individuals” (Mayer & Buckley, 1970, p. 46), and greater status is usually associated with greater power (Lenski, 1966). Women generally have lower status than men (Lips, 1991; Rhoadie, 1989). As such, they may be constrained to behave in a more interpersonally sensitive manner. In contrast, men’s higher status allows them to behave in a more assertive, forceful manner. People who observe women and men behaving in their respective manner may neglect to sufficiently consider the situational constraints on women and men’s behavior, and may therefore attribute such behaviors to internal (gender-linked) dispositions. Thus, gender stereotypes appear to be an instance of correspondence bias (Conway et al., 1996; Geis, 1993), whereby people do not sufficiently take into consideration situational status constraints on their behavior (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). The same analysis can be applied to other stereotypes, such as those of ethnicity and income. People perceive speakers with low-status accents as more communal, and speakers with high-status accents as more agentic (Argyle, 1994). People of average means may be perceived as more communal and less agentic than their wealthy counterparts (Dittmar, Mannetti, & Semin, 1989). Although this correspondence bias analysis can account for a wide range of social judgments, one might question whether these perceptions are determined by other factors as well, such as different social occupations and roles.

Conway et al. (1996) addressed the impact of status on perceptions of communality and agency in a manner that avoided any confounds with characteristics often associated with status (e.g., social roles, occupations, age, and indeed gender). They presented participants with a description of a culture consisting of a low-status group and a high-status group. Participants rated their perceptions of the low- and high-status individuals separately on items drawn from the BSRI. Results revealed that low-status individuals relative to high-status individuals were construed as more communal and

less agentic. Note again that these findings emerged even though there were women and men in both groups.

Other research also supports the view that status can account for attributions of communality and agency. Geis, Brown, Jennings, and Corrado-Taylor (1984) had each of their participants view two sets of television commercials featuring a man-woman dyad. One set consisted of the members of the dyad interacting in a 'traditional' manner (i.e., the man having higher status), and the second set consisted of a role reversal (i.e., the woman having higher status). Participants rated each member of the dyad on measures of communality and agency. For the traditional portrayal, men were seen as more agentic and less communal than women, which conforms to gender stereotypes. In the role-reversal portrayal, women were seen as more agentic and men were seen as more communal. Although there are some concerns that can be raised regarding this study (see the present research), the results of Conway et al. (1996) and Geis et al. (1984) suggest that communality and agency are attributed to low- and high-status individuals, respectively, independent of gender.

Beyond Communality and Agency

The question remains whether status differences between women and men can account for features of gender stereotypes other than communality and agency. With the EPAQ, Spence et al. (1979) elaborated on the construal of women and men by proposing additional constructs reflecting the socially undesirable counterparts of communality and agency. In line with Bakan's (1966) theorizing, Spence et al. developed a scale to assess unmitigated communion, which reflects a focus on others to the exclusion of the self. A scale was also developed to assess unmitigated agency, which reflects a focus on the self to the exclusion of others (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). In Spence et al.'s (1979) research, unmitigated communion was found to be more characteristic of women and unmitigated agency was found to be more characteristic of men.

One would expect that low-relative to high-status individuals would be perceived as higher in unmitigated communion and lower in unmitigated agency. As both communality and its unmitigated counterpart reflect a focus on others, there should be a positive correlation between the two. The same argument holds for agency and its unmitigated counterpart. These suppositions have been empirically supported in self-report research (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). Moreover, in terms of two-dimensional circumplex models of interpersonal behavior, unmitigated communality seems situated next to communality, and unmitigated agency seems situated next

to agency (Wiggins, 1979, 1982). In circumplex models, behaviors located close to each other tend to co-occur in individuals (Kiesler, 1983).

