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When the Advantaged Become Disadvantaged: Men's and Women's Actions Against Gender Discrimination

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Abstract

Intergroup theories suggest that different social identities will either discourage or encourage the taking of action against discrimination (Bartky, 1977; Jost & Banaji, 1994). However, research (e.g., Branscombe, 1998) has shown that discrimination is a less negative experience for men than for women. As such, it is possible that men may take greater action than women, regardless of identity. However, men's responses to their perceived disadvantage has not yet been tested. Among those induced to ascribe to a gendered stereotype identity, men endorsed more action than women did. Among those induced to ascribe to an identity based on a gendered social experienced, women endorsed marginally more action than men did. Differences in responses are proposed to be a function of the different efficacy levels developed by each gender within each social identity.

Keywords: gender, discrimination, collective action

When the Advantaged Become Disadvantaged: Men's and Women's Actions Against Gender Discrimination.

In the novel *Egalia's Daughters* (Brantenburg, 1985), the author speculates about what would happen if men were relegated to a lower status than women.

After being faced with many of the disadvantages that women in North America have traditionally endured, the men in this fictional society rise up against the women in power to demand their equal status. As such, the novel makes a questionable assumption: disadvantage will have the same consequences for any group, namely to rebel against its oppressors.

Indeed, the existence of activist groups such as National Organization of Women (NOW) shows that being disadvantaged can lead to the taking of action against discrimination. However, activists are unfortunately, not the norm. Instead, relative deprivation research has shown that perceiving one's group to be disadvantaged is only, at best, moderately related to taking action (see Foster & Matheson, 1995, Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996). More often, traditionally disadvantaged groups are unlikely to support affirmative actions that could serve to benefit their group as a whole (Dovidio, Mann, & Gaertner, 1989; Fletcher & Chalmers, 1991; Foster, 1999; Foster & Matheson, 1995, 1998; Matheson, Echenberg, Taylor, Rivers, & Chow, 1994; Tougas & Veilleux, 1989). Further, when action is taken by disadvantaged group members, it is more often action aimed at helping an individual rather than the group as a whole (Foster, 1999; Foster, Matheson & Poole, 1994; Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990).

A question that remains unanswered is how historically advantaged groups would respond to perceptions of discrimination against them. This is a question that has become more urgent given the increasing claims made by advantaged groups that they are experiencing discrimination (e.g., the popularity of men's movements, claims of reverse discrimination by White people; Nathanson & Young, 2001; Roberts & Stratton, 1995). Indeed, the concerns of advantaged groups have been acted upon to the extent that affirmative action laws in states such as California (i.e., "Proposition 209", now Article 1, Section 31 of the California Constitution) have been repealed. Thus, the differential responses by advantaged and disadvantaged groups to discrimination have implications for changes in social policy, and thus an examination of responses by both groups becomes important. The present

study was therefore designed to examine responses to discrimination by an advantaged (in this study, men) and a disadvantaged group (women) 1 .

Although the novel, *Egalia's Daughters* implies that the experience of being discriminated against will ultimately lead its victims to take social action, some intergroup theories suggest that there are certain social identities that will either discourage or encourage the taking of action, despite the negative experience of discrimination. First, system justification theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) focuses on stereotypes as tools that serve to disempower disadvantaged groups. The theory suggests various ways in which stereotypes may actually facilitate a disadvantaged group's participation in their own oppression. For example, stereotypes can be internalized by disadvantaged groups (e.g., "I'm a woman, I'm not very mathematical"). Consistent with the self-fulfilling prophecy (Zanna & Pack, 1975), once stereotypes are internalized, group members may believe that their lower status is legitimate, and, consequently, they do not fight against it. Another way in which stereotypes may be disempowering is through the belief that stereotyped traits are stable–something that cannot be changed. Consistent with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), group members may not rebel against situations that they believe cannot be changed. As such, SJT suggests that stereotypes are a particularly powerful means of disempowerment in that disadvantaged groups ultimately participate in their own oppression.

In support of SJT, studies have shown that stereotypes serve to disempower disadvantaged groups on many levels. Research has shown that the more women endorse traditional stereotypes, the more they blame themselves for failure on various tasks (Lee, 1987; Neto, 1995; Teglasi, 1978). Research on the stereotype-threat model shows that when a stereotype about their academic ability is salient, women's academic performance decreases. This suggests that the salience of stereotypes impairs academic performance, even for those who do not ascribe to the stereotype (e.g., Aronson, Quinn, & Spencer, 1998; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Research has also demonstrated that endorsement of and exposure to traditional stereotypes are associated with women's self-

blame for, and greater tolerance of, sexual harassment (Burgess & Borgida, 1997; Jensen & Gutek, 1982; Malovich & Stake, 1990). Further, the more women define their social identity along traditional stereotypic lines, the less personal discrimination they perceive (Foster & Matheson, 1999) and the less action they take against discrimination when it happens to them (Foster, 1999). Thus, a social identity based on a negative stereotype appears to disempower women.

