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THE BOUDANRY CONDITIONS OF BACKLASH FOR BLACK WOMEN:

WHEN BLACK WOMEN ESCAPE BACKLASH FOR AGENTIC AND

DOMINANT BEHAVIOR IN THE WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

When vying for leadership roles, women who act in stereotypically masculine ways are considered less likable and less hireable compared to similarly behaving men, furthering the gender disparity in leadership roles (Rudman, 1998). Backlash for agentic and dominant behavior in the workplace is an established phenomenon for White women, but less is known the extent to which Black women experience backlash. Although Black women's race and gender are incongruent with leadership prototypes, Black women may escape backlash for dominant behavior because of their nonprototypicality as Blacks and as women (Hall et al., 2014; Livingston et al., 2012) and because of stereotypes about their assertiveness and strength. Informed by an intersectional perspective, three studies explore when Black women experience backlash. Study 1 analyzed prescriptive and proscriptive stereotypes about agency and dominance and found that Black men and women were prescribed agency and proscribed dominance in similar ways. Overall, it was considered more ideal for Black women and men to posses agentic and dominant traits compared to White women, but less ideal compared to White men. Study 2 examined whether dominance or agency descriptions in an employee review would influence promoting intentions, but found that Black women and men received more favorable reviews compared to White women and men, regardless of how they were described. Study 3 failed to replicate Rudman et al.'s (2012) sabotage paradigm, as neither race nor gender influenced sabotage allocation. Considerations for future work on race, gender, and backlash are discussed.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Women are largely underrepresented in top leadership positions in the workforce. Of the Fortune 500 CEOs, 5.2% are women and only one of these women is Black (Ursula Burns, CEO of Xerox; Catalyst, 2014). To be viewed as competent and to be considered for leadership positions, men and women have to be agentic, (assertive, confident, and ambitious) as well as dominant (demanding, tough, exerting control). Although agentic women are perceived as competent, they are also perceived as less likable and hirable than similarly agentic men (Rudman, 1998). A growing body of literature has established this backlash effect, showing that women encounter penalties when they behave in ways that are counter to prescribed gender expectations of communality and warmth (see Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Glick, & Phelan, 2012 for a review). Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) and Heilman's (1983) lack of fit model also argue that women encounter prejudice because gender roles of communality are perceived to conflict with leadership roles that require stereotypically male traits of agency. Thus, counterstereotypical displays of assertiveness and dominance are penalized, limiting women in promotions to leadership positions.

Research on backlash for assertive, leader-like behavior has, with few exceptions, been limited to White women and men or has not included any discussion of race. Backlash may not operate similarly for *all* women; unique intersecting race and gender stereotypes may alter the experience of backlash. Black women are not associated with

the same stereotypes as White women (Donovan, 2011), and are perceived as more stereotypically masculine than White women (Galinsky, Hall, & Cuddy, 2013; Goff, Thomas, & Jackson, 2008), including the stereotype of Black women as strong, tough, direct, and independent (Abrams, Maxwell, Pope, & Belgrave, 2014; Donovan, 2011; Popp, Donovan, Crawford, Marsh, & Peele, 2003). In addition, Black women are non-prototypic of either their racial or gender group, meaning that they are not as quickly categorized as Blacks compared to Black men and not as quickly categorized as women compared to White women (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Sesko & Biernat, 2010; Thomas et al., 2014). For these reasons, Black women may escape backlash if stereotypes about them include being assertive, direct, and strong, and if their invisibility or lack of association with their race and gender allows them more flexibility (i.e., fewer penalties) for agentic behavior that White women are penalized for.

In fact, vignette studies have shown that Black women can be dominant or demanding in the workplace without penalties of disliking or perceived effectiveness (Livingston, Rosette, & Washington, 2012; Hall, Phillips, Rudman, & Glick, 2014). However, these studies did not examine all aspects of dominance, nor whether agentic traits are permitted for Black women in the workplace. Understanding whether and how Black women experience backlash in the workplace can help explain why there are so few Black women in leadership positions, or potentially reveal strategies for Black women to present themselves as capable leaders in the workplace.

The purpose of this project is to determine the extent to which agentic traits are considered ideal (prescriptive) for Black women, whether Black women receive backlash for agentic (assertive, ambitious) and/or dominant (aggressive) behavior as White women

do, and to understand the implications this has for selection to leadership roles. A second goal is to explicitly incorporate intersectionality into research by examining intersecting race and gender stereotypes. Intersectionality, or the notion that multiple social identities such as gender and race cannot be defined independently (e.g. Crenshaw, 1989), has been repeatedly called for in the field of psychology (e.g. Bowleg, 2008; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010; Warner, 2008), and is seen as essential for the progress of feminist psychology and psychology as a whole (Shields, 2008). Intersectionality asserts that multiple social identities such as gender, race, class, and age (among many other possible identities) can only be defined in relation to one another (e.g. Crenshaw, 1989). For example, a person's experience as a woman cannot be understood by looking only at her gender – depending on the situation, other identities influence and define her gender (and vice-versa). Thus, stereotypes of others are comprised not only of race stereotypes or gender stereotypes, but a unique combination of these, which may predict unique outcomes in bias and discrimination in hiring.

Emerging from collective experiences of oppression, Black feminist thought emphasizes intersecting oppressions of race, gender, and class and questioned the independence of categories of "gender" and "women" (Collins, 2000). Sojourner Truth famously declared "ain't I a woman?" at a woman's convention in 1851, revealing the contradiction in using the label "woman" to apply to all women when her experiences as a Black woman differ from those of White women and from Black men (Loewenberg & Bogin, 1976). Similarly, Black feminists have criticized White feminists for their focus on the experiences of White middle-class women and anti-racist scholars for focusing on Black men's experiences that renders Black women's realities invisible (Baca Zinn & Dill,

1996; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1995). Black feminist thought emphasizes the importance of considering intersecting systems of oppression. Relevant to this project, Collins (2000) identifies controlling images or stereotypes about Black women as key to maintaining and normalizing racism, sexism, and poverty. Thus, individual experiences of injustice need to be connected to the systems that produce and perpetuate those injustices.

An intersectional approach to studying stereotypes is imperative because it provides a more nuanced view of how stereotypes affect women's lives. By using an intersectional framework in this project, I challenge the notion that all women experience backlash for agentic behavior in the same way and challenge the idea that the gender stereotypes and prescriptive norms that produce backlash for women are universal for all women. If Black women escape backlash for agentic behavior, how do unique stereotypes created about Black women contribute to this, and are there limits to how assertive they are permitted to be (e.g., when is dominant behavior unacceptable for Black women)? In what ways might gender and race stereotypes of Black men produce similar backlash effects that White women receive? This project considers specific stereotypes of Black women and men that may affect when they receive backlash. By taking race and gender into account and by considering race and gender as intersecting rather than separate analyses, this project furthers intersectional work within psychology.

Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) stress the need for intersectional work in leadership that takes into account how gender intersects with other identities to produce unique experiences of oppression and privilege in acquiring leadership positions. Determining when and how women are selected for leadership positions and when they encounter bias is imperative, given the underrepresentation of women in the top

leadership positions. Research on the dearth of women in leadership and on the biases that prevent them from attaining these positions typically do not incorporate race or ethnicity in the discussion, implicitly assuming that sexism operates similarly for all women. An intersectional lens will help organizations consider how gender bias operates differently for women of color, and to be sensitive to multiple identities in leadership training and development.

To consider how intersecting race and gender stereotypes may produce different outcomes for Black women's agentic and dominant behavior in the workplace, I review research on prescriptive and proscriptive gender stereotypes, or entrenched beliefs we have about how men and women should behave, violations of which produce backlash effects. I examine how descriptive, intersecting gender and race stereotypes about Black women and men may or may not fit existing research on gender prescriptions and proscriptions. Next, I review the evidence showing that Black women may be permitted to display dominance and agency, theories about why this might be the case, as well as shortcomings of these studies that I plan to address in the proposed work. Lastly, I review how the prediction that Black women escape backlash for agency and dominance challenges past theories about gender and leadership, pointing to how an intersectional approach advances knowledge about why women are underrepresented in leadership.

Prescriptive and Proscriptive Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes of women as communal (e.g., sensitive, caring, and other-oriented) and men as agentic (independent, confident, aggressive, decisive) are pervasive,

strongly held, and resistant to change (Heilman, 2001; Leuptow, Garovich, & Leuptow, 1995). Gender stereotypes reflect beliefs about what men and women are (descriptive), but they also signal beliefs about what women and men should be like (prescriptive traits) and what they should not be like (proscriptive traits; Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Prentice and Carranza (2002) distinguish between relaxed and intensified prescriptions and proscriptions – those that are strongly demanded of (or disapproved of) women and men (intensified), and those that are less rigidly held (relaxed). They found that intensified prescriptions are socially desirable and strongly preferred for the target gender (e.g., friendliness for women, high self-esteem for men) and intensified proscriptions are socially undesirable and devalued for the target gender (e.g., controlling for women, emotional for men). Relaxed prescriptions are socially desirable but less valued for the target gender; men and women are allowed to fall short of these valued traits (e.g., high self-esteem for women, friendly for men). Relaxed proscriptions are less socially desirable, but more allowable for the target gender (e.g., emotional for women, controlling for men).

The consequences for violated prescriptions and proscriptions should then vary based on the degree to which they are relaxed or intensified and socially desirable. Prentice and Carranza (2002) point out that violating intense and undesirable proscriptions should result in the harshest punishment, while violating relaxed prescriptions and proscriptions may even garner rewards. For instance, women who violate prescriptions of niceness and valued feminine traits are punished with harassment, negative evaluations, social sanctions, and discrimination (Berdahl, 2007; Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Butler & Geis, 1990; Costrich, Feinstein, Kidder, Marecek, & Pascal,

1975; Eagly, Makijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; Rudman, 1998), and male role-violators who display communality are thought of less competent and hirable (Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999; 2001). Despite the fact that agency is a relaxed prescription for women, assertive, self-promoting women are assumed to lack warmth, therefore violating intensified prescriptions of warmth and possibly as confirming intensified proscriptions as cold and arrogant (e.g., Rudman, 1998; Rudman et al., 2012). However, if agentic women confirm relaxed prescriptions of agency as well as intensified prescriptions of warmth, they may be rewarded (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Rudman & Glick, 1999). Along the same lines, men might be rewarded for their cooperation and kindness towards others (relaxed prescriptions), assuming they are also assertive and decisive (intensified prescriptions). However, most of the research in this area focuses the violation of prescribed gender roles, as negative reactions to stereotype-violators result in discrimination and perpetuate existing power structures and inequities (Eagly, 1987; Fiske & Stevens, 1993; Jost & Banaji, 1994).

The stereotyping literature has only recently begun to explore how descriptive race stereotypes can be conceptualized as prescriptive (Berdahl & Min, 2012; Phelan & Rudman, 2010). For example, Berdahl and Min (2012) found that East Asian Americans are stereotyped as non-dominant both descriptively and prescriptively, and descriptively stereotyped as cold. Further, East Asian Americans who violated the descriptive stereotype of coldness or the proscriptive stereotype of dominance were harassed more than those who did not violate the stereotypes. Interestingly, these effects were similar for East Asian men and women, and harassment followed even a positive descriptive violation (warmth). While Phelan and Rudman (2010) found that Black and White race-

stereotype violators were sabotaged more than non-violators, their study did not examine gender and did not explicitly measure prescriptive and descriptive race stereotypes. Lastly, a recent unpublished study (Hall et al., 2014) focusing on prescribed and proscribed communality and dominance traits reported that communality was less prescribed for Black women than White women, but there were no differences between prescriptions for Black or White men. Black women were less proscribed from dominance than White women but there was no gender difference for Blacks on proscribed dominance. White men were proscribed from dominance to the same extent as Black women. Although Hall et al.'s study points to the importance of intersecting race and gender stereotypes and the potential for a relaxed dominance proscription for Black women, they did not measure agentic traits or examine which specific traits were considered to be relaxed or intensified prescriptions for each group.

When considering Black women's experience of backlash for assertive and dominant behavior, it becomes important to specify which agentic and dominant traits are prescriptive and proscriptive for them. For instance, it appears that Black women are given more leeway than White women for possessing dominant traits (Hall et al., 2014). In the Hall et al. study, however, dominance was considered largely undesirable for both groups (means were 3.75 and 3.08, on a 1-9 Likert scale), and because items were averaged together, we do not know how desirable each specific trait was for the groups. Examining specific traits may tell us more about what types of dominance White and Black women are proscribed from displaying. Perhaps Black women are given more flexibility than White women in being demanding and forceful (i.e., relaxed proscription compared to white women), but are not when it comes to being aggressive or threatening

(intensified proscription as it is for white women). Additionally, determining whether agentic traits are actually prescribed for Black women would be a novel contribution to the field. If this were the case, Black women would be liked and strongly expected to be agentic as White men are (e.g., Rudman & Glick, 1999; 2001).

Determining which agentic traits are allowable or valued when expressed by a Black woman is also important. For example, Livingston (2013) posits that Black women are viewed positively for administrative agency (assertiveness, independence, forceful, and proactive) but not for ambitious agency (ambition, competitive, threatening, power-seeking). Additionally, assertiveness and dominance have been confounded in past studies (Berdahl & Min, 2012; Livingston et al., 2012), even though the constructs are not equal in proscriptive strength for White women (i.e., dominance is more proscriptive for White women than agency; Rudman et al., 2012). Furthermore, specific agency and dominance-related stereotypes about Black women (e.g., strength, resilience, and hostility) have not traditionally been included in prescriptive stereotype studies (Prentice & Carranza, 2002; Rudman et al., 2012). If it is more desirable for Black women to be agentic in some cases but not others, it is important to examine the prescriptions and proscriptions of specific traits, and to distinguish between agency and dominance.

Descriptive Stereotypes About Black Women and Men

Although only Hall et al. (2014) has examined pre-and proscriptive stereotypes about Black men and women, other studies have explored intersecting descriptive race and gender stereotypes. Importantly, stereotypes about race are gendered, and in the case

of Black women, stereotypes are more masculine than feminine, and more masculine than

those of White women (Galinsky et al., 2013; Goff et al., 2008). For instance, when

subliminally primed with the word "Black," participants were quicker to respond to

masculine adjectives than feminine ones (Galinsky et al., 2013). Similarly, Goff et al.