Another feature of gender stereotypes assessed by the EPAQ is verbal passive-aggression. Although women tend to score higher than men on this scale, it is unclear whether this finding can be understood in terms of women's lower status relative to men. The verbal passive-aggression scale consists of the terms *nagging*, *complaining*, *fussy*, and *whiny*. On one hand, it has been argued that women, because of their lower status, may be restricted to using weak strategies in attempts to gain power and influence over others (Sagrestano, 1992). These weak strategies may include such behaviors as nagging and complaining (Johnson, 1976). On the other hand, an alternative argument is that nagging and complaining reflect a critical disposition, which in circumplex models of behavior such as Wiggins' (1979, 1982) would be higher in dominance, and would therefore be situated closer to agency than to communality. It should be noted, however, that the four terms of the EPAQ verbal passive-aggression scale are not found in Wiggins' scale. Rather, criticism is reflected in the constructs of *arrogance* (e.g., cocky and forward) and *cold* (e.g., coldhearted). Even though there is another circumplex model (Kiesler, 1983), in which being critical is seen as lower in dominance (in contrast to being distrustful), Tracey's (1994) comprehensive results do lend more support to Wiggins' conceptualization of being critical in terms of dominance.

Research supports the view that people's perceptions of others in terms of the EPAQ constructs vary as a function of the others' status. In Gerber (1996), partners in police dyads were identified as either low-status or high-status based on external status markers, such as gender in mixed-gender dyads, and experience in same-gender dyads. Each officer made self-ratings and ratings of their partner on the EPAQ scales. Overall, it was found that low-status individuals (i.e., women and low-status men) relative to high-status individuals were rated as higher in unmitigated communion, higher in verbal passive-aggression, and lower in unmitigated agency. These findings concur with the self-reports of women and men in the research of Spence et al. (1979). Gerber's (1996) results suggest that the EPAQ constructs are differentially attributed to individuals as a function of their status. In her study, however, status was examined, in part, in terms of gender. In no instance did the female partner have higher status than the male partner in the mixed-gender dyad. In this respect, status was confounded with gender. The experience variable may also have been confounded with actual personality differences. That is, more experienced officers (i.e., those who have stayed in the police force) may differ from their junior counterparts.

The Present Research

The present hypothesis is that gender stereotypes, assessed in terms of the EPAQ constructs, are due to women's lower status relative to men. Stereotype research indicates that it is important to distinguish between perceptions regarding the nature of common stereotypes and people's own beliefs regarding the targeted groups (Devine, 1989). As such, Study 1a addressed participants' perceptions of the stereotypes people hold of women and men, whereas Study 1b addressed participants' own beliefs regarding the nature of women and men. Gender stereotypes were assessed in Study 1a and 1b with a modified version of the Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire (EPAQ; Spence et al., 1979). The EPAQ is a self-report measure consisting of six scales: communion (F+), agency (M+), masculinity-femininity (MF+), unmitigated communion (Fc-), unmitigated agency (M-), and verbal passive-aggression (Fva-). The EPAQ was modified to address respondents' perceptions of the stereotypes of women and of men by simply changing the instructions (for similar approaches, see Dion & Cota, 1991; Gerber, 1996). Respondents in Study 1a were asked to report their perceptions of common beliefs regarding women and men; the stem "Most people perceive men as . . ." preceded the EPAQ scales for one set of ratings, whereas the stem "Most people perceive women as . . ." preceded a second set of rating scales. In Study 1b, respondents were asked to report their own beliefs; the stem "I perceive men as . . ." preceded the scales for one set of ratings, whereas the stem "I perceive women as . . ." preceded the scales for a second set of ratings. In all cases, the scales themselves remained identical to those in the original EPAQ. In Study 1a, it was expected that the stereotypes of women compared to the stereotypes of men would be rated higher in communality, unmitigated communality, and verbal passive-aggression, and lower in agency and unmitigated agency. Parallel, if somewhat weaker, results in Study 1b were expected for participants' personal beliefs regarding women and men. Studies 1a and 1b were conducted to demonstrate that individuals drawn from the same sample as those of Study 2 exhibit gender stereotyping consistent with prior research. This demonstration is useful in light of historical changes observed in gender identity (Twenge, 1997), which may be reflected in changes in gender stereotypes, as well as changes in the nature of sexism (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995).