However, all social identities are not the same. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that in response to a negative social identity, low status groups may choose to redefine characteristics of their identity in order to attain a more positive, empowering identity. For instance, the slogan "Black is beautiful" was such a motivated redefinition of African American identity (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1987). Group consciousness theories (Bartky, 1977, Bowles & Klein, 1983; Carey, 1980; Dreifus, 1973, Stanley & Wise, 1983; Wilkinson & Schneider, 1990) have been explicit in redefining women's social identity so that it is empowering rather than debilitating. In particular, these theories suggest that social groups be defined along the historical experiences of the group rather than by stereotyped traits. A practical example of how group consciousness theories have defined this group identity can be seen in the feminist consciousness-raising groups of the 1970s. For example, women who were paid less than their male colleagues were encouraged to redefine women from "less capable" (i.e., stereotype) to a group who had been historically devalued by society (i.e.,"women are a group whose work is undervalued"). Thus, the focus was removed from the individual, and, instead, an identity based on social experience was promoted.

Empirical evidence that an identity defined along social experiences is empowering is sparse. Instead, indirect evidence comes from research on the empowering process of consciousness-raising groups and women's studies courses, both of which seek to redefine women's identity. For example, consciousness-raising groups and women's studies courses have been shown to increase women's self-esteem (Stake & Gerner, 1987; Weitz, 1982; Worell,

Stilwell, Oakley, & Robinson, 1999), independence (Brush, Gold, & White, 1978), egalitarianism (Bryant, 2003) and reduced depression (Weitz, 1982). Limited research however has directly examined how a social identity based on a gendered social experience may be empowering. One exception asked women to completed a questionnaire containing measures of identity and collective action. The more women endorsed an identity based on a gendered social experience, the more they reported taking collective actions (Foster, 1999; Study 1). Further, when these identities were experimentally induced, the results were replicated (Foster, 1999, Study 2). However, given the sparseness of the research, there is indeed a need for more data.

Further, a question that has not yet been addressed is whether these types of identities (stereotype versus social experience-based) will have the same consequences for both genders. In particular, SJT does not address whether stereotypes will, when applied to a historically advantaged group, disempower them as well. Similarly, group consciousness theories are derived from a minority group perspective, and they do not address the consequences of an advantaged group that perceives itself as targets of discrimination. However, research is beginning to suggest that men and women experience discrimination differently, namely that discrimination may be more negative for women than for men. For women, perceiving and experiencing discrimination is associated with negative psychological symptoms such as lower self-esteem and increased depression and anxiety (Dion, 1975; Foster, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine,& Campbell, 2000; Kobrynowicz & Branscombe, 1997; Landrine, Klonoff, Gibbs, Manning, & Lund, 1995; Pak, Dion, & Dion, 1991; Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz, & Owen, 2002). In contrast, Schmitt et al. (2002) found that, although the perception and experience of discrimination was related to negative well-being for women, it was unrelated to well-being for men. This suggests that the meaning of discrimination is more negative for women than for men. In addition, Schmitt and Branscombe (2002) found that attributing an experience to prejudice invoked more negative affect for women than for men. Branscombe (1998) even found that men

experienced a psychological benefit when thinking about their disadvantage, namely increased self-esteem.

If discrimination is a more negative experience for women than for men, then the link between negative affect and reduced instrumental behavior suggests that women may be less likely than men to take action against discrimination. For instance, literature on coping with depression suggests that a focus on negative emotion will maintain depression and impair any positive behaviors that could alleviate it (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991, 2001). Similarly, the achievement motivation literature has shown negative emotions such as anxiety to impair task performance (Brockner & Hulton, 1978; Dutke & Stoebber, 2001; Heckhausen, 1991; Sarason, 1975). Literature on health behaviors has shown that emotion-focused coping may impede instrumental health behaviors such as condom use (Koniak, Nyamathi, Vasquez, & Russo, 1994; Nyamathi, Stein, & Swanson, 2000). Together, these studies suggest that women's greater negative affect in response to discrimination may reduce their tendency to take action against that discrimination, regardless of social identity type.

