When Professionals Become Mothers, Warmth Doesn't Cut the Ice

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Working moms risk being reduced to one of two subtypes: homemakers—viewed as warm but incompetent, or female professionals—characterized as competent but cold. The current study (N = 122 college students) presents four important findings. First, when working women become mothers, they trade perceived competence for perceived warmth. Second, working men don't make this trade; when they become fathers, they gain perceived warmth and maintain perceived competence. Third, people report less interest in hiring, promoting, and educating working moms relative to working dads and childless employees. Finally, competence ratings predict interest in hiring, promoting, and educating workers. Thus, working moms' gain in perceived warmth does not help them, but their loss in perceived competence does hurt them.

One of us is drafting this article between loads of laundry, another during a toddler's naps, and another between homework consults. All three of us take our careers seriously and take our child-rearing seriously. And yet our situations differ, at least as perceived from outside. The working dad is lauded for being a great father, so involved with his child, but no one questions his commitment to his profession. The working moms among us haven't heard any praise lately for their parenting skills, but have been asked if they can really manage the profession at the same time as raising their respective children (Deutsch & Saxon, 1998a). Women operate under pressure from ambient stereotypes saying that mothers can't be serious professionals, otherwise known as the mommy track (Schwartz, 1989).

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Trade books tell us we are right to worry. *The Working Mother's Guilt Guide* (Hickey & Salmans, 1992, p. 140) includes a whole page worth of ways to just say no" to extra professional commitments (Our favorite: I'd be delighted. Not many places welcome exconvicts as volunteers."). This year, the novel *I Don't Know How She Does It* (Pearson, 2003) painted a funny but grim portrait that included a high-level financial analyst at midnight transferring store-bought mince pies from the package to a baking pan, then distressing them, so they would look homemade for the school potluck.

According to research by our colleagues, women even cooperate in this self-inflicted juggling. In one study (Kelley, 1979), when male and female partners explored varying ways to share the housework, women reacted more strongly than men to the situations of both partners cleaning (rated as highly desirable by the women, moderately desirable by the men) or both partners not cleaning (more undesirable for women, but negative for both women and men). If traditional roles reversed (the man cleaned and the woman did not), both were upset, but ironically, the woman more than the man (Was it guilt? Was it judgment about the man's cleaning?). If traditional gender roles were followed (the woman cleaned, but the man did not), both men and women were neutral. Though this study is old, it is not out-of-date. Recent research corroborates the continuing inequality in gender roles, with women continuing to do more parenting and household tasks (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Crosby, 1991; Deutsch & Saxon, 1998a; Families & Work Institute, 2002; Kobrynowicz & Biernat, 1997); although things are slowly changing in the direction of increased equality (Deutsch, 1999, 2001).

Are women right to worry that the apparently incompatible roles of parent and professional create a no-win situation? We will first lay the theoretical groundwork for understanding the stereotypes that accompany women as parents and women as professionals. These theoretical approaches are supported by research on attitudes toward more clear-cut traditional (homemaker) and non-traditional (career-oriented) women (e.g., Glick, Diebold, Bailey Werner, & Zhu, 1997). However, many women cross subtype boundaries, belonging to both groups. How do people view women who combine elements of traditional and nontraditional types? In the current study, we explore perceptions of and behavior toward women who occupy both roles   mother and professional. The results show a unique disadvantage suffered by female (as compared to male) professionals who happen to be parents.

Stereotype Content Model

Our stereotype content model (SCM) distinguishes among qualitatively different types of prejudice based on the relative status and perceived interdependence (cooperative versus competitive) of target groups (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999). The SCM has been replicated in over two dozen U.S. (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Fiske et al., 1999) and

international (Cuddy, Fiske, Kwan et al., 2004) samples, and across scores of target groups. The model differentiates stereotyped groups along two dimensions, competence and warmth, resulting in four combinations of warmth (high/low) by competence (high/low) stereotypes. Unique patterns of four intergroup emotions admiration, contempt, envy, and pity accompany each of the four warmth-competence combinations (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2002).