Study 2 addressed people's perceptions of low- and high-status individuals in terms of the modified EPAQ. In this study, status was manipulated independent of gender. It was hypothesized that low- relative to high-status individuals would be perceived as more communal and higher in unmitigated communality, and that high- relative to low-status individuals would be perceived as more agentic and higher in unmitigated agency. No

specific prediction was made with respect to participants' perceptions of low- and high-status individuals' verbal passive-aggression. Using the status manipulation of Conway et al. (1996), participants were presented with a description of a culture consisting of a low-status group and a high-status group. Status was instantiated only in terms of status markers such as personal ornamentation and priority access to certain resources. Status groups were *not* differentiated in terms of gender, social roles, occupation, race, or age, nor are there any status differences in physical characteristics. This allows observed differences in how people perceive low- and high-status individuals to reflect the status difference, as opposed to some other variable usually correlated with status (such as gender itself).

Although status may seem to be a somewhat ambiguous concept, it is a unidimensional construct with distinct implications for interpersonal perception and behavior. Generally speaking, many factors may influence the status observers confer on others, including the gender, age, social occupation, and wealth. Yet, the resultant status judgment maps onto one dimension. Consistent with this view, research indicates that potency (i.e., power) is one of the three dimensions that underlie human judgment (the other two being valence and activity) in both social and nonsocial domains (Osgood, May, & Miron, 1975). As noted earlier, status is usually associated with power. In turn, greater status is often conferred on those with greater power (Ridgeway, 1991). In terms of interpersonal perception and behavior, Bugental (2000) has proposed five basic types of social relations: infant-parent attachment, mating, relations anchored in group coalition, reciprocity, and the "use and recognition of social dominance (the hierarchical power domain)" (p. 187; also see Fiske, 1992, for a related formulation). As such, dominance-based relationships are one of only 3 types of relations that are apparent in general social interactions. Dominance-based relations are closely linked to status. As reviewed by Bugental, dominance-based relations have specific implications at many levels, including psychobiological, cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

The approach to manipulating status in Study 2 was conceptually consistent with the view that status is a unidimensional construct associated with various forms of power. In Study 2, the manipulation check that was administered included two questions regarding power. One question concerned the ability to choose and pursue one's own interests and activities. The other question concerned the ability to influence others. These questions address the core features of power (cf. Ng, 1980, chap. 7). As such, higher status as manipulated in Study 2 was expected to be linked to greater power in participants' minds. This general representation can be applied to understanding gender stereotypes, as the description of the culture provided in Study 2 did not include any specific status-related

information regarding the use of force, manipulation, or influence. Neither was information provided regarding goods for which access serves as grounds for power, or regarding external sanctions. Furthermore, no information was provided about exchange of goods between the two groups (Zelditch, 1992). Because of these deliberate omissions, the status manipulation of Conway et al. (1996) adopted in Study 2 can be characterized as minimal, and can therefore be applied to test hypotheses regarding the impact of status in social judgment in a manner that avoids being confounded with other factors. If it is status that defines gender stereotypes (as opposed to being defined by particular power differences between women and men), then the results of Study 2 should match those of Studies 1a and 1b.

The methodology of Study 2 avoided some of the pitfalls faced when status is manipulated or studied in the context of specific contexts or occupations. For example, Gerber (1996) construed status in terms of gender or seniority. As such, other factors related to gender and seniority may have influenced perceptions of communality and agency. Another issue arises in regard to the Geis et al. (1984) study. They manipulated status in the context of reenactments of TV ads, each presenting a male-female dyad. One concern is that each participant viewed both the traditional gender-typed version of an ad and the gender-role reversed version of the ad. Consequently, participants may have been implicitly encouraged to focus on the contrast between the two. They may have been encouraged to make differential ratings of the women and men in the contrasting ads (which was the hypothesized effect). It should also be noted that one gender-role reversed ad required a change in actor (i.e., to a "large, handsome woman"). Perhaps it is not surprising then that the large, handsome woman was seen as more agentic.