In summary, the purpose of the present study was to expose both men and women to a situation of discrimination under two conditions: a gendered stereotype identity or an identity based on a gendered social experience. If as intergroup theories suggest, different social identities can alter the experience of discrimination (Bartky, 1977; Jost & Banaji, 1994), then there should be a main effect for social identity type, such that those exposed to a gendered stereotype identity will be less likely to act against discrimination than those exposed to an identity based on a gendered social experience. Alternatively, given past research that shows that discrimination is a more negative experience for women than for men (e.g., Branscombe, 1998), then women may feel less empowered than men do to act against discrimination, regardless of identity.

Method

Participants

Female (n=60) and male (n=60) introductory psychology students at a mid-western university were randomly contacted by telephone and asked to participate in a study that was explained to them as an investigation of how to reduce test-taking anxiety. Participants were told that they would receive course credit and that they were eligible for a $100 lottery drawing. Reported ethnicity of students was European American (95%), Native American (2%), Latin American (2%) and 1% labeled themselves as "other".

Procedure

Participants entered the lab in groups of 5 to 10. In each group, there were at least two women and two men. Participants were first given an overview of what the experiment would entail. Specifically, they were told that it was a study on how to reduce test-taking anxiety. They would be divided into groups based on their performance on a task. Those who did well on the task would enter the "video group" where they would be asked to contribute to a video on test-taking anxiety designed for new students, and they would also be eligible for a $100 lottery. Those who did not perform well on the task would be asked to remain behind to perform additional tasks to assess whether anxiety-related performance generalizes across tasks; they would be eligible only for a $10 lottery. The purpose of these group delineations was to establish a desirable and an undesirable group status; this was expected to motivate participants to want to perform well in order to enter the video group (desirable

More specific instructions were then given to participants; these varied depending on the type of social identity that would be portrayed. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two identities. In the stereotyped identity condition, participants were told that anxiety in test-taking was associated with personality traits. They were told that one trait, namely "intellectualizing", has been important in understanding anxiety in test-taking. The relationship between the traits and test-taking was further explained to them; they were told

that "low intellectualizers", are people who pay attention to their feelings, let their feelings overwhelm them in test-taking situations, and, therefore perform poorly on tests. In contrast, "high intellectualizers" were described as people who conquer fear by gathering information and by problem-solving, and therefore they would perform well.

In the social experience identity condition, participants were told that anxiety in test-taking was associated with past educational opportunities. They were told that children generally receive either low (e.g., lack of resources and choice of courses) or high (e.g., ample resources and choice of courses) educational opportunities as they progress through school. The relationship between resources and test-taking was further explained to them; they were told that those with low educational opportunities were not given enough resources to enable them to by-pass the anxiety, and therefore they perform poorly. In contrast, those with high educational opportunities were given enough resources to enable them to by-pass the anxiety of test-taking, and therefore they perform well.

Two steps were taken in order to encourage participants to endorse the stereotype/experience as a part of their social identities. The first step was to portray a social identity consistent with the definition provided by self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). This operational definition of a social identity was used because it provides an explicit quantitative measure of a salient social identity. SCT states that when a social identity is salient, it is indicated by a particular pattern of perceptions referred to as a high "meta-contrast ratio." A meta-contrast ratio is defined as the ratio of the perceived differences between members of one category and another to the perceived differences among members within one category (Turner, et al.,1987). The meta-contrast ratio is high if "between group differences" are perceived to be greater than "within group differences." For example, a woman whose social identity as a woman is salient will perceive the differences between men and women to be larger than the differences among women. Thus, to introduce perceptions of a high

meta-contrast ratio (greater intergroup than ingroup differences) and to link each identity to gender, participants in the stereotype condition read that the intellectualizing trait

is associated with gender. That is, research shows that women (men) are more likely to be low intellectualizers and men (women) are more likely to be high intellectualizers. For example, most women (men) follow their gut feelings, whereas most men (women) are likely to think a lot and analyze a situation.

Participants in the social experience condition read that educational opportunities

are associated with gender. That is, research shows that women (men) are more likely to receive low educational opportunities and men (women) are more likely to received high educational opportunities. For example, most female (male) students are not called upon as often by teachers, whereas most male (female) students receive greater encouragement and feedback from teachers.

Thus, each group was exposed to an identity based on a gendered stereotype or on a social experience. These descriptions were developed so that the stereotype/experience could potentially apply to either gender. This is consistent with research on subtyping and stereotypes (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). Research shows that subtypes of stereotypes can exist (e.g., blue collar man, businessman; businesswoman, housewife). As such, one stereotype can be applied to either gender. For instance, whereas a woman traditionally may be considered educationally disadvantaged, so can a blue collar man; whereas a man may traditionally be considered rational, so can a businesswoman (Deaux, Winston, Crowley, & Lewis, 1985). Pilot testing confirmed that low intellectualizing was considered by both genders to be part of their respective gender stereotype and that having low educational opportunities was considered a typical experience for both men and women.