Some groups are stereotyped as low on both dimensions, the traditional form of antipathy normally associated with derogated groups, perceived as neither nice nor able. In our American samples, people of any race who are poor, homeless, or on welfare elicit this kind of contempt. In cross-cultural comparisons, poor people often receive this kind of disfavor, as do gypsies in Europe, Pakistanis in Hong Kong, and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica (Cuddy, Fiske, Kwan et al., 2004). Contempt is directed at stigmatized people or groups whose negative outcomes are perceived by others as avoidable (Weiner, 1985). For example, homelessness (Barnett, Quackenbush, & Pierce, 1997), obesity (Weiner, 1985), and AIDS (Dijker, Kok, & Koomen, 1996) all elicit anger when they are attributed to individual weaknesses or moral shortcomings.

Conversely, the ingroup is favored as both warm and competent, the traditional view of ingroup loyalty. In our American samples, this includes people who are middle class, Christian, and White. Elsewhere, these include cultural reference groups, such as full members of society in Japan and college graduates and married people in Hong Kong (Cuddy, Fiske, Kwan et al., 2004). These groups typically elicit pride and admiration, which are reserved for people and groups with self-relevant positive outcomes (Weiner, 1985).

Our model uniquely highlights the two off-diagonal combinations, the groups seen as high on one dimension but low on the other. Traditionally, prejudice has been conceived as one-dimensional antipathy: In-groups are loved and outgroups are hated (e.g., Allport, 1954; Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980). We know, though, that not all groups are simply negatively evaluated (model minorities," for example) and that many are targets of more complex patterns of prejudice and discrimination; thus, the inflexible traditional view of prejudice as antipathy prevents researchers from predicting how specific groups are likely to be treated. The SCM shows that many groups are simultaneously viewed positively on one dimension and negatively on the other. These mixed-valence warmth and competence stereotypes elicit mixed-valence patterns of prejudice.

Groups stereotyped as low on competence but high on warmth include, in our American samples, people who are elderly, mentally disabled, physically disabled and housewives (Cuddy, Norton, & Fiske, in press; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Fiske et al., 1999). Cross-culturally, elderly and disabled people consistently hold their place in this liked but disrespected cluster, in addition to other groups, including women in Japan, women and peasants in Costa Rica, and

Buddhists in South Korea (Cuddy, Fiske, Kwan et al., 2004). Viewed as harmless but pathetic, they typically elicit pity, a paternalistic response, and occasional admiration. Pity goes to people whose bad lots in life are viewed as uncontrollable (Weiner, 1985; Weiner, Graham, & Chandler, 1982; Weiner, Perry, & Magnusson, 1988) and tends to be directed at lower-status groups (Smith, 2000).

Groups stereotyped conversely as high on competence and low on warmth include, in our American samples, people who are rich, Asian, Jewish and female professionals. Black professionals, gay activists, and gray panthers also end up here, a place for uppity outgroups. Rich and professional people retain this stereotype cross-culturally (Cuddy, Fiske, Kwan et al., 2004). Viewed grudgingly as worthy of respect, such groups are not well liked and elicit envy, a loaded emotion that involves both hostility and depression (Smith, Parrott, Ozer, & Moniz, 1994). Envy tends to be directed toward higher-status groups (Smith, 2000) whose positive outcomes are seen as unjust (Smith et al., 1994).

Stereotype Content and Discrimination

So far, the SCM has described how warmth and competence stereotypes derive from status and competition relations among groups. It has demonstrated that prejudice is more complicated than the one-dimensional outgroup antipathy described by more traditional models; many groups are targets of affectively inconsistent intergroup emotions, related to their mixed-valence warmth-competence stereotypes.

More recent preliminary data show that warmth and competence stereotypes also predict patterns of discriminatory behavioral intentions (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004), including active harm (e.g., attack, sabotage), passive harm (e.g., social exclusion, derogation), helping (e.g., helping, assistance), and cooperation (e.g., association, cooperation). Perceived warmth earns groups assistance from other groups and shields them from active harm. Perceived competence earns cooperation seeking from other groups and prevents social exclusion. Four combinations of behaviors result, corresponding with the four clusters of stereotyped groups.

Only groups perceived as both warm and competent (e.g., middle-class people) enjoy both assistance from and cooperation with other groups. On the flip side, only groups perceived as not warm and not competent (e.g., poor and homeless people) are targets of both negative intergroup behaviors social exclusion and sometimes even active harm.