In the present research, it was expected that parallel results would be found in Studies 1a, 1b, and 2 for participants' ratings of the target groups in terms of the EPAQ constructs. It was expected that the relative difference in scale ratings in Studies 1a and 1b observed as a function of gender would also emerge in Study 2 as a function of status. Such parallel findings would not provide an unequivocal demonstration that the status difference between women and men causes gender stereotypes. However, a status account for gender stereotypes would be supported if the results of Studies 1a, 1b, and 2 correspond. In contrast, little correspondence would undermine a status account. Furthermore, one can argue that the exclusion of gender as a basis for comparison in Study 2 is appropriate given the conceptual focus on status. As has been argued in the gender literature, sex per se is irrelevant with this focus on status (cf. Kessler & McKenna, 1978). What are the alternatives to the approach adopted in Study 2? One possibility

is to address people's perceptions of social targets that vary in terms of various status cues, such as gender and occupation. But this approach does not allow one to disentangle gender and status (which is necessary to strictly address a status hypothesis). For example, asking participants to judge a female manager, a male clerk, and others, leaves gender to operate in concert with occupation in determining perceived status. Neither gender nor occupation have hegemony in such cases. Occupational stereotypes may also have an impact, quite apart from associated gender and status considerations (for more on this point, see Conway et al., 1996, Studies 1 and 2). Although this alternative type of research can identify interesting judgmental differences regarding gender, it does not provide an unequivocal understanding of how gender may be understood in terms of status.

The focus of the present research was on general gender stereotypes, particularly as these are reflected in the EPAQ constructs. It should be acknowledged that there are other aspects to general gender stereotypes (e.g. roles; see Deaux & Lewis, 1984), and there are more specific gender stereotypes (e.g., "sexy woman" and "blue-collar working man;" see Deaux, Winton, Crowley, & Lewis, 1985). Many factors may operate in determining these various features of gender stereotypes. Just as the present empirical focus is on general gender stereotypes, the theoretical level of analysis is also general, appealing to the status difference between women and men. In terms of concrete issues such as occupation, education, and income (Rhodie, 1989), women have lower status than men in most societies. Research also indicates that gender itself operates as a status cue (cf. Berger, Wagner, & Zelditch, 1985). People generally defer more to men than women and have higher performance expectations for men. Gender may operate in this manner as a status cue since, historically, men have had greater access to desirable resources than women, which would have led maleness to come to acquire higher status (Ridgeway, 1991). Many studies are consistent with a status account of both gender differences in social behavior and gender stereotypes (see Conway et al., 1996). Indeed, status is a core underlying dimension in social life (Lonner, 1980), defining many social relations (Bugental, 2000). Nevertheless, despite its significance, it is not realistic to argue that status is the only determinant of gender stereotypes (see Conway et al., 1996, p. 34). We believe status is a major determinant of general gender stereotypes.

STUDIES 1a AND 1b

The aim of Study 1a was to identify people's perceptions of gender stereotypes using a modified version of the EPAQ. It was expected that

participants' perceptions of the stereotypes of women and men would parallel the findings of the self-report research of Spence et al. (Spence & Helmreich, 1978; Spence et al., 1979). Study 1b was highly similar to Study 1a, with participants being asked to report their own beliefs about women and men. Parallel results were expected.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited at a booth on the main Concordia University campus where they completed a packet of questionnaires to have their names entered in a lottery draw. Within the questionnaire packet was a future contact sheet where individuals interested in future research would provide their name and telephone number. In Study 1a, there were 68 participants (33 men and 35 women). Of these, 3 participants (2 men and 1 woman) had language difficulties, and one man discontinued the study. As such, the findings reported are for 30 male and 34 female participants. Mean age was 23.14 years; range was 18 to 46 years. In Study 1b, there were 50 participants (21 men and 29 women). Mean age was 21.28 years; range was 19 to 55 years. Although ethnicity and language information was not collected from each participant in the present studies, the booth recruitment procedure has recently been shown to result in the following sample profile: When asked "What cultural group, if any, do you identify most with?", participants' responses could be grouped into Canadian (24%), Middle East and South Asia (14%), Chinese (10%), European (10%), French Canadian (6%), Caucasian (5%), Latin American (3%), and Black (2%); 23% left the item blank. When asked "What languages do you speak most often at home?," 51% indicated English alone, 18% indicated French alone, 7% indicated English or French and some third language, and 19% indicated a language other than English or French. Participants were paid \$8.00 Canadian (CDN) for their participation.