(2008) found that undergraduates made more errors in categorizing the gender of Black

women than White men and women and Black men, and that racial stereotypicality was

associated with masculinity for Black targets. These studies point to the importance of

studying race and gender stereotypes together rather than independently, and the potential

difference in how White and Black women's agency displays may be perceived.

Intersecting stereotypes of Black women as masculine are not inconsequential.

Collins (2000) identifies how controlling images or stereotypes of Black women maintain

intersecting oppressions and Black women's status as "Other" and as outsiders who

threaten the social order. One controlling image Collins (2000) examines is that of the

matriarch, who is characterized as the overly strong, overly aggressive Black mother who

works outside the home and is the head of the household. Collins illustrates how this

image maintains racism and sexism as it allows Whites to blame Black women for their

children's failures in school, because the matriarch was absent from home. Viewing

Black women as "bad mothers" and as overly aggressive normalizes their economic

disadvantage. Racism and sexism are mutually reinforced through the matriarch image.

According to the 1965 Moynihan Report conducted by the U.S. government, slavery

disrupted the structure of the Black family, resulting in a gender role reversal of strong

mothers as the head of the household (Collins, 2000). Thus, the absence of a patriarchic

in the Black households justified Black men and women's cultural inferiority (Collins,

1989, 2000). Support for this idea can also be seen in Kennelly's (1999) interviews with White employers who used the stereotype of single motherhood to justify their perception that Black women employees were desperate, often late, and the root of Black problems. Thus, images and stereotypes of Black women as either too strong or too aggressive serve to justify intersecting oppressions.

Research within psychology confirms that aspects of the matriarch image are preserved in the Strong Black Woman and in the Angry Black woman images. Black women are socialized to be and are stereotyped as strong, independent, and tough (Abrams et al., 2014; Donovan, 2011; Robinson, 1983). These qualities are different from the stereotype of White women as affective and communal, but similar to the stereotype of White men. Yet, Black women, as well as Black men, are also negatively stereotyped as angry and hostile (e.g., Harris-Perry, 2011). Supporting the notion that stereotypes of Black women are distinct, Ghavami and Peplau (2013) found that when asked about Black women compared to Blacks, participants listed more unique traits than when they were asked about Black men. These traits included "have an attitude," "confident," "assertive," and "aggressive" – traits related to both the SBW and ABW and traits that were not listed for Black men or White women. Thus, there are two different stereotypes that characterize the perception of Black women's agency and dominance, while there is one stereotype that should predict how Black men's agency and dominance will be perceived.

The Strong Black Woman

The Strong Black Woman (SBW) stereotype is partly derived from the historical and sociocultural realities of Black women enduring slavery, independently supporting households, and resisting gendered and racial oppression, especially through personal agency and collective action (Collins, 2000; Harris-Perry, 2011; Parker, 2005). The SBW image is 1) grounded in personal experiences and self-definitions that require resilience and leadership in families and communities and 2) cultivated by media portrayals of strong Black women and intergenerational messages to be strong despite social injustices (Abrams et al., 2014; Settles, 2006). In a survey of African American women, Harris-Perry (2011) found that "strong" and "independent" were among the top five most frequently used terms to describe their own group. She argues that this image is a response by Black women to negative stereotypes of them. While this image can create a positive identity for Black women through confidence and pride, expectations for them to endure hardship and suppress vulnerability make the SBW image damaging to psychological health, especially if internalized (Abrams et al., 2014; Black & Woods-Giscombé, 2012). In the workplace context, expectations of to be tough and resilient may limit Black women's ability to ask for help or create the perception that they can handle anything (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008).

The SBW stereotype could contribute to perceptions that Black women can be effective leaders in that it overlaps with the "Superwoman," image, the intelligent, independent, strong, and assertive professional Black woman (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). Perceivers may assume Black women will make good leaders based on the agentic

SBW stereotype that, as mentioned above, is based in realities that require their leadership. Indeed, Galinsky et al. (2013) found that Black women were preferred to lead in a position that required the candidate be "fierce, competitive, and contentious" (a masculine work context) over Asian and White women (p. 503). Parker and Ogilvie (1996) argue that as leaders, Black women might use different strategies than White women because their racial/ethnic background socializes traits of strength, confidence, independence, and directness. They also propose that perceivers may assume that Black women are more qualified for leadership positions because of their potential agentic traits. However, the expectation that Black women can handle anything that is thrown at them may have negative implications at work (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008).

The Angry Black Woman

In addition to the SBW, the angry Black woman (ABW) stereotype is relevant to when Black women experience backlash in the workplace, and has been identified as one of the most powerful stereotypes that affects how Black women see themselves (Harris-Perry, 2011). Black women have reported feeling that others perceive them as more aggressive and confrontational than they believe themselves to be (Harris-Perry, 2011), especially in workplace settings (Catalyst, 2004; p.17; Hall, Everett, & Hamilton, 2012; Nelson, 2008; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). For instance, Black women leaders have reported feeling stereotyped as strong, direct, and aggressive, yet also as hostile, pushy, and militant (Griffin, 1986). Black women professors have faced perceptions of them as mean, cold, and

intimidating, and as a result, they are forced to do extra emotion work to maintain professionalism (Harlow, 2003). As Black women's accounts of the stereotype suggest, the ABW is loud, domineering, aggressive, quick-tempered, direct, and hostile (Donovan, 2011; Landrine, 1985; Popp et al., 2003; Weitz & Gordon, 1993; West, 2008). The Sapphire, an image based on a Black female character from the 1950's *Amos 'n' Andy* show, is described in similar ways, as too aggressive and outspoken (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008; West, 1995). The ABW would suggest that Black women should be perceived negatively and receive backlash (similar to White women) for dominant or aggressive, ruthless, and intimidating behavior.

The ABW stereotype has significant effects on the experiences of Black women, though not necessarily the same for all Black women. Wingfield (2010) found that Black women confront racist and gendered emotion expectations in the workplace by smiling more and displaying warmth to put others at ease. This is in line with research showing that Black women feel pressure to attenuate their directness and assertiveness (Jones and Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Black women may also embrace the ABW stereotype. Ong (2005) finds that black women physics students consciously enact a "loud black girl" stereotype to assert themselves. Knowingly confirming the angry black woman stereotype is a way of managing their already highly visible status as outsiders. Similarly, a Black woman participant in Harris-Perry's (2011) focus groups uses her anger as a way to be heard in the workplace, because she typically feels invisible. Harris-Perry connects this experience of misrecognition to W.E.B. Du Bois' description of double-consciousness, the idea that one has to constantly "view oneself through the eyes of others" (Du Bois, 1903). Examining stereotypes, particularly intersecting stereotypes is important to understanding the effect

these views have on Black women and men in the workplace.

Similarities Between Stereotypes of Black Women and Men

Stereotypes about Black men also include hostility and aggressiveness, but Black men are also associated with danger and threat (e.g., Devine, 1989; Devine & Eliot, 1995; Donders, Correll, & Wittenbrink, 2008; Duncan, 1976; Wittenbrink, Judd, & Park, 1997). Specific to the workplace context, Livingston and Pearce (2009) found that Black men CEOs benefitted more (i.e., were thought to be paid more, were thought to have high salaries, and were perceived as being warmer) than White male CEOs when they had a baby face, a trait associated with deference and warmth. Livingston and Pearce suggested that disarming techniques or attributes are necessary for Black male leaders to decrease the perception of them as threatening, whether employees view them as threatening based on the stereotype or high status position as leaders. Similarly, Wingfield (2010) found that both Black men and women professionals who were tokens in their organizations reported feeling pressure to maintain feeling rules of warmth and niceness and suppress anger more than Whites in the organization to ward off the image of them as too angry. However, only Black women in the study reported being able to, at key moments, express anger and confirm the stereotype with the aim of being taken seriously by colleagues (although they point out that this is not always effective). Thus, if Black men display dominance or aggressiveness in the workplace, they should be perceived negatively for confirming negative stereotypes about hostility.

When Black Women's Assertiveness Escapes Backlash

Agency and dominance are important to parse when it comes to backlash because we need to know what which traits and associated behaviors are considered proscription or status-violating for Black women and men compared to White women. If Black women are allowed to be demanding (i.e., dominant; Hall et al., 2014; Rudman et al., 2012), how generalizable is this to other dominance traits like aggressiveness, ruthlessness, intimidating, and threatening, especially considering negative racial stereotypes about their hostility?

Supporting the idea that Black women might be perceived positively for their assertiveness in the leadership positions, Livingston et al. (2012) found that participants perceived a Black woman and a White man CEO who were demanding and tough with an employee as more effective than a White female or Black male CEO acting in a similar manner. They also had a condition in which targets were communal or caring with the employee, which benefitted Black men and White women the most. Livingston et al.'s (2012) finding also suggests that demanding Black men were rated negatively because they might confirm negative stereotypes of them as hostile or aggressive (e.g., Livingston & Pearce, 2009). However, Livingston and colleagues conceptualized "demanding" as dominant and agentic, without distinguishing between the two constructs.

The only other study to experimentally examine whether Black women receive backlash examined dominance behavior as well (Hall et al., 2014). In their study, participants viewed a profile of a Black or White male or female candidate applying for a consulting position that required leadership experience and managing relationships (i.e.,

both communal and agentic qualities were required). The candidate was described as dominant; specifically as insensitive, demanding, extremely competent, and willing to step on others to get to the top. Results indicated that participants were more likely to hire the White man or the Black woman than the White woman or the Black man. The same pattern was found for perceived likability, and higher perceived liking accounted for the greater hiring of the Black woman only. Supporting Livingston et al.'s (2012) results, dominant Black professional women escaped backlash while White women and Black men did not. However, the way in which dominance was manipulated did not fully reflect all dominant traits the measured (e.g., aggressive, threatening, ruthless, controlling, intimidating, and forceful), so it is unclear whether the ABW stereotype might be applied if the dominance manipulation was stronger.

Why might Black women be able to escape backlash for assertive and dominant behavior? Livingston et al. (2012) and Hall et al. (2014) have proposed that Black women's non-prototypic status as women and Blacks may explain these findings. The prototypical Black person is male while the prototypical woman is White, leaving Black women invisible or nonprototypical of their race or gender (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Sesko & Biernat, 2010). Their nonprototypicality can be a disadvantage in that their faces and contributions in a conversation are less memorable than White women, Black men, or White men (Sesko & Biernat, 2010), but it may allow them to escape some prescriptions. For instance, Social Dominance Theory (SDO; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000) proposes an advantage for minority women because of their nonprototypicality. The theory states that hierarchy-maintaining beliefs consider minority men as a greater threat to the hierarchy, thus minority men are oppressed more than

minority women. Minority women represent a lesser threat and as a consequence, they have greater latitude for gender and/or race-violating prescriptions (Livingston et al., 2012; Hall et al., 2014). Unique race and gender stereotypes of Black women (e.g., SBW) are also conceptualized resulting from Black women's nonprototypical race and gender status, and contribute to the positive perception of their dominant behavior.

Challenging Past Theories of Gender and Leadership

The non-prototypicality hypothesis, in addition to the intersecting race and gender stereotypes pose an important challenge to theories of gender and leadership. Namely, Eagly and Karau's (2002) Role Congruity Theory (RCT) of prejudice against female leaders states that women's communal gender roles are perceived to conflict with agentic and stereotypically masculine leadership roles. This conflict results in descriptive and prescriptive bias. Descriptive bias occurs when there is perceived mismatch between roles (i.e., women do not have the traits to be leaders) while prescriptive bias occurs when a woman violates prescriptive gender roles with her masculine (i.e., direct, assertive, or dominant) and leadership style (e.g., Carli, 1990; Eagly et al., 1992). Heilman's lack of fit model (1983; 1995) is very similar, but she emphasizes stereotypes rather than gender roles, per se. Black women do not neatly fit into this role, because while they are expected to be communal at some level (e.g., the Mammy stereotype that describes a caring mother figure), they are also expected to be agentic (e.g., SBW, the Matriarch, a tough, aggressive mother figure). Thus they both may match and mismatch the leadership role in stereotypic gender-race roles.

Evidence that the typical leader is a White male also suggests that Black women should not be considered for leadership positions. According to Lord and Maher's (1993) leadership categorization theory, the fit between an individual's characteristics and the perceiver's ideas about a typical or prototypical leader predicts whether the leader is evaluated positively and as effective. Exemplars of the leader category (or prototypical members) are assumed to have typical leader attributes; thus because White men occupy most leader positions, people assume that White men are leaders (a pro-White leadership bias; Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008). The pro-White bias exists even at the implicit level (Gundemir, Homan, de Dreu, & van Vugt, 2014). By this logic, Black women should not be considered leaders because they do not match the prototypical leader race (and gender); however, Black women's nonprototypicality actually results in similar levels of perceived leader effectiveness as White men (Livingston et al., 2012).

Rudman et al. (2012) point out that RCT does not account for instances in which agentic women suffer backlash when not in leadership positions, the specific gender roles that are responsible for backlash, and perceivers' motivations for penalizing gender-role deviants. They instead propose the status incongruity hypothesis (SIH), which posits that women receive backlash because their gender communicates low status, which is incongruent with their agentic behavior that is associated with status and gaining power. Importantly, they predicted and found that it was *not* a perceived lack or communality that predicted backlash; rather, perceptions of extreme dominance (the dominance penalty) accounted for backlash. They also found that participants' greater gender system-justifying beliefs predicted backlash (lower liking and hiring), supporting their hypothesis that backlash stems from perceived status violations and the support of the

gender status quo. Thus, the dominance penalty (increased perceptions of dominance) and status quo beliefs predicted backlash towards female targets.

Because Black women occupy a position of even lower status than White women, by the SIH logic, their agency displays should be viewed even more negatively than that of White women. However, evidence previously discussed indicates the opposite, that Black women are rewarded for their dominance displays (Hall et al., 2014). If the present study were to produce similar findings, the SIH would be applicable only to White women and men. Thus, examining how race affects backlash effects provides a useful test of the SIH.

Overview of the Present Studies

The current set of studies was designed to determine when assertive and dominant Black women encounter backlash. Study 1 determined which agentic and dominant traits are prescriptive and proscriptive for Black women relative to other groups (White women, Black men, White men, and the average person). This study was needed because past research has conflated agency and dominance, a distinction relevant given the fine line that Black women walk when it comes to being viewed positively for assertiveness or negatively for hostility and anger. The prescriptions and proscriptions found in Study 1 should thus predict backlash in Studies 2 and 3. Study 2 explored the boundary conditions of the claim that Black women are permitted to be "dominant" (Livingston et al., 2012; Hall et al., 2014). Study 2 determined whether agentic and dominant Black women and men receive backlash in the form of decreased liking and likelihood of being

promoted for agentic behavior compared to White counterparts when being considered for a leadership position in the workplace. Lastly, Study 3 assessed how Black women and men fit Rudman et al.'s (2012) SIH, and the extent to which participants sabotage agentic Black women and men and agentic White women and men in an interaction context.