Not surprisingly, mixed-valence stereotypes lead to mixed-valence patterns of intergroup behaviors. Mainstream groups resentfully cooperate with high-status outgroups who are stereotyped as capable but not friendly (e.g., Asians, Jews, female professionals). Failing to cooperate with these groups is seen as disadvantaging to the ingroup. For instance, many Americans scorn Asian-made products,

but buy Japanese cars because they are perceived as more reliable than American ones, thus cooperating in Asian economies. However, these groups can also be victims of active aggression. Many genocides have been perpetrated against groups viewed within their respective cultures as threateningly competent and untrustworthy in professional and political domains   educated professionals in Cambodia, Tutsis in Rwanda, and Jews in Germany (Glick, 2002).

Groups in the opposite corner, those seen as helpless and warm (e.g., elderly and disabled people, housewives), often receive assistance from mainstream society. Helping the old woman to cross the street exemplifies the term good deed. This idea of assisting the disabled and elderly is dyed-in-the-wool American ideology exploited by political candidates and honored by social programs, such as Meals on Wheels. Nevertheless, these groups also risk social exclusion, derogation, and other types of passive harm. All too often they are abandoned by family members and subsequently left to fall through the cracks in publicly-subsidized housing and institutions, in turn losing virtually all social contact (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Cuddyet al., in press).

These patterns of behaviors clearly have implications for how working moms are treated in the workplace, depending on where they end up in the warmth-competence matrix.

Subtypes of Women

The SCM suggests that most, if not all, female subtypes fall into the two mixed-valence clusters of stereotypes (Eckes, 2002; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 1999, 2002). Women are typically respected or liked but not both. This resonates with the infamous Madonna-whore dichotomy, but it focuses on professional and social interactions, not sexual choices. Homemakers are viewed as low status and cooperative, eliciting a paternalism that characterizes them as warm, but not competent, and that evokes condescending affection (Bridges, Etaugh, & Barnes-Farrell, 2002; Eagly & Steffen, 1984, 1986; Eckes, 2002; Etaugh & Poertner, 1992; 2002). In contrast, female professionals are viewed as high-status competitors, eliciting an envious prejudice that characterizes them as competent, but cold, and that evokes begrudging respect and resentment (Bridges, Etaugh, & Barnes-Farrell, 2002; Eckes, 2002; Etaugh & Poertner, 2002; 1992; Etaugh & Study, 1989). We know from prior research on subtyping that internationally common subtypes for women include housewife, career woman, feminist/lesbian, and secretary (Eckes, 2002), and SCM research has demonstrated how these subtypes fit into the larger picture of other significant outgroups (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; 1999).

Some research has expressly compared stereotypes of different female parental- and work-status subtypes (Bridges & Etaugh, 1995; Bridges, Etaugh, & Barnes-Farrell, 2002; Bridges & Orza, 1993; Etaugh & Folger, 1998; Etaugh & Moss, 2001; Etaugh & Nekolny, 1990; Etaugh & Poertner, 1992; 2002). For

example, compared to non-working mothers, working mothers in general are viewed as less dedicated to their families (Etaugh & Nekolny, 1990). Similarly, working mothers who did not take a maternity leave after having a child are, generally, judged more harshly than working mothers who did take leave, which is mediated by people's perceptions that the no-leave mothers are less committed to their children (Bridges & Etaugh, 1995). Attributions for maternal employment seem, also, to affect how working mothers are viewed; mothers who choose to work for personal fulfillment are evaluated more negatively than mothers who must work out of financial need (Bridges & Etaugh, 1995).

Because of the special relationship between men and women, namely, their profound if complex interdependence, gender prejudice often differs from prejudice toward other types of groups. Glick and Fiske (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001a, 2001b) developed Ambivalent Sexism Theory to describe two forms of sexist prejudice, expressly hostile and subjectively benevolent. Men who score high on the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) may be: hostile sexists who dominate women, suspect them for being competitive, and resent them as sexual gatekeepers; benevolent sexists who paternalize women, value them if they cooperate, and regard them as having a kind of moral purity; or ambivalent sexists who, depending on the type of women they interact with, are alternately hostile or benevolent. Ambivalent sexists can reconcile their seemingly contradictory attitudes by directing hostility toward female professionals and benevolence toward homemakers (Glick et al., 1997).