Procedure

In both studies, 1 to 5 participants were present at each experimental session. Participants in Study 1a were informed that the study concerned their impressions of the stereotypes that people have of women and of men. The measure of gender stereotypes used in Studies 1a and 1b was a modified version of the EPAQ (Spence et al., 1979). Participants completed

the EPAQ twice, once for their perceptions of the stereotype of women, and once for their perceptions of the stereotype of men. Ratings were made on the 40 items of the EPAQ. Each item consists of a pair of opposite characteristics (e.g., not aggressive, very aggressive) separated by a five-point letter scale, ranging from A to E. Participants selected the letter that they thought best described the cultural stereotype. The two versions of the modified EPAQ were presented in counterbalanced order among a series of other questionnaires not related to this study (and, therefore, not discussed here). Finally, participants were debriefed and remunerated. The same procedure was followed in Study 1b, except that the modification of the EPAQ consisted of participants being asked to report their own impressions of the characteristics they considered typical of men and women.

Results and Discussion

As per the original EPAQ, item scores ranged from 0 to 4. Prior to analyses, the data were examined for univariate outliers. Outliers were replaced with a score 3 SD away from the mean in the appropriate direction. EPAQ scale scores were derived by summing responses to each item of the scale. The M+, F+, M-, and MF+ scale scores range from 0 to 32; the Fc- and Fva- scale scores range from 0 to 16. Analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted on each EPAQ scale to address the possibility of a participant gender by target-group gender interaction, with target-group gender as the within participant variable. There were significant

Table 1. Participants' Perceptions of the Stereotypes of Women and Men on the EPAQ Scales in Study 1a

Scale	Female Stereotype		Male Stereotype		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	M	SD	M	SD		
Communality (F+)	25.26	3.75	11.25	3.16	61	18.69*
Unmitigated communality (Fc-)	10.32	2.26	5.25	2.93	60	8.90*
Agency (M+)	13.67	4.29	23.72	3.08	62	-13.24*
Unmitigated agency (M-)	12.56	5.09	23.13	3.33	60	-11.89*
MF+	6.73	3.80	23.29	4.19	63	-18.75*
Fva-	12.71	2.45	5.25	2.55	58	13.24*

Note: Degrees of freedom vary due to missing values. The parenthesized items are the labels used for the EPAQ. The range is 0-32 for the M+, F+, MF+, and M- scales, and 0-16 for the Fc- and Fva- scales.

* $p < .001$.

Table II. Participants' Beliefs Regarding the Characteristics of Women and Men, as Reported on the EPAQ Scales in Study 1b

Scale	Female Characteristics		Male Characteristics		<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	M	SD	M	SD		
Communality (F+)	24.66	3.90	15.82	5.10	49	10.86*
Unmitigated communion (Fc-)	8.57	1.99	6.67	2.09	48	4.77*
Agency (M+)	16.80	4.52	21.58	4.20	49	-5.09*
Unmitigated agency (M-)	14.71	3.91	21.08	4.03	48	-7.45*
MF+	9.55	3.33	18.11	3.86	49	-10.85*
Fva-	10.37	2.80	7.55	3.20	48	4.38*

Note: Degrees of freedom vary due to missing values. The parenthesized items are the labels used for the EPAQ. The range is 0–32 for the M+, F+, MF+, and M– scales, and 0–16 for the Fc– and Fva– scales.

* $p < .001$.

interactions on the M+ scale and on the Fc– scale in Study 1a. In both cases, however, male and female participants rated the target groups in similar manner, but female participants showed greater differences in their ratings of the stereotypes of women and of men.

T-tests were performed to compare the scale means for participants' perceptions of the stereotypes of women men (see Table I). Consistent with the hypothesis, participants perceived the stereotype of women to be higher than the stereotype of men in communion (F+), unmitigated communion (Fc–), and verbal passive-aggression (Fva–). Participants also perceived the stereotype of men to be higher than the stereotype of women in agency (M+), and unmitigated agency (M–), and higher on the masculinity-femininity scale (MF+). These results are fully consistent with the self-report research of Spence et al. (Spence & Helmreich, 1978; Spence et al., 1979). The same analyses were conducted in Study 1b and the results parallel those of Study 1a (see Table II). Consistent with prior research (Devine, 1989), people's perceptions of commonly held beliefs (i.e., stereotypes) are more extreme in their differentiation of women and men than are their own beliefs. The next study addresses the parallels with gender stereotypes by focusing on status.