Chapter 2

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to establish which agentic and dominant traits are considered prescriptive and proscriptive for Black women, and the strength of these prescriptions and proscriptions relative to other more prototypic group members (White women, Black men, and White men). It was also important to include SBW and ABW traits in the analysis of agentic and dominant traits to understand how these stereotypes fit into prescriptions and proscriptions for Black women and men; this has not yet been established by any literature on prescriptions and proscriptions for women and men. Thus, Study 1 determined which traits or stereotypes are responsible for the backlash against agentic and or dominant Black women. Given that Black women are stereotyped as masculine (e.g., Galinsky et al., 2013), and unique stereotypes as strong and independent (e.g., SBW; Abrams et al., 2014; Donovan, 2011; Ghavami & Peplau, 2013; Robinson, 1983), Black women may be prescribed agentic traits as White men are. Additionally, Black women may also be rated as more desirable for possessing agentic traits than White women and Black men. Thus, the following hypotheses were made:

Hypothesis 1a: Black women's intensified prescriptions will include agentic traits that are typically associated with White men (e.g., confident, independent, assertive, leadership ability). Black women and White men should not differ in desirability ratings for possessing agentic traits.

Hypothesis 1b: Black women's intensified prescriptions will include agentic traits associated with the SBW (e.g., strong, resilient, tough).

Hypothesis 2: Black women will be rated as more desirable for possessing agentic traits than Black men and White women.

Hall et al. (2014) found that dominance was less proscribed for Black women than White women, but proscriptions did not differ from Black men or White men.

Hypothesis 3: Black women's proscriptions should include dominance traits, but Black women should be rated as more desirable for possessing dominant traits than White women. Black women and men should be rated as equally desirable for possessing dominant traits, and Black women and White men should not differ in desirability ratings on dominant traits.

Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 1,616$) were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk, an online site for recruiting participants (see Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). The sample size for this and all subsequent studies was determined a-priori for medium to small effects (Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). Two hundred and forty-eight participants were not included in analyses because they did not pass one of three attention checks or they did not pass the manipulation check. Three attention check items asked participants to indicate a specified response option (e.g., "Please select '3' for this

question"). The manipulation check was one multiple-choice item: "Who were you asked to think about in the previous question?" with five response options (e.g., "a black male"). One hundred and twenty-five participants failed or did not answer attention checks and 123 failed or did not answer the manipulation check. To be included in analyses, participants had to answer all four items correctly.

The final sample included 1,368 participants (719 women, 633 men, 9 other, and 7 unreported). Participants were mostly white (72.5%), with the remaining identifying as Black (7.7%), Asian (6.5%), Latino/a (5.7%), having multiple races (5.5%), and a small portion of those identifying as Middle Eastern, Native American, Pacific Islander, or other (1.6%), while six (0.4%) neglected to identify. Ages of participants ranged from 18 to 84 years ($M = 35.33$, $Mdn = 32$). Approximately 9.7% of participants did not have a college degree, 26.5% had some college and about half (48.8%) had a 2-year or 4-year college degree; 14.8% had a Masters, doctorate, or professional degree. The median income of participants was $30,000-39,999; though a 43.1% of the sample had an income below $30,000 and 22.3% had an income of $60,000 or more. The majority of participants (54%) were employed for wages while 14.3% were self-employed. The remainder of participants was students (12.4%), out of work and currently looking for work (6.6%), homemakers (5.7%), retired (3.5%), were not currently looking for work or were unable to work currently (3.3%). The average number of years of experience participants had working was 14.85 years ($Mdn = 11$).

Procedure and Materials

Participants took an online survey after they read about the study on Mechanical Turk. Participants were randomly assigned to one of five conditions. They were asked about their perception of what most Americans believe (not their personal beliefs) about one of the following target groups: a Black female, a White female, a Black male, a White male, and the average person. As reported in Prentice and Carranza (2002), participants were asked to indicate "how desirable it is in American society for the target (e.g., a Black female) to possess the following characteristics?" on a scale ranging from - 4 (*very undesirable*) to 4 (*very desirable*), with a midpoint of zero (*neither desirable nor undesirable*). In analyses these scored were recoded to range from 1 (*very undesirable*) to 9 (*very desirable*). Three attention check items were embedded in the list of 49 traits that participants saw. They then were able to indicate any comments they had about the study, completed a manipulation check, and then demographic items. They survey took about five minutes to complete, on average. Participants were compensated $0.30 for completing the survey, a common rate for Mechanical Turk participants (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011).

Traits

Participants were asked to rate the desirability of 48 traits for the target (see Tables **1-1** and **2-1**). Of these traits, 15 were agentic traits that Rudman et al. (2012) found to be prescriptive for men, and 14 were dominant traits that were found to be proscriptive for women (see Table **1-1**). These traits that Rudman and colleagues used

were taken from Prentice and Carranza's (2002) study on prescriptive and proscriptive

traits. I also included traits that have not been tested before in terms of prescriptiveness or

proscriptiveness but that I believe are related to the constructs of agency and dominance;

these traits reflect the SBW (e.g., strong, bold), the ABW (e.g., hostile, domineering), and

stereotypes about Black men's dominance (e.g., threatening, dangerous; see Table **2-1**).

Table **1-1**: Traits from Rudman et al. (2012).

Agentic Traits	Dominant Traits
Career oriented	Aggressive
Leadership ability	Intimidating
Assertive	Dominating
Independent	Arrogant
Business sense	Rebellious
Ambitious	Demanding
Hard worker	Ruthless
Works well under pressure	Angry
Self-starter	Controlling
Intelligent	Stubborn
Analytical ability	Cold towards others
High self-esteem	Self-centered
Persuasive	Cynical
Competitive	Forceful
Competent	

Note. Although I consider competence as a construct distinct from agenticism, it is included
because it was prescriptive for men (along with other agentic traits) in Rudman et al. (2012).

Table **2-1**: Additional traits reflecting intersecting race and gender
stereotypes.

Agentic Traits	Dominant Traits
SBW	ABW
Strong	Hostile
Tough	Domineering
Direct	Pushy
Confident	Loud
Resourceful	Confrontational
Bold	
Self-sufficient	Black Male Stereotype
Opinionated	Threatening
Resilient	Dangerous
Proud	Violent

Decisive

Note. SW traits are based on Abrams et al. (2014), Donovan (2011), Popp et al. (2002), and Thomas et al., 2004; ABW traits are based on Harris-Perry (2011), Griffin, 1986; Landrine (1985), and Weitz and Gordon (1993); Black male stereotypes are based on Duncan (1976), Devine (1989), and Devine and Eliot (1995).

Measures

Although each trait was analyzed separately, an average measure of agency and an average measure of dominance were created to compare how desirable agentic and dominant traits were for each target overall, with higher scores indicating greater desirability. The agency item consisted of a mean score of all 26 agentic items ($\alpha = .95$). The dominance item consisted of a mean score of all 22 dominance items ($\alpha = .96$).

Results

To test the effect of Target on the rated desirability of traits, a one-way MANOVA with Target as the independent variable was conducted for each of the 48 traits. Following analytical procedures from Prentice and Carranza (2002) to control for Type I error, the α level was set to .01 for each test and for the subsequent t-tests, the α level was set to .001 as specified by the Bonferroni correction. The MANOVA revealed a significant multivariate effect of Target, Pillai's Trace $= .57$, $F = 4.00$, $df = 4,616$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$. [1] The univariate ANOVAs revealed significant effects for all 48 traits,

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[1] This effect was moderated by Participant gender, Pillai's Trace $= .20$, $F = 1.27$, $df = 4,596$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, but the subsequent univariate ANOVA showed that participants gender moderated the Target main effect for two traits: intimidating, $F(4, 1,193) = 3.34$, $p = .010$, $\eta_p^2 = .011$, and direct, $F(4, 1,193) = 14.52$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$. Male participants thought it was more desirable for a Black woman to be intimidating than female participants did ($p < .001$). Male participants thought it was more desirable for a Black man to be direct than female participants ($p = .001$). Female participants thought it was more desirable for a White man to be direct than male participants ($p = .20$). The Condition effect was also moderated by participant

where all p-levels were less than or equal to .001 and *F*s ranged from 4.76 to 38.79.

Therefore t-tests were used to compare the desirability for each target group (a Black

woman, a White woman, a Black man, a White man) to the desirability for the average

person for the traits.

Before examining the degree to which each trait was prescriptive or proscriptive

for each group (i.e., differing from the average person), I determined the significant

differences among desirability ratings for the Black woman, Black man, White woman,

and White man targets (see Table **3-1**). Overall, the table shows that desirability ratings

for White women significantly differed from White men for every trait, while there were

more differences among ratings for Black men and women and White men. This was

particularly true for ratings of Black women and White men on agentic traits. For

example, it was considered equally as desirable for Black women to be self-sufficient,

resourceful, proud, and resilient as it was for White men. On dominant traits, there were

some similarities between Black men and White men; for example, it was considered

equally desirable for Black men and White men to be cold, self-centered, and violent.

To determine whether the traits were prescriptive or proscriptive for each group, I

used criteria from Prentice and Carranza (2002); traits that were considered desirable

averaged over 5 (the scale midpoint), and those that were considered undesirable

averaged under 5. Undesirable traits that were rated as less desirable for the target than

the average person were considered intensified proscriptions. Desirable traits that were

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race when parsing participant race into White and non-white groups, Pillai's Trace = .21, F = 1.33, df =
4,632, p = .002, η_p^2 = .05. Univariate ANOVAs revealed significant interaction on the following traits:
aggressive, confrontational, violent, and hostile (all p's < .01, all F's >3.37). Whites perceived it to be less
desirable for White and Black men to have these traits than Nonwhites perceived it to be (all p's < .05).
However, the sample sizes were unequal as there were more White participants in the sample, so these
effects are to be interpreted with caution.

more desirable for the target than the average person would have been considered intensified prescriptions but none of the traits qualified for this category for any target. Desirable traits that were less desirable for the target than the average person were considered relaxed prescriptions. The mean trait ratings for each target compared to the average person and to a White man in American society is shown in Tables **4-1, 5-1, and 6-1**.

To understand how desirable agency and dominance was for targets overall, a MANOVA was conducted with Target as the independent variable and the two agency and dominance items as dependent variables. Results indicated a significant multivariate effect of Target, Pillai's Trace = .20, $F = 37.17$, $df = 2,726$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. The univariate ANOVAs revealed significant effects for agency, $F(4, 1,363) = 42.77$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, and dominance, $F(4, 1,363) = 40.66$, $p = .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. Post-hoc analyses revealed that Black women ($M = 7.06$, $SD = 1.18$) and Black men ($M = 7.02$, $SD = 1.30$) had greater desirability ratings for agentic traits than White women ($M = 6.62$, $SD = 1.30$). White men ($M = 7.72$, $SD = 0.93$) and the average person ($M = 7.61$, $SD = 0.85$) had higher desirability ratings for agentic traits than all other targets. The pattern for dominant traits was the same ($M_{BW} = 3.08$, $SD_{BW} = 1.53$; $M_{WW} = 2.82$, $SD_{WW} = 1.16$; $M_{BM} = 3.00$, $SD_{BM} = 1.53$; $M_{WM} = 4.01$; $SD_{WM} = 1.64$; $M_{AP} = 4.01$, $SD_{AP} = 1.54$).

Hypotheses 1a and 1b

Participants perceived the traits to be similar in desirability for the average person and a White man in American society. Thus, inconsistent with Prentice and Carranza

(2002) and hypothesis 1a, there were no prescriptions or proscriptions for White men, as desirability ratings did not differ from the average person. Prentice and Carranza found that for men, agentic traits were intensified prescriptions (i.e., more favorable than the average person) and dominant traits were relaxed proscriptions (i.e., more favorable than the average person). Although the direction of the means in the present study generally mirrors this trend, the two targets (White men; the average person) did not statistically differ. Thus, participants considered the White man as the standard to compare the other target groups against.

Also counter to hypothesis 1a, no traits were considered intensified prescriptions or relaxed proscriptions for Black women. Instead, the traits reflected relaxed prescriptions for Black women. Although these relaxed prescriptions did include agentic traits typically associated with White men, it was considered less desirable for Black women to possess agentic traits than it was for White men to possess those agentic traits, with seven exceptions (intelligent, resilient, proud, self-sufficient, hard worker, analytical ability, and resourceful). The analysis of the averaged agency item mirrors this finding; it was perceived as less desirable for Black women to be agentic than it was for White men to be agentic. This counters the prediction that Black women and White men could be rated similarly on agentic traits. Thus, hypothesis 1a was largely unsupported, despite similar ratings on seven agentic traits.

Hypothesis 1b that Black women would be strongly prescribed SBW traits was also largely unsupported, given that there were no intensified prescriptions for Black women. In addition, Black women and Black men were prescribed similar SBW traits. However, it was more desirable for Black women to possess some SBW traits (e.g.,

tough, strong, and self-sufficient) than it was for White women to possess those traits, and Black women were rated similarly to White men on some SBW traits (resourceful, self-sufficient, resilient, proud).

Hypothesis 2

I predicted that it would be more desirable for Black women to possess agentic traits compared to White women and Black men; this prediction was partially supported. Participants perceived it to be more desirable for Black women to possess some agentic traits than White women, but desirability ratings were similar for Black women and Black men (see Table **3-1**). For instance, participants perceived it to be more desirable for Black women than for White women to be tough, and for Black men and women to be strong, independent, and hard-working than it was for White women. In addition, there were more relaxed prescriptions for White women compared to Black women and Black men, indicating greater perceived differences of White women and the average person and the similarity in ratings for Black men and women.

The analysis of averaged agency and dominance items partially supports hypothesis 2, that Black women would be rated as more desirable for possessing agentic traits than White women, but did not support the prediction that Black women differed from Black men on agentic traits.