While these lines of research are compelling, to our knowledge, none has compared perceptions of working women and working men with and without children. However, they do suggest that working moms may risk being reduced to one of two subtypes, one that evokes condescension and that leads to social exclusion (mother) or another that evokes resentment and that leads to aggressive harm (professional woman).

Several lines of research suggest that Americans might be motivated to stereotype working moms similarly to how they stereotype housewives. The belief that women should be the primary caregivers and men the primary breadwinners is a long-standing part of traditional American culture (Deutsch & Saxon, 1998b). To view working moms as more motherly than professional, as more nurturing than task-oriented, upholds the social structure that advances this caregiver/breadwinner ideology. Similarly, system justification theory describes how people create beliefs (i.e., stereotypes) that support the status quo, which allows them to see the social system in which they live as fair and legitimate (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 2001c; Jost & Banaji, 1994).

The study presented here investigates how working moms are perceived in the framework of the SCM, relative to childless working women and men, and relative to working dads. Do their professional activities throw them in with female professionals and feminists? Or does their status as parent throw them in with

stay-at-home moms? Or do they benefit from their dual identities, receiving high marks in both categories? And perhaps even more importantly, how do these perceptions relate to how working moms are treated in the workplace; are they helped or hindered, sabotaged or supported?

A Study of Stereotypes of Working Moms in Professional Settings

We asked participants to tell us their impressions of several professionals, through trait ratings and behavioral intentions. Among three filler profiles of management consultants was a crucial profile that varied only two factors: gender and whether the professional person had a child. The factors resulted in four conditions: female professional with child, female professional without child, male professional with child, and male professional without child. These minimal manipulations allowed us to compare the relative degrees to which parent status and gender affect warmth and competence ratings, and whether the target is likely to be hired, promoted, and trained. The comparison of a working mom to a childless working woman in a professional setting is doubly informative. First, it indicates how well a working mom fares when she is competing with a woman who does not have children. Second, it reveals whether female professionals are forced to make professional sacrifices when they decide to become mothers. And the comparison of a working mom to a working dad might reveal the existence of a hidden double standard regarding the balance of career and family.

The study tested several hypotheses. First, we hypothesized that female professionals with children would be viewed as housewives are viewed, as warm and incompetent. Second, we expected that the working mom would be viewed as warmer than the female professional without children but as less competent than the female professional without children. Third, if the working mom is viewed as higher on warmth than on competence, it follows that people should report less interest in rewarding her professionally (i.e., hiring, promoting, and training). Fourth, we expected differences in how the working dad and the working mom would be perceived and treated in a professional setting, such that the father would not experience the same professional disadvantages as the mother.

Method

In a 2 (sex of target: female, male) X 2 (mention of child: yes, no) between-participants design, participants rated three fictitious consultants on traits reflecting warmth and competence, and on three discrimination proxy items aimed at capturing the degree to which the consultant is professionally valued or discriminated against. A two-thirds-White sample of 122 Princeton University undergraduates (72 women, 50 men) completed the questionnaire as part of a larger packet for financial compensation.

At the top of the questionnaire, participants read:

We're studying how people quickly form first impressions, making important decisions from little information. We'd like you to read the profiles of three consultants at McKinsey & Company's Manhattan office and give us your first impressions of them. Imagine you're a client, trying to choose a consultant from very little information. Please try to respond with your first, uncensored impressions.

The middle profile operationalized the critical manipulations. This profile varied the sex of the consultant (Kate or Dan) and whether she/he was a parent (for parents, we added the sentence, "Kate and her husband [Dan and his wife] recently had their first baby"), resulting in four between-participant conditions.

The experimental consultant was described as follows:

Kate (Dan) is a 32-year-old associate consultant who graduated with an MBA. She's (He's) been working in her (his) current field for six years. When working with a client, her (his) duties include identifying issues, planning and conducting interviews and analyses, synthesizing conclusions into recommendations, and helping to implement change in her (his) client's organizations. Her (His) hobbies include swimming and tennis. (Kate and her husband [Dan and his wife] recently had their first baby.) She (He) lives in central New Jersey, commuting to work two days a week and telecommuting three days a week.