STUDY 2

The aim of Study 2 was to examine participants' perceptions of low- and high-status individuals in terms of the EPAQ constructs. Status was manipulated independent of gender.

Method

Participants

Participants in Study 2 were recruited in the same manner as in Study 1a. There were 19 male and 23 female participants in Study 2. Mean age was 23.77 years; range was 18 to 44 years. Participants were paid \$8.00 CDN for their participation.

Procedure

The procedure paralleled that of Study 4 of Conway et al. (1996), with the exception of the questionnaire used to assess participants' perceptions of low- and high-status individuals. As such, only a brief description follows. Participants were presented with a description of a fictitious culture consisting of two groups, the low-status Gunada and the high-status Ngwani. The description was loosely based on anthropological research (Murdock, 1934), and was designed to match status groups on all but some status markers, such as ornamentation on clothing and priority access to certain resources. The full description appears in Appendix B of Conway et al. (1996). After presentation of the description, participants reported their perceptions of low- and high-status individuals in terms of the modified EPAQ, in counterbalanced order. Participants completed the modified EPAQ twice, once for their perceptions of the Gunada and once for their perceptions of the Ngwani. Participants then completed a manipulation check, reporting their perceptions of low- and high-status individuals' power to influence others and power to control their own outcomes (cf. Conway et al., 1996). Responses were on 7-point scales with 1 = none at all and 7 = a great deal. Participants then made a forced choice in regard to which group held higher status. Finally, participants were debriefed and remunerated.

Results

Analyses of the manipulation check items confirmed that high- ($M = 5.59$) relative to low-status ($M = 2.71$) individuals were perceived as more able to influence others, $t(41) = 11.18$, $p < .001$. Similarly, high- ($M = 5.50$) relative to low-status ($M = 3.36$) individuals were perceived as more capable of controlling their own outcomes, $t(41) = 7.09$, $p < .001$. All but 2 participants correctly selected the high-status group in the forced choice.

Table III. Participants' Perceptions of Low- and High-Status Individuals, as Reported on the EPAQ Scales in Study 2

Scale	Low Status		High Status		<i>t</i>
	M	SD	M	SD	
Communality (F+)	21.52	3.47	18.68	4.78	3.64*
Unmitigated communality (Fc-)	9.69	2.19	5.57	2.32	8.02**
Agency (M+)	15.26	4.46	22.77	3.61	-9.27**
Unmitigated agency (M-)	8.00	4.33	17.21	5.20	-8.83**
MF+	11.91	2.27	16.69	3.00	-8.52**
Fva-	4.93	2.66	7.33	2.49	-5.00**

Note: *N* = 42. The parenthesized items are the labels used for the EPAQ. The range is 0–32 for the F+, M+, MF+, and M- scales, and 0–16 for the Fc- and Fva- scales.

p* < .002; *p* < .001.

For each participant, a total score was calculated for each EPAQ scale. Preliminary analyses were conducted on the EPAQ scales to address the possible effects of participant gender. No such gender effects emerged.

T-tests were performed to compare participants' mean ratings of low- and high-status individuals on each of the EPAQ scales. As expected, participants perceived low- relative to high-status individuals as higher in communality and unmitigated communality. Also consistent with expectations, high- relative to low-status individuals were perceived as higher in agency and unmitigated agency, as well as higher on the MF+ scale. No prediction was made for the Fva- scale. High-status individuals were rated higher in verbal passive-aggression than low-status individuals (see Table 3).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In Studies 1a and 1b, it was hypothesized that for both perceptions of stereotypes and personal beliefs, people would report women as higher in communality, unmitigated communion, and verbal passive-aggression; and lower in agency and unmitigated agency. In Study 1a, participants rated their perceptions of the stereotypes of women and men, separately, on a modified EPAQ. In Study 1b, participants reported their personal beliefs in terms of the same scales. Findings were fully consistent with the hypothesis. These results paralleled those of Spence and colleagues (1978; 1979), suggesting that women and men are stereotyped in the manner evident in earlier self-report research. In Study 2, the hypothesis was that low-status individuals would be perceived as higher in communality and unmitigated communion and lower in agency and unmitigated agency. Participants rated low- and high-status individuals on the EPAQ scales. Results were fully