Hypothesis 3

The prediction that Black women would be proscribed from dominance traits to a lesser extent than White women was partially supported: there were fewer proscriptive dominant traits ascribed to Black women compared to those ascribed to White women (see Tables **4-1** and **5-1**). Supporting the prediction that Black women and men would be perceived similarly for possessing dominant traits, Black women and men were proscribed from similar types of dominance traits (see Tables **4-1** and **6-1**) and desirability ratings for both groups did not differ from each other on individual traits (see Table **3-1**). The analysis of the averaged agency and dominance items also support hypothesis 3, as it was more desirable for Black women (and Black men) to possess dominance traits than White women. This analysis also showed that Black women and men did not differ in desirability ratings for dominant traits.

Counter to the prediction that White men and Black women would be perceived similarly in desirability for dominant traits, Black women differed in desirability ratings from White men, with the exception of three traits (hostile, angry, cynical; Table **3-1**). In addition, the analysis of the averaged items showed that White men were given greater desirability ratings for possessing dominant traits than Black women. Thus, it was generally considered less desirable for Black women to be dominant than it was for White men.

Table **3-1**: Relaxed prescriptions and intensified proscriptions for Black women in American society.

	Agentic Traits					Dominant Traits			
	BW	BM	WW	WM		BW	BM	WW	WM
Career oriented	7.44$_a$	7.51$_{ac}$	6.39$_b$	7.94$_c$	Aggressive	3.38$_a$	3.19$_a$	3.30$_a$	4.83$_b$
Leadership ability	7.15$_a$	7.34$_a$	6.59$_b$	8.10$_c$	Intimidating	2.97$_a$	2.70$_a$	2.80$_a$	4.18$_b$
Assertive	6.13$_a$	5.91$_a$	5.86$_a$	7.38$_b$	Dominating	3.67$_a$	3.43$_a$	3.38$_a$	5.02$_b$
Independent	7.56$_a$	7.42$_a$	6.81$_b$	7.98$_b$	Arrogant	2.55$_a$	2.84$_a$	2.39$_a$	3.69$_b$
Business sense	7.21$_a$	7.35$_a$	6.48$_b$	7.86$_c$	Rebellious	3.27$_a$	2.97$_a$	3.38$_a$	4.43$_b$
Ambitious	7.36$_{ab}$	7.44$_a$	6.87$_b$	7.98$_c$	Demanding	3.68$_a$	3.52$_a$	3.30$_a$	4.78$_b$
Hard worker	8.02$_a$	8.04$_a$	7.53$_b$	8.30$_a$	Angry	2.25$_{ab}$	2.30$_{ab}$	2.00$_a$	2.73$_b$
Works well under pressure	7.61$_a$	7.67$_{ab}$	7.36$_a$	8.03$_b$	Controlling	3.25$_a$	2.98$_a$	2.80$_a$	4.13$_b$
Self starter	7.41$_a$	7.32$_a$	6.73$_b$	7.97$_c$	Stubborn	3.55$_a$	3.39$_a$	3.21$_a$	4.33$_b$
Intelligent	7.80$_{ab}$	7.69$_a$	7.54$_a$	8.14$_b$	Cold	2.43$_{ab}$	2.71$_{ac}$	2.04$_b$	3.05$_c$
Analytical ability	7.21$_a$	7.17$_a$	6.57$_b$	7.62$_a$	Self-centered	3.08$_a$	3.26$_{ab}$	2.84$_a$	3.80$_b$
High self-esteem	7.29$_a$	7.17$_a$	7.18$_a$	7.80$_b$	Confrontational	2.91$_a$	2.76$_a$	2.84$_a$	4.19$_b$
Competitive	6.44$_a$	6.53$_a$	5.79$_b$	7.39$_b$	Forceful	3.65$_a$	3.33$_a$	3.28$_a$	4.54$_b$
Competent	7.76$_a$	7.82$_{ac}$	7.60$_a$	8.18$_c$	Violent	1.74$_a$	1.84$_{ab}$	1.57$_a$	2.24$_b$
Strong	7.20$_a$	7.15$_a$	6.58$_b$	7.98$_c$	Hostile	2.04$_{ab}$	2.06$_{ab}$	1.94$_a$	2.53$_b$
Tough	6.13$_a$	5.82$_{ab}$	5.24$_b$	7.25$_c$	Domineering	3.46$_a$	3.26$_a$	3.04$_a$	4.66$_b$
Direct	6.29$_a$	6.32$_a$	6.07$_a$	7.35$_b$	Pushy	2.98$_a$	2.80$_a$	2.73$_a$	3.71$_b$
Resourceful	7.68$_{ab}$	7.56$_a$	7.44$_a$	7.97$_b$	Loud	3.11$_a$	3.29$_a$	2.81$_a$	4.12$_b$
Bold	6.17$_a$	6.14$_a$	5.92$_a$	7.37$_b$	Threatening	2.23$_a$	2.00$_a$	2.02$_a$	2.81$_b$
Self-sufficient	7.82$_{ac}$	7.70$_a$	7.09$_b$	8.11$_c$	Dangerous	2.05$_a$	2.04$_a$	2.09$_a$	2.83$_b$
Opinionated	5.13$_a$	5.00$_a$	4.70$_a$	6.06$_b$	Ruthless	2.91$_a$	2.83$_b$	2.60$_a$	3.79$_c$
Confident	7.37$_a$	7.43$_a$	7.36$_a$	8.16$_b$	Cynical	3.38$_{ab}$	3.33$_{ab}$	2.95$_a$	3.60$_b$
Proud	6.86$_{ab}$	6.62$_a$	6.52$_a$	7.22$_b$					
Resilient	7.21$_{ab}$	7.14$_a$	6.98$_a$	7.63$_b$					
Decisive	7.03$_a$	7.04$_a$	6.76$_a$	7.74$_b$					
Persuasive	6.44$_a$	6.29$_a$	6.23$_a$	7.25$_b$					

Note. BW = mean rating of desirability for a Black woman in American society; BM = mean rating of desirability for a Black man in American society; WW = mean rating of desirability for a White woman in American society. Means are based on *ns* of 251-291. Within each row, means not sharing a common subscript differ significantly at the .001 level.

Table **4-1**: Relaxed prescriptions and intensified proscriptions for Black women in American society.

Black woman target						
Relaxed Prescriptions				Intensified Proscriptions		
	BW	AP	WM		BW	AP	WM
Self starter	7.41_a	7.83_b	8.07_b	Demanding	3.68_a	4.79_b	4.78_b
Confident	7.36_a	8.11_b	8.18_b	Dominating	3.67_a	4.97_b	5.02_b
Ambitious	7.35_a	7.93_b	8.00_b	Forceful	3.65_a	4.75_b	4.54_b
Business sense	7.21_a	7.73_b	7.90_b	Stubborn	3.55_a	4.23_b	4.33_b
Resilient	7.21_a	7.82_b	7.67_{ab}	Domineering	3.46_a	4.28_b	4.67_b
Strong	7.20_a	7.81_b	8.01_b	Aggressive	3.38_a	4.69_b	4.82_b
Leadership ability	7.15_a	7.91_b	8.13_b	Rebellious	3.27_a	4.26_b	4.43_b
Decisive	7.02_a	7.59_b	7.77_b	Controlling	3.25_a	4.01_b	4.13_b
Proud	6.85_a	7.37_b	7.24_{ab}	Loud	3.11_a	4.48_b	4.12_b
Competitive	6.44_a	7.51_b	7.41_b	Self-centered	3.08_a	4.05_b	3.79_b
Persuasive	6.43_a	7.25_b	7.27_b	Pushy	2.98_a	3.78_b	3.71_b
Direct	6.27_a	7.11_b	7.37_b	Intimidating	2.97_a	4.10_b	4.18_b
Bold	6.16_a	7.19_b	7.39_b	Confrontational	2.91_a	3.94_b	4.19_b
Tough	6.13_a	6.98_b	7.27_b	Ruthless	2.91_a	4.15_b	3.79_b
Assertive	6.12_a	7.26_b	7.40_b	Arrogant	2.55_a	3.48_b	3.69_b
Opinionated	5.14_a	6.12_b	6.08_b	Cold	2.43_a	3.03_b	3.04_b
				Angry	2.25_a	2.84_b	2.74_{ab}
				Dangerous	2.05_a	2.56_b	2.83_b
				Hostile	2.04_a	2.55_b	2.54_{ab}
				Violent	1.74_a	2.31_b	2.23_{ab}

Note. BW = mean rating of desirability for a Black woman in American society; BM = mean rating of desirability for a Black man in American society; WW = mean rating of desirability for a White woman in American society. Means are based on *ns* of 251-291. Within each row, means not sharing a common subscript differ significantly at the .001 level.

Table **5-1**: Relaxed prescriptions and intensified proscriptions for White women in American society.

White woman target							
Relaxed Prescriptions				Intensified Proscriptions			
	WW	AP	WM		WW	AP	WM
Competent	7.60_a	8.09_b	8.18_b	Opinionated	4.70_a	6.12_b	6.06_b
Intelligent	7.54_a	7.97_b	8.14_b	Dominating	3.38_a	4.97_b	5.02_b
Hard worker	7.53_a	8.19_b	8.30_b	Rebellious	3.38_a	4.26_b	4.43_b
Resourceful	7.44_a	8.00_b	7.97_b	Aggressive	3.30_a	4.69_b	4.83_b
Works well under pressure	7.36_a	7.90_b	8.03_b	Demanding	3.30_a	4.79_b	4.78_b
Confident	7.36_a	8.11_b	8.16_b	Forceful	3.28_a	4.75_b	4.54_b
High self-esteem	7.18_a	7.69_b	7.80_b	Stubborn	3.21_a	4.23_b	4.33_b
Self-sufficient	7.09_a	7.90_b	8.11_b	Domineering	3.04_a	4.28_b	4.66_b
Resilient	6.98_a	7.82_b	7.63_b	Cynical	2.95_a	3.71_b	3.60_b
Ambitious	6.87_a	7.93_b	7.98_b	Self-centered	2.84_a	4.05_b	3.80_b
Independent	6.81_a	7.72_b	7.98_b	Confrontational	2.84_a	3.94_b	4.19_b
Decisive	6.76_a	7.59_b	7.74_b	Loud	2.81_a	4.48_b	4.12_b
Self-starter	6.73_a	7.83_b	7.97_b	Controlling	2.80_a	4.01_b	4.13_b
Leadership ability	6.59_a	7.91_b	8.10_b	Intimidating	2.80_a	4.10_b	4.18_b
Strong	6.58_a	7.81_b	7.98_b	Pushy	2.73_a	3.78_b	3.71_b
Analytical ability	6.57_a	7.27_b	7.62_b	Ruthless	2.60_a	4.15_b	3.79_b
Proud	6.52_a	7.37_b	7.22_b	Arrogant	2.39_a	3.48_b	3.69_b
Business sense	6.48_a	7.73_b	7.86_b	Cold	2.04_a	3.03_b	3.05_b
Career-oriented	6.39_a	7.63_b	7.94_b	Threatening	2.02_a	2.70_b	2.81_b
Persuasive	6.23_a	7.25_b	7.25_b	Angry	2.00_a	2.84_b	2.73_b
Direct	6.07_a	7.11_b	7.35_b	Hostile	1.94_a	2.55_b	2.53_b
Bold	5.92_a	7.19_b	7.37_b	Violent	1.57_a	2.31_b	2.24_b
Assertive	5.86_a	7.26_b	7.38_b				
Competitive	5.79_a	7.51_b	7.39_b				
Tough	5.24_a	6.98_b	7.25_b				

Note. WW = mean rating of desirability for a White woman in American society; AP = mean rating of desirability for an average person American society; WM = mean rating of desirability for a White man in American society. Means are based on *ns* of 251-291. Within each row, means not sharing a common subscript differ significantly at the .001 level (two subscripts indicate that the White man target group did not differ from the other two target groups).

Table **6-1**: Relaxed prescriptions and intensified proscriptions for Black men in American society.

Black man target						
Relaxed Prescriptions				Intensified Proscriptions		
BM	AP	WM		BM	AP	WM
Resourceful 7.56$_a$	8.00$_b$	7.97$_b$	Demanding	3.52$_a$	4.79$_b$	4.78$_b$
Ambitious 7.44$_a$	7.93$_b$	7.98$_b$	Dominating	3.43$_a$	4.97$_b$	5.02$_b$
Confident 7.43$_a$	8.11$_b$	8.16$_b$	Stubborn	3.39$_a$	4.23$_b$	4.33$_b$
Leadership ability 7.34$_a$	7.91$_b$	8.10$_b$	Forceful	3.33$_a$	4.75$_b$	4.54$_b$
Self-starter 7.32$_a$	7.83$_b$	7.97$_b$	Loud	3.29$_a$	4.48$_b$	4.12$_b$
High self-esteem 7.17$_a$	7.69$_b$	7.80$_b$	Domineering	3.26$_a$	4.28$_b$	4.66$_b$
Strong 7.15$_a$	7.81$_b$	7.98$_b$	Self-centered	3.26$_a$	4.05$_b$	3.80$_{ab}$
Resilient 7.14$_a$	7.82$_b$	7.63$_b$	Aggressive	3.19$_a$	4.69$_b$	4.83$_b$
Decisive 7.04$_a$	7.59$_b$	7.74$_b$	Controlling	2.98$_a$	4.01$_b$	4.13$_b$
Proud 6.62$_a$	7.37$_b$	7.22$_b$	Rebellious	2.97$_a$	4.26$_b$	4.43$_b$
Competitive 6.53$_a$	7.51$_b$	7.39$_b$	Arrogant	2.84$_a$	3.48$_b$	3.69$_b$
Direct 6.32$_a$	7.11$_b$	7.35$_b$	Ruthless	2.83$_a$	4.15$_b$	3.79$_b$
Persuasive 6.29$_a$	7.25$_b$	7.25$_b$	Pushy	2.80$_a$	3.78$_b$	3.71$_b$
Bold 6.14$_a$	7.19$_b$	7.37$_b$	Confrontational	2.76$_a$	3.94$_b$	4.19$_b$
Assertive 5.91$_a$	7.26$_b$	7.38$_b$	Intimidating	2.70$_a$	4.10$_b$	4.18$_b$
Tough 5.82$_a$	6.98$_b$	7.25$_b$	Angry	2.30$_a$	2.84$_b$	2.73$_{ab}$
Opinionated 5.00$_a$	6.12$_b$	6.06$_b$	Threatening	2.00$_a$	2.70$_b$	2.81$_b$

Note. BM = mean rating of desirability for a Black man in American society; AP = mean rating of desirability for an average person American society; WM = mean rating of desirability for a White man in American society. Means are based on *ns* of 251-291. Within each row, means not sharing a common subscript differ significantly at the .001 level (two subscripts indicate that the White man target group did not differ from the other two target groups).