The next step in the procedure was to make salient the potential for discrimination based on their gendered identity. To achieve this, participants read that each identity could serve to prohibit them from entering the video group. In particular, participants in the stereotype condition read that

It is possible that gender differences in personality traits may also affect how people take tests. Because women (men) in general have been found to exhibit the low intellectualizing trait, their anxiety may interfere and reduce their test scores, and therefore they may not enter the video group. In contrast, because men (women) have been found to exhibit the high intellectualizing trait, anxiety may not affect their scores, and they may be more likely to enter the video group.

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The information provided to the participants served to 1) create two gendered identities by portraying the differences between men and women to be larger than the differences within each gender, and 2) make salient the potential for discrimination based on a gendered social identity.

In order to enhance the salience of these social identities further , the second step was to use a minimal group paradigm to categorize participants into the stereotype or social experience condition. This paradigm has consistently been successful in the induction of salient social identities (e.g., Brewer, 1979). In particular, after reading about the identity descriptions, participants in all conditions were given a personalized test booklet. They were told that the experimenters had already assessed their personality type (or past educational experiences) in a mass testing session in which all of the students had participated. This was an appropriate cover story because at the beginning of each semester all psychology students complete a mass testing package that contains a wide variety of measures used by departmental researchers (e.g., personality traits, IQ, reading comprehension). Participants were kept naive as to the purpose of these measures, but were told that they could be called to participate in future studies based on their scores on any one of the measures. Therefore, participants believed that they had been pre-tested on either their intellectualization or their educational opportunities. They were told that based on these pre-tests, their personality/education type was written inside their booklet. In the conditions in which women were the

victims of discrimination, they were categorized as being low intellectualizers or having had low educational opportunity. In contrast, when men were the victims of discrimination, they were categorized as being low intellectualizing or having low educational opportunity. This was done to provide the basis for the subsequent gender discrimination.

Once participants had been categorized into their respective social identities, they were subjected to an experience of gender discrimination. This situation of discrimination was based on a paradigm designed to simulate a meritocractic situation (e.g., Foster, 1999, 2001; Foster, Matheson & Poole, 1994; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). The participants were told that in order to assess how their personality or educational opportunities might be related to test performance, they would complete a task that often appears on standardized language placement tests. They would be given a list of 10 stimulus words to use as the basis for writing a paragraph that is creative, logical, and succinct. They would be given 5 minutes to complete the task. After completion of their paragraphs, their scores would be assessed by the experimenter using the criteria that testing agencies had allegedly provided. Only the highest scoring participants would then be selected for the video group. The remaining participants would be asked to remain behind to do some additional tasks. They were told that a passing score was 5 out of a possible 10 points.

Participants were then given 5 minutes to complete their paragraphs, after which they were collected and "scored." Participants were then given false feedback about both their individual scores (by writing the individual scores in each booklet) and the group's scores (the scores for each group were written on the blackboard.) The distribution of scores indicateed a high meta-contrast ratio. In particular, participants saw that low intellectualizers (or those with low educational opportunities) received a limited range of scores, all of which were below the passing score (e.g., 2.5, 2, 1.5), whereas high intellectualizers received a limited range of scores, all well above the passing score (e.g., 8, 8.5, 9). This pattern of scores was made explicit with the following

explanation:

> As the scores indicate, the low intellectualizer (low educational opportunity) group members seem to score around the same range, and none of them were able to pass. This means they will have to complete more tasks, and as well, are ineligible for the $100 lottery. In contrast, it appears that the high intellectualizer (high educational opportunity) group members had higher scores on average. This means they were able to pass and will help us develop the video, as well as being eligible for the $100 lottery.

Participants were then given their personal booklets to examine their scores. Those wo had received a passing score were asked to follow the experimenter to a different room where they would presumably participate in the video development. At this point it became clear to participants that, consistent with original cover story, only one gender received the necessary passing score and left the room with the experimenter. Thus, their experience with gender discrimination was now explicit. Those who had presumably gained entry into the video group left the room, where another experimenter was waiting to debrief them. The remaining participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that presumably was designed to assess their opinions on the use of the task and were told that the second part of the experiment would follow the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained the manipulation checks and measures of responses to discrimination. Once they had completed the questionnaire, they were told that this was the end of the experiment, and they were debriefed. This debriefing, given to both women and men, is a detailed, four-page description of the purpose of the study, an explanation as to why deception was necessary, repeated confirmation that their performance was not actually measured, and a contact sheet with phone numbers of local counseling centers, the researcher, and the chair of the Psychology Department. Discussions after debriefing indicated that the participants believed the deception and understood the need for deception in order to obtain spontaneous reactions; no adverse reactions to this paradigm have been reported (Foster, 1999, 2001; Foster, Matheson, & Poole, 1994).