The first filler profile described a middle-aged woman with a BA in economics who commutes from West Chester Country for four ten-hour days. The other described a young man with a BA in communications who lives in Manhattan and works a regular five-day workweek. Neither filler profile mentioned children. The two filler profiles were not included in the analyses.

Following each description, participants rated the consultant on twenty traits using a seven-point ($1 =$ not at all, $7 =$ extremely) Likert-type scale. Four of the 20 traits measured competence-related traits (capable, efficient, organized, skillful), four measured warmth-related traits (good-natured, sincere, warm, trustworthy), and the remaining twelve were filler traits (e.g., tolerant, determined, practical). The scale items were taken from scales used in earlier research (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), with the exceptions of efficient and organized, which we added. After making the trait ratings, participants used the same scale to answer the following three discrimination proxy items: "As a client, how likely would you be to request Kate (Dan) as one of your consultants?" (request), "As a client, how likely would you be to recommend Kate (Dan) for a promotion?" (promote), and "As a client, how likely would you be to recommend that McKinsey & Company invest in continuing training and education for Kate (Dan)?" (train).

Results

Because sex of participant did not interact with the manipulated independent variables (sex of target, parental status) for any of the dependent variables analyzed below, this factor is excluded from the analyses presented here.

Stereotypes

We developed two reliable four-item scales that assessed perceived competence (capable, efficient, organized, skillful; $\alpha = .83$) and perceived warmth (good-natured, sincere, warm, trustworthy; $\alpha = .80$), based on previously-used scales (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & XU, 2002).

Our hypotheses focused on different comparisons of competence and warmth ratings within the overall 2 (sex of target: female, male) X 2 (parent status: child, childless) X 2 (trait: warmth, competence) design. Although the omnibus three-way interaction only approached significance, $F(1, 118) = 2.13$, $p < .14$, more focused comparisons are telling.

We found a main effect of parent status on warmth, such that parents were rated as significantly warmer than non-parents, $Ms = 5.12$ and 4.87, respectively; $F(1, 120) = 9.28$, $p < .01$. However, parent status, ignoring sex, did not affect competence ratings, $p = .36$. Sex of target marginally significantly affected warmth ratings, such that women received slightly higher ratings than men, $F(1, 119) = 2.70$, $p = .10.$, but did not affect competence ratings, $F(1, 119) = .00$, $p = .99$.

One more focused test of the hypotheses suggested looking at female workers and male workers separately. Parent status (child, childless) interacted with trait type (competence, warmth) for both female and male workers analyzed separately, $F(1, 61) = 15.03$, $p < .001$, and $F(1, 57) = 7.90$, $p < .01$, respectively.

Ratings of women showed a trade-off; neither woman was rated as both warm and competent (see Table 1). Participants rated the working mom as significantly more warm ($M = 5.39$) than competent ($M = 5.03$), and the childless working woman as significantly more competent ($M = 5.44$) than warm ($M = 4.89$), $t(30) = 2.34$, $p < .05$, and $t(30) = -3.08$, $p < .01$, respectively. Comparisons between the two women unveiled a similar pattern: The working mom was perceived as significantly more warm than the childless working woman, but also as marginally less competent than the childless working woman, $t(61) = 2.56$ $p < .05$, and $t(61) = -1.78$, $p = .08$, respectively.

Table 1. Mean Traits and Discrimination Proxies Ratings by Condition

Condition	Competence		Warmth	Discrimination Proxies (Hire, Promote, Train)
Female Professional				
With Child	5.03 **a**, a	<	5.39 **a**, a	4.16 **a**, a
No Child	5.44 **a**, b	>	4.89 **b**, a, b	4.86 **b**, b
Male Professional				
With Child	5.29 **a**, b	=	5.11 **a**, **b**, a	4.81 **a**, **b**, b
No Child	5.19 **a**, b	>	4.63 **b**, b	4.62 **a**, **b**, b

Note. Minimum score $= 1$; maximum score $= 7$. Within row, $>$ or $<$ indicate that these means differ at $p < .05$. Within column, means not sharing boldface subscripts differ at $p < .05$; means not sharing non-boldface subscripts differ at $p < .08$.