Discussion

Study 1 established that agentic traits were considered relaxed prescriptions and that dominant traits were considered intensified proscriptions for Black women, Black men, and White women. Overall, this replicates findings from Prentice and Carranza (2002) and Rudman et al. (2012) for women compared to men and the average person. However, unlike Prentice and Carranza's (2002) study, there were no prescriptions or proscriptions for White men, as desirability ratings for White men did not differ from the

average person. This reflects person perception research that suggests that when people are asked to think about a typical person a White man comes to mind (Zarate & Smith, 1990). That personhood or typical humanity was equated with the White male is not surprising, given feminist scholarship about White privilege as an invisible category when thinking about race or gender (McIntosh, 1988). This is the definition of androcentrism, or equating the standard person with male, and ethnocentrism, or equating the standard person with White, which can lead to perceiving groups at intersectional positions other than White or male as non-prototypical group members (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008).

I had predicted that there would be similar prescriptions for Black women and White men, as Black women are expected to be independent, tough, and strong. Results showed that it was more desirable for White men to possess many agentic traits than Black women, including SBW traits (e.g., strong, tough, direct, confident). However, it was still more desirable for Black women to possess some of these agentic and SBW traits (e.g., tough, strong, and self-sufficient) than it was for White women to possess those traits, and there were seven agentic traits that were rated as equally desirable for Black women and White men (e.g., resourceful, self-sufficient, resilient). In addition, there were fewer differences in desirability ratings of agentic traits between White men/the average person and Black women compared to desirability ratings between White women and White men/the average person. This indicates that there may be fewer expectations for White women to be agentic than there are for Black women and men.

Although Black women occupy a unique intersectional position and are stereotyped in unique ways compared to Black men, Study 1 found that both relaxed

prescriptions and intensified proscriptions were similar for the two groups, contrary to hypotheses. Black men are stereotyped as hostile, threatening, and violent (Wittenbrink et al., 1997), but Black women were proscribed from traits related to hostility, threat, and violence slightly more than Black men, which may reflect the "woman" component/dimension of the ABW stereotype. If there is a strong expectation for women in general to be warm and nice (e.g., Heilman, 2001; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007); the ABW stereotype may be particularly harmful when applied to Black women, given these proscriptions. Despite this, it was still perceived as more desirable for Black targets to be dominant in general than it was for a White woman, which is in line with predictions and past research (Hall, 2014). This suggests that participants had stricter ideas about what types of traits White women should not possess compared to other targets, and that it may be slightly more acceptable for Black women and men to display dominance than White women.

White women's relaxed prescriptions included many of the same agentic relaxed prescriptions in Prentice and Carranza's (2002) and Rudman et al.'s (2012) research. Specifically, participants considered it less desirable for White women to be competent, intelligent, and career-oriented compared to White men or the average person. Traits related to competence and being hard working in a career context were relaxed prescriptions for White women but not for Black women and men. This suggests that it is less important or desirable for White women to be competent than it is for other groups to be. Despite this, ratings for Black men and women and White women for competence and intelligence did not statistically differ, suggesting that participants made more of a

distinction between White men and women with competence and intelligence than they do for Black men and women.

In summary, Study 1 showed that Black women, Black men, and White women are proscribed from similar types of dominance traits, but White women are proscribed from a greater number of dominance traits and overall are rated overall as being less desirable than Black targets for possessing dominant traits. A similar result was shown for agentic traits; White women were considered to be loosely prescribed more agentic traits than Black targets, and Black targets were rated as overall more desirable for possessing agentic traits than the White woman target. White male targets were identical to the average person and were rated higher on most traits (agentic or dominant) than the either Black targets or White female targets. These findings lay the groundwork for Study 2. The goal of Study 2 was to investigate whether these prescriptions and proscriptions result in backlash for Black and female targets, and whether backlash occurs for Black women to the same extent that it does for Black men and White women.

Chapter 3

Study 2

In Study 2, participants read a performance review materials for an employee who was ostensibly up for a promotion. The materials contained an employee profile (identical for all targets except for race and gender), and a performance review that either emphasized the employee's agentic or dominant qualities in their job performance (using terms from Study 1. Thus, the between-subjects study design was 2 (Target Race: Black, White) X 2 (Target Gender: woman, man) X 2 (Performance review: agentic, dominant).

Results from Study 1 demonstrated that White women, Black women, and Black men have similar types of proscriptions, but as a whole, it was more acceptable for Black targets to be dominant than a White woman (despite dominance being a proscription for all three targets). Hall et al. (2014) and Livingston et al. (2012) found that dominant Black women escaped backlash compared to White women and Black men, but results of my study 1 lead to a different set of predictions. I predicted that an employee profile that strongly manipulates dominance should reflect findings from Study 1. Study 2 should show that dominance is more acceptable for Black women and men compared to a White woman, but less acceptable compared to a White man, as it is still proscribed for Black women and men. Study 2 employed a dominance manipulation that includes proscriptions from Study 1 that included more dominance traits than previous studies.

Predictions for agentic targets are similar to predictions for dominant targets. Study 1 showed that Black women and men share similar agency prescriptions and that overall, agency was rated more favorably for Black targets than for White women. Thus,

I predict that agentic Black targets will avoid backlash compared to White women, but not in comparison to White men. Replicating previous research, White women should encounter backlash compared to White men whether they display agency or dominance. Thus, the following hypotheses were made about how participants would rate a dominant or an agentic employee:

Hypothesis 4: Black targets described in agentic or in dominant terms in a performance review will be perceived as more likable and likely to be promoted than a White female target, but less likeable and likely to be promoted compared to a White male target.

Hypothesis 5: Consistent with previous research on backlash effects, White women described in agentic or in dominant terms in a performance review will be perceived as less likable and less likely to be promoted than a White man.

Hypothesis 6: Consistent with previous research on backlash effects, those who receive backlash should be seen as equally competent as those who do not receive backlash. Thus perception of target competence will not be affected by either profile or performance review.

Method

Participants

There were 2,066 participants recruited on Mechanical Turk to participate in this study. One hundred and thirty-five participants failed to pass an attention check ("Please

select 6" for this question") and/or the three manipulation checks. Manipulation checks consisted of correctly identifying the name of the employee, the race/ethnicity of the employee, and the type of job the employee had from a multiple choice list. Fifteen participants did not answer the attention check correctly, and 120 did not answer one to three of the manipulation checks correctly.

The final sample included 1,931 participants (1,034 female, 879 male, 13 other, 5 unspecified). The sample was mostly White (79.7%), followed by Asian (7.2%), Black (7.0%), Latino/a (4.2%), and 1.6 percent consisted of Middle Eastern, Native American or Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, or other. Ages of participants ranged from 18 to 77 (M = 34.15, Md = 31). About half of participants had a degree from a 2 or 4-year college, 11.6% had some college education, 8.9% had a high school degree, and 14.1% had a master's degree, doctoral degree, or professional degree. The median income of participants was $30,000-39,999; though a 40% of the sample had an income below $30,000 and 23.3% had an income of $60,000 or more. The majority of the sample (59%) was employed for wages while 12.2% were self-employed. Some were homemakers (7.0%), students (9.2%), out of work and currently looking for work (7.1%), retired (2.3%), or were out of work (2.7%). The average number of years of experience participants had working was 13.49 years.

Procedure and Materials

Participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk took an online survey advertised as a study about evaluating employee performance. After reading a consent form, they were

shown an employee profile which consisted of an employee ID number, a first and last name, job title, education, and languages spoken. Importantly, the employee profile contained the race and gender of the target, which were conveyed with checkboxes. The name of male employees was Michael Smith and the name of female employees was Nicole Smith. The employee's job title was "consultant." Participants then saw the employee's performance review which included a summary of their performance by an evaluator as well as coworker comments about the employee (see Appendix). Agentic performance reviews included agentic traits from Study 1 and dominant performance reviews included dominant traits from Study 1. Each performance review was identical except for the agentic or dominant terms used. Materials for the employee profile and performance review were based on real performance review materials found on the Internet.

Participants completed the main dependent measures: perceived likability, competence, and likelihood of promoting the target. They completed one attention check and three manipulation checks, followed by demographic information. They were thanked for their time and given $0.25 as compensation. The survey took an average of six minutes to complete.

Measures

All dependent measures were assessed with a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) Likert scale and were based on measures from Rudman et al. (2012) and Hall et al. (2014) that assessed perceived likability, competence, and hireability.

Perceived likability was measured with five items (e.g., "I like this candidate.";
"This candidate seems like someone who would be popular with colleagues."; "I would
want to be friends with this candidate."). All items were summed and averaged (α = .93).

Perceived competence was measured with five items that were also all summed
and averaged (α = .92). Sample items were "The candidate seems skilled in his/her area
of expertise," "The candidate strikes me as competent" and "The candidate strikes me as
intelligent."

Likelihood of promoting the target was measured with three items: "I would
chose to interview the candidate for the promotion," "I would personally promote the
candidate to the position," and "It is likely that this candidate will be promoted to the
position." All items were summed and averaged (α = .91). Participants were given a
description of the position that the candidate would be promoted to. The position was
"senior managing consultant" which required that candidates have strong social skills to
manage relationships, problem solving skills, leadership ability, ability to maintain long-
lasting relationships with clients, and decision-making skills. The description was based
on Hall et al.'s (2014) job description for a consulting position.

Results

To test hypotheses, a 2 (Target Gender) X 2 (Target Race) x 2 (Profile Style)
between-subjects MANOVA was conducted on perceived likability, perceived
competence, and likelihood of promoting the target. There were multivariate effects of
Target Race, Pillai's Trace = .02, F = 10.14, df = 1,921 p = .000, η_p^2 = .02, and Profile

Style, Pillai's Trace = .29, F = 259.31, df = 1,921, p = .000, η_p^2 = .29. The univariate

ANOVA for the significant multivariate Target Race effect revealed a significant effect

of Target Race on all three dependent measures (Fs range from 9.31 to 25.90).

Examining the means indicated that participants reported liking the Black targets more

than the White targets, perceiving the Black targets as more competent than the White

targets, and being more likely to promote the Black targets (see Figure **1-1** and Table **7-**

1). The univariate ANOVA for Profile Style revealed a significant effect on all dependent

measures (Fs ranging from 71.58 to 734.50). The direction of the means indicated that

participants perceived agentic profiles as more likeable, competent and likely to promote

compared to the dominant profiles (see Figure **2-1** and Table **7-1**). Neither participant

gender nor race (nonwhite versus White participants) interacted with any main
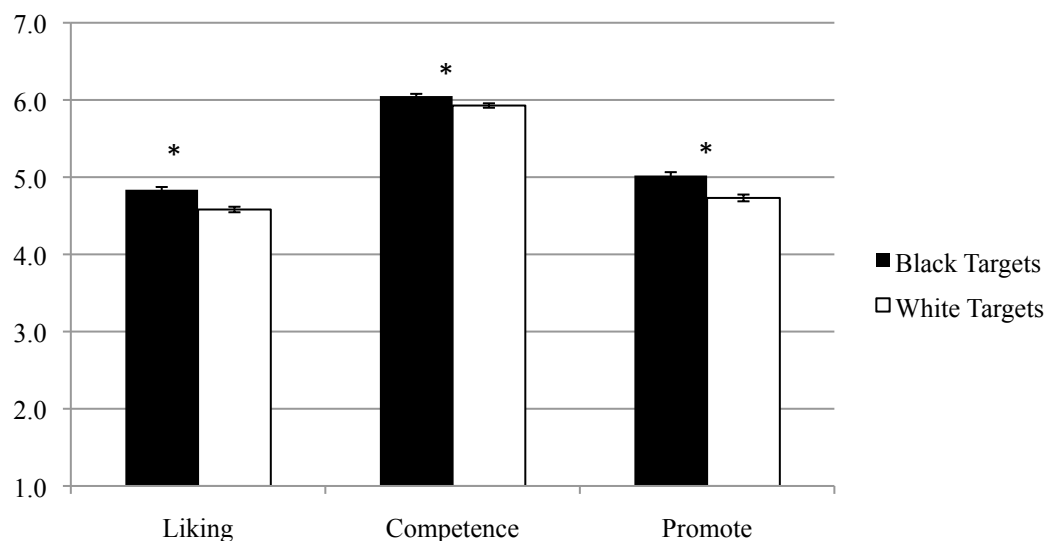
independent variable.

Figure **1-1**: Mean ratings of liking, competence, and promote for Black and White targets (*
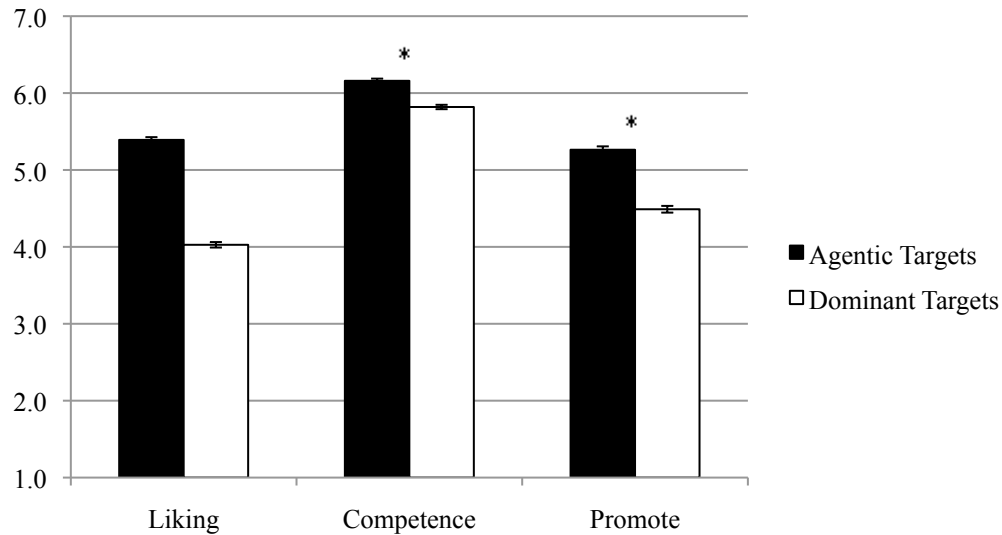indicates significant differences at the .01 level).

Figure **2-1**: Mean ratings of liking, competence, and promote for Agentic and Dominant targets (* indicates significant differences at the .01 level).