consistent with the hypothesis. The results of Study 2 further the findings of Conway et al. (1996), indicating that in addition to communality and agency people perceive low- and high-status individuals differentially in terms of the other EPAQ constructs. Taken together, these present findings support the view that women are stereotyped as more communal, higher in unmitigated communion, less agentic, and lower in unmitigated agency because of their lower status relative to men. These results concur with previous research relating the attribution of EPAQ constructs to status (e.g., Geis et al., 1984; Gerber, 1996).

The one inconsistent finding across Studies 1a and 1b and Study 2 was for the verbal passive-aggression scale. As expected, participants in Study 1a and 1b perceived women as higher in verbal passive-aggression. In Study 2, high-status individuals were perceived as higher in verbal passive-aggression. This latter finding is consistent with circumplex models of interpersonal behavior (Wiggins, 1979, 1982), in as much as the verbal passive-aggression items (e.g., nagging and whining) reflect criticism directed at another. This finding of Study 2 is reliable, as we have obtained similar results in another study (Conway, 2000). Moreover, it cannot be attributed to some general negativity bias, as participants in Study 2 also perceived high-status individuals as being agentic, which is a desirable quality. Perhaps being nagging and whiny are inherently ambivalent characteristics. Although they reflect criticism, they are not characteristics rated high in potency or power (Williams & Best, 1990, Appendix B). As opposed to being argumentative or severe (which are both high in potency), nagging and whining both seem to be assertive and weak in the same instance. It is an empirical question whether the same complaining behavior would be perceived as nagging if originating from a woman and as reflecting severity if coming from a man. This might be expected on the basis of Geis' (1993) argument that people disapprove of women's assertiveness and attempts to gain leadership and power. Such differential judgments would concur with the fact that such EPAQ verbal passive-aggression scale terms as nagging are quite strongly gender-typed as female (Williams & Best, 1990). Alternatively, a specific critical behavior that is seen as simply assertive if originating with a man may be seen as aggressive if enacted by a woman (cf. Fiske, 1993). Returning to the results of the present research, it seems that people's perceptions of verbal passive-aggression operate in at least two different ways. On one hand, in the absence of gender cues, verbal passive-aggression may be perceived as more characteristic of high-status individuals, as was found in Study 2. In this case, people's perceptions seemed focused on verbal passive-aggression as criticism. On the other hand, when gender is the dominant cue on which the basis of judgments are made, verbal passive-aggression is attributed more to women. In this

case, people's perceptions may be determined by the gender-typing of the terms.

It has been argued here that status is a determinant of gender stereotypes, just as it may influence the stereotypes that people hold of other groups. A somewhat different account is that low status is but a component of the female stereotype, and high status is a component of the male stereotype. These respective components then color people's perceptions of women and men in terms of the EPAQ constructs, which would account for the present results. Although this component analysis appears to differ from our conceptualization, it effectively embraces its core aspects. Assume status is a mere component of female and male stereotypes. Our position was that status is sufficient to account for the differential perception of women and men in terms of the EPAQ constructs. The present findings generally support that view. By the component account, one could then argue that the status component is sufficiently influential to determine these important perceptions. Recall that agency and communality are the core features of general gender stereotypes, as has been documented in cross-cultural research. This alternative status-as-component account seems to emphasize that there are other components to gender stereotypes, such as roles and occupations. We have no qualms with this view, as noted earlier. Considering status as either a component or a determinant of gender stereotypes seems to lead to the same predictions. But in light of the points about to be addressed, it seems more logical to consider status as a determinant of gender.