Ratings of men revealed a different pattern (see Table 1). Participants rated the working dad as equally warm ($M = 5.11$) and competent ($M = 5.29$), $t(29) = .92$, n.s. On the other hand, the childless working man looked more like our SCM version of men; he was rated as significantly more competent ($M = 5.19$) than warm ($M = 4.63$), $t(28) = 2.96$, $p < .01$. Consistent with the main effect of parent status on warmth, the two men differed, such that participants rated the working dad as warmer than the childless working man, $t(57) = -1.87$, $p = .068$. However, unlike the female consultants, the two men did not differ on competence, $t(57) = .45$, n.s.

Although the directions of the means were as expected, with dads as more competent than moms, and moms as more warm than dads (see Table 1), surprisingly, the differences between working moms and working dads on warmth and competence were not significant, ps $= .24$ and $.26$, respectively.

Discrimination Proxy Items

The three discrimination proxy items (request, promote, and train) formed a single, reliable scale, $\alpha = .83$.

A 2 (sex of target) X 2 (child/no child) between-participants ANOVA on the three-item discrimination proxy scale uncovered a significant interaction, $F(1, 112) = 5.82$, $p = .05$. The nature of the interaction suggested that the working mom was preferred less (i.e., request, promote, train) than the childless woman, whereas the working dad was preferred more than the childless man.

Gaining a child hurt female workers on the discrimination proxy items (see Table 1 for means). Compared to the childless working woman, the working mom received a significantly lower discrimination proxy score ($M = 4.16$) than the childless working woman ($M = 4.86$), $F(1, 59) = 3.88$, $p = .05$, and a marginally significantly lower score than the working dad ($M = 4.81$), $F(1, 56) = 3.30$, $p = .07$.

Gaining a child did not affect male workers on the discrimination proxy items (see Table 1 for means); working dads and childless working men ($M = 4.62$) received equal discrimination proxy scores, $F(1, 53) = .43$, $p = .70$.

Relationships Between Stereotypes and Discrimination Proxy Items

We performed correlational analyses to examine whether warmth and competence ratings predict whether a consultant will be requested, promoted, and trained. Warmth and competence correlated positively ($r = .35$, p $< .001$), so we report both Pearson and partial correlations. Competence strongly predicted the discrimination proxy scale, $r = .54$, $p < .001$. This correlation held even when controlling for warmth, $r = .51$ $p < .001$, and across sex of target and parent-status, partial rs $= .54$ (women) and $.47$ (men), $.52$ (parent) and $.48$ (not parent), all

$ps < .001$. Warmth correlated with the discrimination proxy scale, $r = .20, p < .05$. However, once competence ratings were controlled for, the warmth-discrimination correlation disappeared, $r = .00, p = .97$

Discussion

In the current study, women lost perceived competence and gained perceived warmth when they became mothers, looking significantly less competent than warm. Perhaps most noteworthy, participants expressed less interest in hiring, promoting, and educating the working mother compared to the childless woman. Moreover, competence ratings predicted positive behavioral intentions: Participants expressed more interest in hiring, promoting, and educating consultants who they viewed as competent. Thus, the apparent boost in working mothers' perceived warmth did not help them professionally, whereas their apparent loss in perceived competence did seem to hurt them.

Childless working women (and men) were perceived as significantly more competent than warm. In contrast, when working men became fathers, they maintained perceived competence and gained perceived warmth, looking equally warm and competent. Although working dads (compared to childless workers) also were perceived as higher in warmth, unlike working moms, they were not perceived as significantly more warm than competent. Working dads, also, did not lose perceived competence when they gained a child, as working moms did.

Whereas the competence dimension strongly predicted discrimination proxy items to request (i.e., hire) as a consultant, promote, and further train the target, the warmth dimension was unrelated to these decisions   a result that echoes earlier work suggesting that agency (i.e., competence), not warmth, is associated with high-status occupations such as the management consultant job used in the current study (Glick, Wilk, & Perreault, 1995). Thus, the trait dimension that dominated participants' impressions of working moms (warmth) seems, also, to be viewed as irrelevant to work performance, in contrast to the trait dimension (competence) that dominates perceptions of male and female workers without children.