Table **7-1**: Means for all experimental conditions (standard deviations in parentheses).

	Black woman	Black man	White woman	White man
Agentic Targets				
Liking	5.45 (1.01)$_{ac}$	5.57 (0.96)$_a$	5.33 (1.00)$_b$	5.22 (0.96)$_{bc}$
Competence	6.21 (0.85)$_a$	6.24 (0.80)$_a$	6.20 (0.71)$_a$	6.00 (0.77)$_b$
Promote	5.47 (1.18)$_a$	5.40 (1.24)$_a$	5.12 (1.18)$_b$	5.06 (1.26)$_b$
Dominant Targets				
Liking	4.10 (1.29)$_{ab}$	4.23 (1.19)$_a$	3.86 (1.17)$_{bd}$	3.92 (1.21)$_{cd}$
Competence	5.91 (0.96)$_a$	5.84 (0.96)$_a$	5.76 (1.00)$_a$	5.76 (0.91)$_a$
Promote	4.66 (1.49)$_a$	4.56 (1.41)$_{ab}$	4.38 (1.51)$_b$	4.36 (1.53)$_b$

Note. Means are based on *n*s ranging from 236-247. Within each row, means not sharing a common subscript differ significantly at the .05 level.

Discussion

The main finding from Study 2 is that overall, Black targets were rated more favorably than White targets for all dependent measures and in both types of employee profile styles (agentic or dominant). In fact, the White male target was rated the least favorably for most dependent measures in all conditions compared to other targets. This counters hypotheses 4 and 5 predicting that the White man would encounter the least backlash compared to other targets. Especially important to note is the fact that the White male target (and White targets in general) with a dominant profile received more backlash in the form of decreased liking and rates of promotion than Black targets, and that White men and White women did not differ in the extent to which they received backlash, whether it was for agency or dominance. Counter to hypothesis 6, competence ratings differed for targets who experienced backlash (in this case, White women and men). These results contradict a finding that has been shown repeatedly by Rudman and colleagues (Phelan et al., 2008; Rudman, 1998; Rudman and Glick, 1999; 2001; Rudman et al., 2012) that men encounter less backlash than women for agentic behavior.

There are a few possibilities for why these results contradict past research on backlash. Results from the present study could suggest that the non-student sample used may differ in a critical way from the student samples used in Rudman and colleagues' work; however, Study 1 showed that a similar Mechanical Turk sample rated agentic and dominant traits more favorably when White men are though to possess them. Thus, participants in the present sample should have also considered agentic and dominant White men to be more likable and likely to be promoted than other targets.

Another possibility for the counter-intuitive findings is that the job context was slightly feminized, as it included both agentic and communal skills. Although women are penalized for their competence at male-typed work (e.g., Heilman & Okiomoto, 2007; Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989), backlash for agentic behavior occurs for positions requiring both feminine and masculine traits (Phelan, Moss-Racusin, & Rudman, 2008; Rudman & Glick, 1999, 2001). In fact, Rudman and Glick (1999; 2001) found that backlash for agentic women occurred more for a feminized position requiring agentic and communal traits than for a purely masculine position requiring agentic traits. They posited that the communal job requirements allowed perceivers to penalize a woman who was not perceived as sufficiently communal. This study's job description of senior managing consultant may not have been feminine enough, as the feminized job legitimizes backlash towards agentic female targets. A leadership position requiring helpfulness and sensitivity to clients may have increased the likelihood of finding backlash effects for White woman targets. In addition, the job was a senior management position that required leadership skills; past research has shown leadership to be stereotypically male (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, Block, Martell & Simon, 1989; Heilman, 1983; 2001) and White (Rosette et al., 2008). Therefore the fact that the White man was not preferred for the promotion or liked more than other targets was in direct opposition to previous research.

I predicted that agentic and dominant Black targets would be perceived as more likable and likely to be promoted than a White female target, but less liked and likely to be promoted than a White man. Results did not ultimately support this or previous work showing that Black women can escape backlash compared to Black men or White women

(Hall et al., 2014; Livingston et al., 2012). Given the fact that participants rated the White man target as low as the White woman target, I suspect that participants were afraid of perceived as prejudiced if they indicated negative attitudes about Black targets. Thus, Study 3 attempted to detect backlash in a slightly less conspicuous manner, by employing Rudman's (Rudman et al., 2012; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004) sabotage paradigm.

Chapter 4

Study 3

The purpose of Study 3 was to determine whether backlash effects for agentic

Black men and women and White women might be more likely to occur in an interaction

context, and when using a different measure of backlash (sabotage; Rudman & Fairchild,

2004; Rudman et al., 2012). To do this, I replicated a study procedure of Rudman et al.

(2012), showing that agentic female leaders were sabotaged compared to agentic male

leaders. The goal of Study 3 was to replicate and extend Rudman's findings to determine

whether Black men and women targets are sabotaged to the same extent as White women

for being agentic leaders. I focus on agentic behavior to extend Rudman's work on

sabotage for agentic behavior to test how Black women fit in Rudman and colleagues'

(2012) SIH theory.

Rudman et al. (2012) created an experimental environment in which women were

in a high status position as leaders, but either as highly agentic leaders or low-agentic

leaders. According to their status incongruity hypothesis (SIH), backlash for women

occurs because women's low status is incongruous with the high status that agentic

behavior conveys. They reasoned that being a leader by itself was not sufficient to

produce backlash: while a non-agentic woman leader is likely to be an ineffective leader

and thus unthreatening to the status quo, an agentic woman leader unequivocally conveys

high status and directly threatens the status quo as she has the potential to produce social

change. Supporting their predictions, they found that agentic female leaders were

sabotaged (i.e., their ability to succeed was undermined) compared to agentic male leaders, despite being perceived as similarly competent.

The addition of race to Rudman et al.'s (2012) paradigm serves as a more stringent test of their SIH. If women's gender conveys low status, then any non-White race should convey low status. By this logic, Black women should have the lowest status, and their agency should represent the greatest status incongruence, according to the SIH. This notion is similar to double jeopardy, or the idea that those with multiple disadvantaged identities experience more discrimination than those with one disadvantaged identity (Beale, 1970). Thus, SIH would predict that agentic Black women would experience less backlash than agentic White women. However, some research has shown that Black women and are less penalized for dominance (a trait related to, but not identical with agency) than Black men and White women (Hall et al.; 2014; Livingston et al., 2012). Furthermore, Study 1 showed that agency and dominance were perceived as equally desirable for Black women and men. Thus, there are many different predictions that could be made about how Black women and men will experience sabotage in the present study.

First, I predicted that White women would be sabotaged for being agentic leaders compared to agentic White men leaders, replicating Rudman and colleagues' (2012) findings. Second, results from Study 1 agency prescriptions were similar for Black men and women. Specifically, participants perceived it to be more desirable for Black men and women to be agentic and dominant than White women, but as less desirable compared to White men. Thus, if backlash is due to prescriptions and proscriptions, then agentic Black women and men will experience less sabotage compared to agentic White

women, but will experience more sabotage compared to agentic White men. If backlash typically results in liking deficits (Phelan et al., 2008; Rudman et al., 2012), then perceptions of disliking should mirror sabotage allocation. In other words, I predict that backlash in this study will consist of sabotage and decreases in perceived likability, as Rudman et al. (2012) consider both to be forms of backlash. Lastly, low agency targets (regardless of race and gender) will not be perceived as threatening to the status quo, thus they will not receive backlash in the form of sabotage or decreased liking. This was shown in past work (Rudman et al., 2012) and in other studies comparing agentic job candidates to communal job candidates (Rudman, 1998).

Hypothesis 8: The high agency White woman target should be sabotaged more than the high agency White male target. High-agency Black woman and men targets will be sabotaged less and liked more than high agency White women targets; Black targets will be sabotaged more and liked less than White men targets. Low agency targets will not experience backlash (i.e., sabotage or decreased liking).

If perceptions of competence follow from agentic behavior regardless of the target's gender (Rudman et al., 2012; Rudman & Glick, 1999, 2001), there should be no difference in competence ratings for high-agency leaders. If perceptions of competence follow from agentic behavior, low agency targets should not be perceived as competent. However, if White men are typically associated with leadership roles (Rosette et al., 2008), they may be perceived as more competent as leaders – even if they are low in agency. In line with this, Rudman and colleagues (2012) found that low agency men were perceived as more competent than low agency women. They argue that this finding was evidence that women must be agentic to be perceived as competent as men are in

leadership roles, and that they must overcome the assumption that they are not fit to lead (Rudman & Phelan, 2008). Thus, if perceptions of competence follow from fit with the leadership role (in addition to agentic behavior), low agency White men should be perceived as more competent than all other low agency targets.

Hypothesis 9: If perceptions of competence follow from agentic behavior, then there will be no differences in perceived competence of high agency targets. However, if perceptions of competence follow from perceived fit with leadership when agency is low, then a low agency White male target will be perceived as more competent than all other low agency targets.

Rudman and colleagues (2012) designed the sabotage experiment with a goal of eliminating the dominance penalty (as discussed previously). To do this, they made the assignment of the leader role random; in other words, the lack of competition for the leader role rendered partners "accidental" leaders. Consequently, they found no interaction effects for dominance. Thus, I predicted that Study 3 would largely replicate this result, with the exception that high agency targets should be perceived as more dominant than low agency targets overall.

Hypothesis 10: High agency targets will be perceived as more dominant than low agency targets; no other effects of dominance will emerge.

As an exploratory prediction, I included perceived threat as a measure in the present study to assess whether perceived threat would mirror sabotage ratings. This measure was adapted from Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, and Weaver (2008) and assessed participants' feelings of anxiety and threat without having them self-report these feelings. If perceivers impose backlash because counter-stereotypical targets threaten

perceivers' sense of the status quo (Rudman et al., 2012), then sabotage should be correlated with feelings of threat. Thus, participants who sabotage their partners should also report greater perceived threat.

Exploratory Hypothesis 1: Participants in conditions predicted to result in more sabotage (the high agency White woman target) should also report greater perceived threat than participants in conditions predicted to result in less sabotage (the high agency Black woman target, Black man target, and White man target, and low agency targets).

Method

Participants

Two hundred and fifty students from the university's subject pool participated in an in-lab experiment. The majority ($n = 220$) participated in exchange for research credit for their introductory psychology course. Some participants ($n = 30$) participated in exchange for $5.00 and pizza. The latter group of participants was recruited with flyers and advertisements in university classes. Nine participants were excluded because they doubted their partner was real when asked what they thought the study was about at the end of the study. The final sample included 241 students (134 women, 107 men). Participants were mostly White (73.0%), Asian (10.0%), Black (7.1%), Latino/a (3.3%), or identified with another racial group (6.6%). The mean age of participants was 19.48 years.

Materials

Agency Manipulation

Following procedures from Rudman et al. (2012), participants completed a 20-item leadership aptitude test, believing that their partner did the same. Ten items pertained to agency and leadership (e.g., "When I am in charge of a group things always go smoothly" and "I have no problem asserting myself") and ten indeterminate items were included to ensure that participants thought their score was believable (e.g., "Given the choice, I would rather do something physical than read a book" and "I think almost everything can be analyzed"). Agency-related items were designed to reflect agentic and leader-like traits from Study 1. After completing the leadership aptitude test, participants saw that they ostensibly scored in the 77th percentile. Participants in the high agency saw their partner scored in the 97th percentile and those in the low agency condition saw their partner score in the 67th percentile.

In addition to the leadership aptitude test, participants also saw their partner was agentic (high agency condition) or not (low agency condition) by exchanging information with their partner. Participants filled out a brief profile "to get to know their partner." It included name, college major, year in school, hometown, music and television preferences, and two questions that conveyed high or low agency from Rudman et al. (2012): "If you are assigned to be the leader, how comfortable would you feel grading others work?" and "If you are assigned to be the boss, how comfortable would you feel criticizing others?" Each item was answered on a 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*) Likert scale. Those in the high agency condition saw that their partner selected a 6 and a 5,

respectively, on these two items. Those in the low agency condition saw their partner

selected a 4 and 3, respectively. Participants also were able to type a message to their

partner. Those in the high agency condition saw that their partner had typed "I hope I get

to be the leader" and those in the low agency condition saw "I hope I don't get picked to

be the leader..." [2] After filling out the profile, participants saw their partner's profile with

their partner's score on the leadership test prominently displayed.

Partner Race and Gender Manipulation

The race and gender of the fictitious partner was manipulated by the name of the

partner that participants were supposedly assigned to randomly. Participants saw that the

computer randomly assigned them to work with Deyvon (Black male), Sharese (Black

female), Sarah (White female), or Matt (White male). These names were pretested with a

separate sample.[3]

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[2] Rudman and colleagues (2012) had confederates say, "I hope I get to be the leader" to participants in person, as they recruited real confederates instead of using a fictitious partner in an online context. I added the quote for the low agency condition to bolster the low agency manipulation. Real confederates were not used in this study due to practical constraints, as it would be too time-consuming to recruit Black and White and male and female students to be available at all times that the study was taking place.

[3] Pretesting participants ($n = 41$) were asked to type the race that first came to mind when reading each of the 54 names (10 White female, 11 White male, 17 Black female, 16 Black male). The pretesting sample revealed that out of 10 female names and 11 male names, 100% of participants thought Sarah and Matt were White. All but one participant (97.6%) thought Sharese and Deyvon were Black. Participants were drawn from university's subject pool.

Dependent Measures

Competence

Perceived competence of the partner was measured with three items: "I think my partner is competent," "I think my partner is intelligent," and "I think my partner would make a good leader" (Rudman et al., 2012). Items were rated on a Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) and were averaged to from the competence index ($\alpha = .83$).

Liking and Dominance

Perceived liking of the partner was measured with three items from the same Likert scale (Rudman et al., 2012): "I do not like my partner very much" (reverse-coded), "I would like to get to know my partner better," and "I look forward to working closely with my partner." Items were averaged to create the liking index ($\alpha = .80$). Perceived dominance was also measured with three items (Rudman et al.): "I think my partner is dominant," I think my partner is arrogant," and "I think my partner is controlling." These three items were averaged to create the dominance index ($\alpha = .74$).

Sabotage

Sabotage was operationalized as the extent to which participants were helpful to their partner in completing a task (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Rudman et al., 2012;

Tesser & Smith, 1980). All participants were made to believe that they were randomly

assigned to the "subordinate" role and their partner was the "leader." Participants were

given 10 anagrams that they were told their partner (the leader) would have to solve.