Another alternative explanation is that people's conceptualizations of status are inherently linked to their conceptions of gender. Indeed, as noted above, gender and status are closely linked at many different levels in general society. It would then follow, for example, that people's perceptions of low-status individuals are largely a reflection of their concept of women or femininity. In other words, this alternative view claims gender defines status. What we have advanced above is that status defines gender. There are a number of reasons to favor the latter view. Status is a broader construct than gender which has implications beyond people's differential perceptions of women and men. For example, status can address interpersonal perceptions and relations between same-gender individuals who differ on other status dimensions. Status differences can be observed in relations between individuals of different language, different age, different ethnicity, and so on. That is, gender, language, age, and ethnicity have all been shown to operate in a similar manner as status cues. Certainly, one would not choose to argue that gender is the basis on which different linguistic, age, and ethnic groups are defined and interact. Indeed, since parallel results can be observed across these different status cues (i.e., language, age, ethnicity,

and gender), one could just as well argue for the primacy of language, as opposed to gender, as determining people's perceptions of groups that differ on any status dimension. It seems more plausible, as is done in Berger's status characteristics theory (Berger et al., 1985), to appeal to the general underlying construct of status. Indeed, the latter theory has been applied to understanding gender- and race-based standards of competence in recent work in social cognition (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997). The general status construct is also advanced as a central feature in recent formulations of Eagly's social role theory of gender (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). It seems more heuristically useful and more accurate to construe status as an underlying dimension that influences people's representations of and interactions with others that differ in terms of a range of characteristics, including gender.

One limitation of the present research is that it does not directly demonstrate gender's role as a status cue. However, the parallels in this and other research between gender stereotypes and people's perceptions of low- and high-status individuals lend strong support to the view that status determines perceived and actual gender differences. For example, Conway, Di Fazio, and Mayman (1999) found that lower-status individuals were perceived as more expressive of sadness and fear and less expressive of anger. These results are consistent with gender stereotypes of emotion (Brody & Hall, 1993). Furthermore, Conway et al. (1999) report that lower-status individuals are perceived as more emotional than higher status individuals. This concurs with the stereotype that women are more emotional than men. The approach used in the present Study 2 has the advantage of examining the attribution of EPAQ characteristics strictly as a function of status. When status is examined in the context of gender, status cannot be separated from other variables strongly related to gender, such as gender roles, occupation, and socioeconomic status.

The present research can be linked to other work indicating that gender operates as a status cue. For example, according to expectation states theory, gender operates as a diffuse status cue which is considered relevant unless evidence to the contrary is provided (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980). In support of this view, Dovidio, Ellyson, Keating, Heltman, and Brown (1988) examined the use of visual dominance by having women and men engage in discussions on topics that were either neutral or topics in which one member was more expert than the other. When the experimenter assigned a topic on which the woman more was expert, thereby giving her higher situational status, she used greater visual dominance than the man, and similarly when a topic was assigned on which the man was more expert, he displayed greater visual dominance. However, when discussing a neutral topic (and, therefore, in the absence of such specific status markers), tradi-

tional status roles prevailed and men displayed greater visual dominance. In addition to dominance behavior, other research has found that in the absence of specific status information men are judged as more competent than women (Wood & Karten, 1986).

If general gender stereotypes can be understood as reflecting the status differential between women and men, then the perpetuation of women's lower status can be seen as reflecting what Geis (1993) discusses as a self-fulfilling prophecy. According to this view, because women are stereotyped as interpersonally sensitive and devoted to others, they are assigned (and choose) roles that require characteristics and behaviors consistent with the stereotypes. Similarly, because men are stereotyped as more assertive, instrumental, and devoted to self, they are assigned (and choose) roles that require such characteristics and behaviors. Due to correspondence bias, when women and men display their stereotypical characteristics and behaviors, the qualities are seen as internal dispositions of the individual, thereby confirming the stereotype. Thus, stereotypes reflect as well as perpetuate the status differential between women and men.

If status can account for general gender stereotypes and for how women and men perceive themselves, it follows that changes in status will lead to changes in social and self-perception. It can be argued that women's improving condition relative to men accounts in part for the finding that in the last 20 years, women have been rating themselves progressively higher on agentic characteristics of the BSRI and the PAQ (Twenge, 1997). Women's ratings are approaching, but not surpassing, men's ratings. As such, women and men now perceive themselves in more similar manner than they did 20 years ago. In light of the major consequences of such self-representations, such historical trends are significant. Such changes in self-perception may reflect a broader pattern of change that is also apparent in people's personal beliefs regarding the nature of women and men.

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