The working mother fared poorly compared to the childless working woman. She was stereotyped as less competent and more warm than the woman without a child, and was less likely to be requested, promoted, and trained. This pairing uniquely allowed us not only to compare the working mother to a potential professional competitor; it allowed us, also, to make a within-person before (the child) and after (the child) comparison. Our results suggest that in the workplace, working moms lose in both comparisons. Not only are they viewed as less competent and less worthy of training than their childless female counterparts, they are also viewed as less competent than they were before they had children. Merely adding a child caused people to view the woman as lower on traits such as capable and skillful, and decreased people's interest in training, hiring, and promoting her.

Between-sex comparisons surprisingly revealed no significant differences in competence or warmth ratings for the working mom as compared to a working dad. This finding might seem to suggest that the significant within-sex comparisons are not as problematic as they appear   even if a working mom was viewed as less competent than a childless female worker, she was not viewed as less competent than a working dad. However, such trait ratings are subjective and therefore subject to shifting standards that can mask stereotyping effects (Biernat, 1994). Kunda and Thagard (1996) suggest that stereotypes sometimes affect behavioral predictions (i.e., our request, promotion, and training items) even when they do not affect trait ratings. In fact, the working mom was rated lower than the working dad (as well as lower than the childless female worker) on all three of these discrimination proxy items. In the end, such decisions, which dramatically affect people's working lives, are of more practical importance than trait impressions, making the differential treatment of the working mom on these measures particularly disturbing.

That moms gain in warmth is consistent with prior research on the SCM in that the mom category is strongly associated with a high degree of warmth. But the working mom gained warmth at the cost of significantly lower (at least as compared to a childless female worker) competence ratings and, in turn, was discriminated against on the behavioral measures. On the other hand, the working dad gained warmth and maintained perceived competence, moving from the SCM's envied category to the SCM's admired category (in which a group is stereotyped as being competent and warm). Thus the working dad, unlike the working mom, did not experience discrimination on the behavioral measures (request, promote, and train).

It is not surprising that the gain in perceived warmth for working moms failed to translate into greater work opportunities because it seems not to be viewed as an important requirement for high-status jobs (recall that correlations between warmth ratings and opportunity-related discrimination proxy items were near zero). Were we to have asked participants to complete measures of their likelihood of pursuing a friendship with the targets, it seems likely that warmth would relate to this more social behavioral intention. In fact, in a study by Operario and Fiske (2001), high-dominant interviewers (i.e., powerful employers) were more interested in socializing with applicants whom they perceived as warm, but were not more likely to hire them. The perceived irrelevance of warmth to job qualifications explains why working moms experience no gain when it comes to decisions about assignments, promotions, etc.

One possible explanation for the differential treatment of the working mom, despite relatively favorable trait impressions, is that her perceived warmth over-shadowed her perceived competence. In other words, an unfavorable contrast might have made her look like a less appealing prospect for important assignments, pro-motion, and training. Although working dads and working moms both gained in perceived warmth, only working moms ended up looking significantly more warm

than competent, whereas the working dad was a balanced package (and childless workers were rated as more competent than warm). Although warmth did not in itself negatively predict discrimination proxy items (suggesting that participants viewed this dimension as irrelevant to assignment, promotion, and training recommendations), the dominance of the warmth dimension in perceptions of the working mom may have made her seem less well-matched to a job stereotyped as requiring only competence (and not warmth).

A mediator we did not measure in the current study, perceived job commitment, might be partially responsible, also, for the discrimination against the working mom. Opportunity-related decisions, such as promoting or providing additional training to a worker, are likely to depend not only on the perceived ability of the individual, but also on the individual's perceived commitment to the organization (and to clients). Companies are understandably reluctant to invest resources in people who are unlikely to remain in the job or who are perceived to be less committed. Working moms, in comparison to working dads or childless women, stereotypically are assumed to be more distracted by family commitments and more likely to take leaves of absence or to quit in order to devote themselves to their children. Hence, even though a woman may not suddenly be viewed as having lost her intellectual abilities as a result of having a child, she may nevertheless suddenly be perceived as a less bright prospect for promotion or commitment of company resources.