They were presented with three clues for each anagram and were asked to choose one

clue to give their partner for each anagram. The three clues ranged in helpfulness from

difficult (unhelpful) to easy (helpful). For example, participants were given

"AEENPPRSW," the answer (newspaper), and the following clues: "It starts with the

letter 'N'" (unhelpful), "A person reads this" (medium), and "A person reads this and it

starts with 'N'" (helpful). Clues were not labeled with their helpfulness and were in

random order. Each response was scored from 1 (helpful) to 3 (unhelpful). Scores were

added to form the sabotage index ($\alpha = .82$), such that scores ranged from 10-30, where

lower scores represented less sabotage.[4]

Perceived Threat

Perceived threat was used to measure threat-related feelings (anxiety, shame) that

participants may not self-report in reaction to their partner (Vandello et al., 2008).

Participants were instructed to complete a list of twenty word fragments by filling in the

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[4] Following Rudman et al. (2012), participants were asked to indicate how helpful they thought
they were in giving clues to their partner to ensure that they were aware that they were sabotaging
their partner. Three items ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) were averaged
to form awareness of sabotage index ($\alpha = .63$). They were "I do not expect my partner will
perform well on the anagram task," "I tried to be helpful as possible when programming the
anagram task" (reverse-coded), and "With my clues, my partner will perform well on the anagram
task" (reverse-coded). Since this index correlated significantly with sabotage, $r(241) = -.42$, $p <
.001$, this indicates that the more people were sabotaging, the more unhelpful they thought they were.,
indicating an awareness of sabotage.

missing letter of the word. Seven words could be completed with either threat-related or threat-unrelated words: THREA_ (*threat*), STRE_ _ (*stress*), _OTHER (*bother*), SHA_E (*shame*), _EAK (*weak*), and LO_ER (*loser*). The 13 other word fragments could only be completed with non-threat words and were taken from Anderson et al. (2004). The percentage of the six threat-related words that were completed in with threat words was the measure of perceived threat.[5]

Procedure

After signing consent forms participants were told they would be participating in a study on work roles. They were told that researchers were interested in how students work together on tasks remotely, that the research was intended to inform online courses, and that they would be working with a student from Pennsylvania State University's Altoona campus. To boost the cover story, research assistants began the study only after texting the Altoona campus researcher to ensure other students were ready to begin the study (in reality research assistants were texting the primary investigator). Participants believed they would be randomly assigned to work with a partner and that both partners would be assigned to be a leader or a subordinate role (in reality, all participants were assigned to the subordinate role). Up to five participants completed the study on computers with a Qualtrics survey in each session and each session lasted approximately 30 minutes.

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[5] Another item (_ _SET; *upset*) was originally included as a threat-related word but was not included in analyses due to a Qualtrics error.

The Qualtrics survey was designed to resemble a computer program, as it could automatically present subsequent screens to make it appear that participants were sending messages to their partner, the computer was calculating results of the leadership test, and that the computer was generating a partner for them to work with. When participants began the Qualtrics survey, they first completed the leadership test and received their scores on the leadership test. They were then "randomly" assigned a partner, completed a partner profile, and received their partner's profile. Next, they were again "randomly" assigned to a work role (i.e., the subordinate role), completed the sabotage task and all dependent measures. Finally, they reported their demographics, indicated what they thought the study was about (i.e., suspicion detection), and any comments they had. After participants finished the Qualtrics form, they were debriefed about the true purpose of the study, and were thanked and compensated for their participation.

Results

A 2 (Target Race) X 2 (Target Gender) X 2 (Target Agency) between-subjects MANOVA was performed on all dependent measures (sabotage, competence, liking, dominance, and perceived threat; see Table **8-1**).

Sabotage

The predicted three-way interaction of manipulated variables was not significant ($p = .708$); thus Hypothesis 8 was not supported. The only effect that emerged for

sabotage was a multivariate main effect of agency, Pillai's Trace = .42, F = 31.06, df =

218 p = .000, η_p^2 = .42. Participants sabotaged high agency targets (M = 13.03, SD =

3.79) more than low agency targets (M = 11.95, SD = 2.72) overall, $F(1,222)$ = 6.20, p =

.013, η_p^2 = .03. This partially supported the prediction that low agency targets will not

encounter backlash.

Competence

No effects emerged for competence, partially supporting Hypothesis 9 that

predicted no race or gender differences in competence in the high agency condition.

However, counter to hypothesis 9, there were also no gender or race differences in the

low agency condition.

Liking and dominance

Although it was predicted that liking ratings would mirror those of sabotage

(Hypothesis 8), the predicted three-way multivariate interaction of manipulated variables

was not significant (p = .708, as reported above). In addition, sabotage and liking were

not significantly correlated (see Table **9-1**). The significant multivariate main effect for

agency reported earlier, Pillai's Trace = .42, F = 31.06, df = 218 p = .000, η_p^2 = .42,

revealed a significant effect for liking, $F(1,222)$ = 19.82, p = .000, η_p^2 = .08, and

dominance, $F(1,222)$ = 146.07, p = .000, η_p^2 = .40. Participants liked low agency targets

(M = 5.39, SD = 1.07) more than high agency targets (M = 4.73, SD = 1.15). Supporting

Hypothesis 10, high agency targets were perceived as more dominant ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.19$) than low agency targets ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 0.92$). Although it was unpredicted, there was also a marginal multivariate effect for target gender, Pillai's Trace = .04, $F = 2.02$, $df = 218$ $p = .077$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Overall, participants liked female targets ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 1.12$) more than male targets ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.18$), $F(1,222) = 5.05$, $p = .026$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$.

Despite the prediction (Hypothesis 8) that participants should sabotage targets they liked less, a mediation analysis with Hayes' (2012) PROCESS macro showed that liking did not mediate the relationship between target agency (low agency = 0, high agency = 1) and sabotage. The indirect effect was tested using a bootstrapping estimation approach with 5,000 samples and indicated a non-significant indirect coefficient, b = 0.12, SE = 0.14, 95% CI = -0.14, 0.43. In this analysis target agency was a significant predictor of liking, b = -0.64, SE = 0.14, $p = .000$, but liking was not a significant predictor of sabotage b = -0.19, SE = 0.20, $p = .33$. The direct effect of target agency on sabotage was significant with the mediator in the model, b = 0.91, SE = .44, $p = .04$. Thus, participants sabotaged high agency targets for a reason other than liking. Dominance also did not mediate the relationship between target agency and sabotage, as the indirect coefficient was not significant, b = 0.26, SE = 0.34, 95% CI = -0.41, 0.95, despite the fact that sabotage and dominance were negatively correlated (see Table **9-1**).[6]

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[6] Although Rudman et al. (2012) found that dominance and sabotage was correlated for high agency female targets but not correlated for other targets, I did not find a correlation between sabotage and dominance for any target in any condition (all ps > .16). However, there was a weak overall correlation between dominance and sabotage $r(241) = -0.14$, $p = .030$.

Perceived Threat

It was not the case that participants who sabotaged also felt more threatened, as posited in Exploratory Hypothesis 1. Sabotage was not correlated with perceived threat, $r(232) = -.01$ ($p = .89$; see Table **9-1**). Instead, the marginal multivariate effect of target gender (reported above) revealed that participants felt less threatened by female targets ($M_{\text{female}} = .36$, $SD_{female} = 0.20$; $M_{\text{male}} = .42$, $SD_{male} = .20$), $F(1, 222) = 4.68$, $p = .032$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. In other words, participants completed more words with threat-related words when they had a male partner compared to when they had a female partner. Perceived threat was also negatively correlated with liking (see Table **9-1**).

Unpredicted Effects

Despite the fact that past research on backlash typically does not find participant gender effects (Rudman et al., 2012; Rudman & Glick, 1999, 2001; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Phelan et al., 2008), there was a three-way interaction of participant gender, target agency, and target gender, Pillai's Trace = .06, $F = 2.74$, $df = 210$ $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, specifically on liking, $F(1, 214) = 8.21$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, and dominance, $F(1, 214) = 9.40$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$. Women participants liked the low agency female targets ($M = 5.81$, $SD = 0.97$) more than men ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 0.93$); men participants liked the high agency female targets (5.40, $SD = 0.77$) more than women ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.31$). Women participants thought the high agency female targets were more dominant ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.13$) than men thought they were ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.98$). Thus, women

participants appeared to administer more backlash to agentic women than to men participants.

Table **8-1:** Reactions to targets by agency, race, and gender.

	High Agency							
	White				Black			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Liking	4.39	1.16	4.91	1.17	4.69	1.06	4.93	*1.19*
Dominance	3.92	1.16	3.96	1.11	3.92	1.34	4.27	*1.15*
Competence	5.17	1.44	5.28	1.25	5.24	1.08	5.46	*1.06*
Sabotage	13.13	3.78	12.42	3.90	13.89	4.51	12.63	*2.91*
Perceived threat	0.47	0.17	0.33	0.16	0.41	0.23	0.40	*0.18*

	Low Agency							
	White				Black			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Liking	5.28	1.02	5.58	0.99	5.21	1.27	5.46	*1.01*
Dominance	2.31	0.81	2.20	1.07	2.42	0.83	2.31	*0.98*
Competence	5.03	1.02	5.42	1.00	5.25	1.25	5.23	*0.97*
Sabotage	11.90	2.64	12.48	2.72	11.61	2.78	11.75	*2.78*
Perceived threat	0.39	0.22	0.32	0.19	0.43	0.20	0.41	*0.25*

Note. Liking, Dominance, and Competence were scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 7. Sabotage scores could range from 10 to 30. Perceived threat was measured on a scale from 0 to 1, as it indicated the proportion of words completed with threat-related words.

Table **9-1**: Correlations among dependent measures.

	Dominance	Competence	Sabotage	Perceived threat
Liking	-.40[**]	.62[**]	-.10	-.15[*]
Dominance	--	-.06	.14[*]	.03
Competence		--	.05	-.09
Sabotage			--	.01

Note.* indicates significance at the .05 level and ** indicates significance at the .01 level, $n = 241$.

Discussion

In a replication of Rudman and colleagues' (2012) sabotage experiment, Study 3 did not support the predicted replication of their backlash effects for White or Black women and men. The present study was similar to Rudman and colleagues' study in sabotage ratings: although about half (51%) of participants gave the most helpful clue to their partner (i.e., did not sabotage), the cell means in Table 6 show similar sabotage rates to those found by Rudman et al. (who reported a cell mean maximum of 15.47). Both studies recruited similar samples of college students and the procedure was nearly identical.

One major procedural difference between the studies was that the present study did not employ real confederates to interact with participants, which may have attenuated backlash effects if participants were not convinced of their partner's existence. Confederates in Rudman et al.'s (2012) study said, "I hope I get to be the leader" in real time and filled out their profiles next to participants (though the two groups were separated for dependent measures). The present study involved a slightly different cover story (research for Penn State's online courses) to make working remotely with another person believable; however, it is possible that the remoteness of their partners made participants feel less threatened by high agency women or Black leaders and therefore sabotaged these partners less. One could argue that the greater anonymity of the Internet encourages greater backlash or gender harassment (Fox, Cruz, & Lee, 2015; Herring, 1999; Herring & Stoerger, 2013). However, discussions with some participants after the study suggested that participants could have questioned the existence of their partner

without indicating this in the suspicion probe, which could have suppressed the amount of backlash allocated to partners (remote or not).

Another explanation for the results is that the agency manipulation in the online context was too strong and may have masked other gender and race effects. The "I hope I get to be a leader" online message may have been perceived as too agentic or pushy, or could convey the image of a person who is trying too hard to please the experimenter and cares too much about a psychology study. If the leader role was described as having more power in the experiment, perhaps this comment would have been less noticeable, as the desire to be the leader would be obvious. Thus, future online studies employing the sabotage paradigm would benefit from pre-testing to determine this possibility.

Drawing from the industrial organizational psychology literature, sabotage may also take the form of social undermining. Social undermining assumes intent and has been shown to obstruct work-related success, relationships, and one's reputation (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002). Examples of social undermining include belittling a colleague's idea, making a colleague feel incompetent, and criticizing a colleague's decisions (Hershcovis, 2011). In the present study, partner race and gender did not elicit sabotage, but future research should examine whether different manipulations of sabotage (e.g., damaging the partner's reputation, public criticism of the partner, undermining the partner's power) elicit sabotage effects based on target race and gender.

In general, findings on perceptions of liking, dominance, and competence did not replicate those of Rudman and colleagues (2012). Rudman and colleagues found that women targets were liked less and thought of as less dominant than men targets overall. In the present study, women targets were liked more than men targets and low agentic

targets were liked more and perceived as less dominant. Thus it appears that participants in the present study were not relying on gender stereotypes as in Rudman's study. In fact, target agency mattered more than target gender in this study. Contrary to Rudman and colleagues' logic, participants in this study appeared to enact the dominance penalty against (i.e., give higher dominance ratings to) their partners despite the random assignment of leader. The random assignment of leader should have removed the perceived pushiness of the partner, whether the partner was high or low in agency. However, participants in this study disliked and thought the high agency leader was too dominant. Participants may have disliked the "I hope I get to be leader" message. The latter message may have appeared to be too ambitious for a study context where there are no privileges given to the leader.

Another departure from Rudman and colleagues' (2012) study was the fact that findings were moderated by participants' gender, which is typically not the case for studies on backlash (Rudman et al., 2012; Rudman & Glick, 1999, 2001; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004; Phelan et al., 2008). Theoretically, men and women should be equally as biased in administering backlash or in their perceptions of agentic leaders because they are steeped in the same culture that prescribed stereotypes of warmth to women. However, in this study, women participants appeared to administer backlash in the form of decreased liking and the dominance penalty to high agency female targets more than men participants. It is unclear why this penalty did not generalize to sabotage ratings among female participants, or whether this was indicative of a trend for the entire sample if the sample size had been larger. However, the undergraduate sample in this study was

similar to that of Rudman and colleagues' (2012), so it is unclear why some effects in this study were moderated by participant gender.

In addition to liking women targets more than men targets overall, participants also felt less threatened by women than men targets. This did not support predictions that sabotage should be related to feelings of threat, or that participants should report greater threat when presented with someone who has the potential to disrupt the status quo (e.g., high agency female leaders). When presented with the threat of America's decline, participants perceived agentic women as less likable and less hirable than when presented with an unthreatening depiction of America on the rise (Rudman et al., 2012). Thus, threat and backlash should be correlated. However, it appears that agentic female leaders were not perceived as threatening in the present study. If participants were not convinced of their partners' existence, it might not be surprising that participants were more threatened by those who typically hold more power in society.