But working dads do not suffer the same negative perception. While working moms are criticized for too little involvement at home and too much involvement at work, working dads are praised for being involved with their families (Deutsch & Saxon, 1998a). As discussed earlier, the belief that the man should be the primary breadwinner and the woman the primary caregiver is part of the fabric of traditional American cultural ideology (Deutsch & Saxon, 1998b). In the service of this cultural belief, women are believed to be less committed to work, and thus more likely to leave after having children.

The characteristics of the particular sample for this study make the findings particularly disquieting. The participants, many of whom will be decision-makers of the future, are male and female students at an ivy league college   men and women who, for the most part, expect to have careers and families. The women in our study most likely expect to have both careers and families and the men most likely expect to marry women who will pursue careers as well as have children. These participants are also predominantly the products of families in which their mothers worked (which is known to produce more egalitarian attitudes about gender roles). These aspects of our sample may have worked against the likelihood of finding discrimination against working moms. A representative sample of workers might be expected to show stronger effects, including perhaps less favorable characterizations of working moms' perceived competence. Halpert, Wilson, and Hickman (1993), using videotapes of the same woman performing work behaviors

with and without a pregnancy prosthesis, found (in less highly selected samples than the one used here) that pregnant (as compared to nonpregnant) women were rated as less competent and less qualified for promotion. Indeed, Langer, Fiske, Taylor, and Chanowitz (1976) found pregnancy to be a stigma on a college campus, comparable to wearing a leg brace. Thus, as soon as a woman visibly becomes a mom-to-be, she is apparently perceived to have less of the traits demanded in the work world. Therefore, we suspect that our current results underestimate the effects of parenthood on perceptions of working women.

In a related vein, that our minimal manipulation (Kate [Dan] and her husband [and his wife] recently had their first child") caused the effects, also, is striking, and suggests that participants made some different assumptions about how the child would affect the woman's career versus how the child would affect the man's career. Several participants in the working mom condition told the experimenter during debriefing that they had punished her on the discrimination proxies because she telecommutes, not because she had recently had a child. Of course, the sentence about telecommuting had been held constant across conditions, and no participants voiced similar concerns in the other conditions. It is almost as if they needed an excuse to discriminate, a phenomenon that was first captured in another domain by Dovidio and Gaertner's aversive racism theory (1986). Aversive racists hold ambivalent feelings and beliefs about Black people, reflecting both egalitarianism and negative feelings. They are most likely to discriminate when another factor (other than race) is available to serve as a rationalization for their discriminatory behaviors. In the current study, the telecommuting provided an ideal excuse for discrimination against the working mom.

These results may or may not shed light on stereotypes of mothers who work in less prestigious jobs. In the current study, the mother occupied a white collar position. Mothers who work in less prestigious jobs (i.e., blue collar or pink collar) might not be perceived as particularly competent, consistent with the SCM's tenet that perceived status predicts competence stereotypes. Indeed, one study showed that mothers with moderate-prestige jobs were rated as more competent than mothers with low-prestige jobs (Etaugh & Poertner, 1991). On the other hand, to the extent that these stereotypes are mediated by attributional processes, the mother with the less prestigious job might be viewed more positively if she is seen as having to work out of financial necessity (as opposed to choosing to work for personal fulfillment; Bridges & Etaugh, 1995).

Conclusions

Our previous SCM research has illustrated how female subtypes are subjected to affectively mixed prejudices. Women with careers are viewed as capable but also as overly ambitious and antisocial, a stereotype that can lead to aggressive forms of discrimination. Homemakers are seen as kind and caring, but lose the

competence attributed to their childless professional sisters, a stereotype that can lead to social exclusion and neglect.

The current study suggests that working women with children are not immune from mixed-valence stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination. When working women become mothers, they unwittingly make a trade   perceived warmth for perceived competence. This trade unjustly costs them professional credibility and hinders their odds of being hired, promoted, and generally supported in the work-place. As it should be for everyone, men are not fated to lose perceived competence when they gain a child, and becoming fathers does not diminish their professional opportunities. We hope this research will underscore the reality and height of the hurdles faced by working moms, and the urgency with which they must be addressed.

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