In sum, results of Study 3 did not support predictions about Black women escaping backlash in the form of sabotage, nor did they replicate results from Rudman et al. (2012) showing that women leaders receive more sabotage for assertive behavior than men leaders. In this study, agency was more important in determining backlash than race or gender of the target. It is possible that the adaptation of Rudman's experimental procedure does not produce backlash effects unless partners are real confederates that participants believe they are working with in person.

Chapter 5

General Discussion

Previous work on backlash has repeatedly shown that agentic White women are liked less and are less likely to be hired than agentic White men, but this research has neglected to consider how the intersection of race might complicate the backlash effect. In addition, there has been almost no examination of traits that are generally believed to be desirable (prescriptive traits) or undesirable (proscriptive traits) for Black women and men compared to White women and men. The present research established that Black women and men have similar relaxed prescriptions and proscriptions, and that they have slightly more latitude in possessing agentic and dominant traits than White women. However, two experimental studies presented here failed to replicate the supposedly well-established backlash effect for White men and women; moreover, these studies failed to show convincing evidence that backlash follows from prescribed ideas of how Black and White men and women should be.

The argument that Black women are unique in their potential ability to escape backlash for dominant or assertive behavior was largely unsupported in the present research. Although Study 1 showed that Black women were viewed more favorably for possessing agentic and dominant traits than White women, so too were Black men. These results somewhat mirrored those of Hall and colleagues' (2014), showing similar dominance proscriptions for Black women and men. The fact that Black women and men are given similar prescriptions and proscriptions reflects the shared stereotype of both groups as masculine in general (Galinsky et al. 2013; Hall et al., 2015). Thus, Study 1

showed that compared to White women, there is potential for Black men and women to escape some backlash for agentic and dominant behavior, but perhaps not to escape backlash completely, as Blacks were rated unfavorably compared to White men and the average person. Although intersectional analyses often reveal differences in group categories, similarities in the perception or experiences of groups does not negate the need for intersectional analyses examining similarities or those that examine the contexts in which these similarities occur. Further research is necessary to determine whether these similar perceptions of Black men and women lead to qualitatively different experiences of backlash, and how this varies based on other factors such as job type and the status associated with one's position in a company.

When examining specific agentic trait prescriptions, it is evident that Black men and women were rated similarly on traits that I had conceptualized as SBW traits (e.g., strong, bold, assertive, self-sufficient). This observation does not negate the fact that these are traits that embody the SBW image and are descriptive of Black women (Abrams et al., 2014). It may be the case that these traits are more descriptive of Black women (i.e., they indicate what Black women are like) than prescriptive (i.e., what Black women should be like). Reflecting this, Donovan (2011) found that Black women were stereotyped as strong and tough compared to White women. The results of Study 1 suggest that components of the SBW are not prescriptive for Black women – theoretically, Black women should not be punished for lacking these traits, as White men would be punished for not being sufficiently agentic. If the SBW is an image rooted in and maintained among Black women or in Black culture (Abrams et al., 2014), surveying a mostly Black sample could reveal that SBW traits are prescriptive for Black women.

Indeed, Harris-Perry's (2011) non-random sample of Black women showed that they considered their own group to be strong and independent.

The analysis of individual ABW and SBW traits allowed for interpretation of intersectional race and gender stereotypes. For instance, despite the overall similarity in Black men and women's dominant traits proscriptions, there was a gendered dimension to dominance proscriptions. Black and White women were proscribed from hostility, violence, and coldness but Black men were not, and it was less desirable for women to be ruthless than it was for Black men. Thus, the negative hostility stereotype of Blacks may be gendered as the ABW, while White women are proscribed from more dominance traits in general.

Studies 2 and 3 did not support the literature on backlash in that agentic White women did not receive greater backlash agentic White men. In fact, Study 2 presented the counterintuitive finding that Black women and men were perceived more positively overall than White targets, regardless of gender. I know of no literature showing this pattern of results, leading me to suspect that participants were responding out of fear of being prejudiced towards Blacks. Study 2 was conducted in January of 2016. It is possible that participants were sensitized to the topic of race given the Black Lives Matter social movement that protests against police brutality is a topic of national debate. Some research suggests that Whites could be motivated to endorse a Black person because it makes them feel licensed to prefer other Whites over Blacks in a subsequent decision (Effron, Cameron, & Monin, 2009). Thus, evaluating Black targets in an overwhelmingly positive manner may have relieved some stress for White targets.

Findings from Study 3 may have also been a result of participants avoiding the appearance of prejudice given that some participants were made to believe that they were interacting with a nonwhite partner. However, the pattern of the means does not suggest that participants were uniformly giving an advantage to Black targets. Instead, the online context of the sabotage task may have caused the incongruent findings. It is possible that participants did not believe their partner existed (although those who indicated they were suspicious were removed from analyses). The lack of a competition with their partner could have made participants less engaged or could have made leadership role assignment inconsequential. Participants may have needed motivation for engagement and competition (e.g., a chance to win a reward) to feel justified in allocating more sabotage. Thus, future studies employing Rudman et al.'s (2012) sabotage paradigm should use caution in altering the face-to-face nature of their procedure.

One notable strength of the present research is the intersectional framework for studying intersecting stereotypes of Black men, Black women, White women, and White men. First, the inclusion of Black women is significant, because historically, Black women have been excluded and invisible in psychological studies of race and gender (Cole, 2009). Further, the present research does not reduce the inclusion of Black women to addressing "diversity concerns" (Baca Zinn & Dill, 1996). I have also attended to the unmarked or dominant categories (e.g., White women, White men) to elucidate the normalizing of those groups in power, as specified by Choo and Ferree (2010). Importantly, this work includes an intersectional perspective in experimental work, which is, to my knowledge, relatively rare. I considered how social identity categories are not simply advantaged or disadvantaged (McCall, 2005). Lastly, this research considered

how racist and sexist systems produce intersecting stereotypes for Black women, which is an important contribution of intersectionality theory (Shields, 2008).

The findings have somewhat contradictory implications for the business world. On one hand, previous research has found that White managers stereotype White women, Black men, and Black women in distinct ways that hinders their advancement (Kennelly, 1999) and that Black women and men report that they are negatively stereotyped in workplace (e.g., Catalyst, 2004; Hall et al., 2012; Weber & Higginbotham, 1997; Wingfield, 2010). On the other hand, results from the present study suggest that it is seen as more desirable for Black men and women to be agentic and dominant than White women. Although the experimental studies here did not show evidence of backlash for agentic or dominant behavior for Black women and men, it does not mean that backlash does not exist or negate the experiences of Black employees. More experimental work on backlash for Black women and men's agentic behavior is necessary.

Recommendations to employers who wish to promote equal opportunity for employees' advancement include being knowledgeable about negative race and gender stereotypes and creating and promoting a work culture that does not tolerate the acceptance of racist and sexist comments. Importantly, those who make hiring decisions (and all employees) should be aware of the insidious way that stereotypes can affect employee assessments. For example, JP Morgan Chase developed a program to encourage employees to send positive "micro-messages" and to be aware of the micro-inequities that can affect turnover, productivity, and morale (Catalyst, 2004). Interestingly, Catalyst (2004) found that 56 percent of African Americans reported the existence of race-gender stereotypes and only 18 percent reported the existence of race

stereotypes; the intersection of race and gender stereotypes should thus be an important consideration for companies when raising awareness of biases.

Limitations and Future Directions

Future research should increase competition when employing the sabotage paradigm as in Rudman and Fairchild (2004). According to Rudman and Fairchild, perceivers are more likely to enact backlash when they feel justified in doing so. For instance, agentic women were denied jobs that required interpersonal skills and technical skills compared to jobs that required technical skills only (Rudman & Glick, 1999). Rudman and Fairchild (2004) found that women were sabotaged more for outperforming participants on a masculine knowledge test about football (i.e., gender deviants) compared to women who outperformed participants on a feminine knowledge test about childcare, and this sabotage was related to greater self-esteem. Thus, perceivers felt justified denying jobs to agentic women who were assumed to lack communal traits, and those who felt threatened by atypical women had greater self-esteem after sabotaging gender deviants. Competition should increase the likelihood of backlash because failure in a competition threatens self-esteem, which increases justification for backlash. This should be the case especially when the stakes are high (e.g., a chance to win a cash prize) and participants are motivated to win. Thus, if I were to complete a subsequent study I would increase competition and measure self-esteem to determine whether backlash against Black targets results in a similar self-esteem boost.

Future studies should explore other manipulations of race to explore whether Black women escape backlash for agentic or dominant behavior conclusively. If participants know they are participating in an experiment and see race cues in the study, they may be motivated to respond in a socially desirable manner. Pictures (Livingston et al., 2012) and checkboxes in an employee profile (Hall et al., 2014; 2015; Galinsky et al., 2013) have been used to manipulate race and gender. Using confederates of difference genders and races may be less obvious in an experimental manipulation. However, research has shown that this interaction makes Whites feel anxious (e.g., Mendes, Blascovich, Lickel, & Hunter, 2002; Plant & Devine, 1998; 2003). Rather, the brief face-to-face presence of their partner (in Study 3, for instance) may convince participants of the existence of their partner in a less obvious manner.

Another consideration for future studies is the gendered context of the job. Recent research suggests that race conveys gendered information about how a person will fit with a masculine or feminine job (Hall et al., 2015). Black women and men are stereotyped as more masculine and are considered more qualified for jobs that are masculine (e.g., security officer; Hall et al., 2015) and jobs that are described in masculine terms (e.g., fierce, competitive, contentious; Galinsky et al., 2013). If Black women and men are considered to be a better fit with masculine job positions, they may not encounter backlash for agentic behavior in these job contexts. Future replications of the present studies could employ a masculine job context with the prediction that Black women and men would experience less backlash for agency or dominance than White women or Asians who are typed as more feminine.

This research was based on the perceptions of mostly White participants. As discussed above, this may have implications for when agency and dominance is considered prescriptive or proscriptive. Black women and men may not perceive hostility-related traits to be as negative as White men and women consider them to be, as suggested by the interaction of participant race and condition in Study 1. More research needs to address how other groups of men and women perceive the desirability of agency and dominance in Black and White men and women.

Conclusion

The present set of studies attempted to determine the extent to which Black women and men experience backlash for agentic and dominant behavior. Study 1 found that Black women and men are prescribed agency and proscribed dominance to a similar extent, and that dominant and agentic traits were more desirable for Black women and men than White women overall. Contrary to previous work, these prescriptive beliefs about agency and dominance did not predict backlash in subsequent studies for White or Black targets. Furthermore, the experimental studies did not replicate previously established backlash effect for agentic women and men. Results may have been affected by participants' desires to seem unprejudiced or a lack of competition in the experiment. Ultimately, results did not support the prediction that Black women would escape backlash due to their nonprototypicality status or stereotypes (SBW) and (ABW).

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Appendix

Performance Reviews From Study 2

Agentic performance review (bolded items represent the agency manipulation):

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW			
Employee Name:	**Employee Number:**	**Consulting Area:**	**Period of Evaluation**
Smith, Michael, E.	9822408	Human Capital	**From**: 12/15/14 **To**: 12/01/15
Leader/Evaluator: David Harrison			

Results:

Michael has met all expectations of his role and has **demonstrated his business sense** and **leadership potential**; he raises issues and suggests improvements and simplifications that will benefit the AMS Human Capital team in the long-term. He has quickly grasped advanced concepts of human capital and is recognized as a source of definitive information. Michael's **ambition** and his effort on the AMS Business Model has impressed local staff and clients, and has provided confidence that we will deliver the right product. Michael has integrated fairly well with the team and is recognized as a valuable source of Human Capital knowledge; however, Michael **could be more collaborative and less independent when working in teams**.

Coworker Comments:

"Michael seems like he would be **strong and tough** in the face of criticism. He's usually **opinionated** and **assertive** in meetings."

"Michael is **competitive** with other consulting teams… and it really helps us to improve our team."

"Michael definitely is what they call **a self-starter**. He's the kind of person who **initiates projects and is really self-sufficient**."

"Michael is a great co-worker. I wish I had his work ethic and **analytical ability**."

"Michael seems intensely **career-focused** at first, but he's not. He's really got a lot of talent."

Strengths:	**Areas for Development or Improvement:**
- Focus on achieving results - Ability to see the larger picture - Impressive technical skills	- Improving skills in facilitating client learning and client retention - Developing broader recognition as a technical specialist, especial with regard to Test Driven Development

Dominant performance review (bolded items represent the agency manipulation):

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW			
Employee Name:	**Employee Number:**	**Consulting Area:**	**Period of Evaluation**
Smith, Michael, E.	9822408	Human Capital	**From**:12/15/14 **To:** 12/01/15
Leader/Evaluator: David Harrison			

Results:

Michael has met all expectations of his role and has **aggressively** raised issues and suggested improvements and simplifications which will benefit the AMS Human Capital team in the long-term. He has good suggestions and insights, though he can be **pushy** or **stubborn** with his ideas at times. He has quickly grasped advanced concepts of human capital and is recognized as a source of definitive information. Michael's effort on the AMS Business Model has impressed local staff and clients, and has provided confidence that we will deliver the right product. Michael has integrated fairly well with the team and is recognized as a valuable source of Human Capital knowledge; however, Michael could **give others more chances to speak in meetings**.

Coworker Comments:

"Michael seems like he **wouldn't be the warmest interpersonally** when dealing with clients. He usually **dominates** group meetings."
"Michael is **demanding** of our consulting team… and it really helps us to improve our team."
"Michael definitely **isn't afraid to push boundaries or step on other people's toes to get to the top**. I've seen him get **angry** before… he's a **force** to be reckoned with."
"Michael is a great co-worker. I wish I had his work ethic and **aggressiveness**."
"Michael seems **intimidating** at first, but he's not. He's really got a lot of talent.

Strengths:	**Areas for Development or Improvement:**
- Focus on achieving results - Ability to see the larger picture - Impressive technical skills	- Improving skills in facilitating client learning and client retention - Developing broader recognition as a technical specialist, especial with regard to Test Driven Development

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PUBLICATIONS

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MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

Dicicco, E. C. Competent but Hostile: Intersecting Race/Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Women's Anger in the Workplace.

Dicicco, E. C., Li, Y., & Shields, S.A. Perceptions of Black Women's Anger Expressions in the Workplace: Communicating Agency, Not Competence.

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