Materials

Manipulation checks. To assess the extent to which participants believed

the cover story, they indicated on a scale that ranged from "not at all" (0) to "completely" (10) how much there are gender differences in intellectualizing (or in the experience of educational opportunities). They also indicated how much they labeled themselves as low intellectualizing (low educational opportunities).

To assess whether participants in each condition perceived the social identity that was portrayed, two questions were asked about perceptions of ingroup and intergroup variability. Perceptions of ingroup variability were assessed by asking participants to indicate how similar women (men) are in terms of intellectualizing (or in the experience of low educational opportunities). Responses were assessed using a scale that ranged from "not at all similar" (0) to "extremely similar" (10). Using the same scale, perceptions of intergroup variability were assessed by having participants indicate how similar men and women are on intellectualizing (or on the educational opportunities women and men receive).

To assess social identities in a manner consistent with self-categorization theory, meta-contrast ratios were then computed from the ingroup and intergroup variability measures. First, scores on both measures of ingroup and intergroup variability were recoded such that higher scores indicateed higher perceptions of ingroup and intergroup differences (Turner et al., 1987). These scores were then transformed by adding a constant of 1, in order to avoid any division by zero in the calculation of meta-contrast ratios. From these scores, a meta-contrast ratio was computed by dividing perceptions of intergroup differences by perceptions of ingroup differences. Meta-contrast ratios greater than 1 indicate salient social identities (i.e., greater between group than within group differences; Turner et al., 1987).

Finally, to assess whether participants perceived gender discrimination, they responded to two questions: "Ethical guidelines require that we ask how fairly your was gender treated in the present experiment" and "How much did this task discriminate against against your gender" Questions were answered using a scale that ranged from "not at all" (0) to "extremely" (10).

Responses to discrimination . Based on Wright, Taylor and Moghaddam's (1990) classification of action responses, participants indicated the extent to which they would participate in each of five behaviors if they were given the opportunity to respond to their treatment in the present experiment. Questions were answered using a scale that ranged from "extremely unlikely to participate" (0) to "extremely likely to participate" (10). Items included "accept the situation, that is, your assignment to either group, as is"; "request an individual retest of your score"; "confront the experimenter and demand an explanation of your particular group assignment"; "ask that the group be retested on their scores"; "get together with other students to confront the experimenter, demanding an explanation for your group assignment."

Results

Manipulation Checks

All means and standard deviations appear in Table 1. A 2 (sex) by 2 (identity) ANOVA showed that participants believed that there were gender differences in intellectualizing/educational opportunities. A non-significant interaction effect indicated that all four groups equally reported these gender differences, $F(1,116) = .071, p = .791$. A second ANOVA showed that participants applied the label of low intellectualizer (low educational opportunities) to themselves. Again, a non-significant interaction effect showed that all four groups labeled themselves to the same extent, $F(1, 116) = 1.16, p = .206$.

To assess whether the social identity inductions were successful, a 2 (sex) by 2 (identity type) ANOVA was conducted on the meta-contrast ratios. As the means indicate, participants in all four conditions reported salient social identities in that they reported meta-contrast rations greater than 1. Further, a non-significant interaction effect showed that participants in each condition exhibited equally salient social identities $F(1,116) = .01, p = .928$

Finally, ANOVAs were also conducted on the discrimination measures. As seen in Table 1, participants in each condition reported a score below the

midpoint on the fairness measure, which indicates perceptions of unfair treatment. Participants in each condition also reported a score above the midpoint on the gender discrimination measure, which indicates perceived discrimination. There was no significant interaction either for fairness, $F(1,116) = 1.16, p = .282$, or for discrimination, $F(1,116) = .119, p = .730$, which suggests that all four groups equally considered their treatment to be unfair and discriminatory.

Dependent Variables

A 2 (sex) by 2 (identity) MANOVA was performed on the five responses to discrimination (see Table 1). There was no main effect for sex, $F(5,112) = .623\ p = .683$ but there was a main effect for social identity, $F(5,112) = 3.13, p = .01, \eta 2 = .123$. However, this was qualified by a significant interaction effect, $F(5,112) = 3.87, p = .003, \eta 2 = .147$. The univariate Fs for individual confrontation, $F(1,116) = 13.95, p = .001, \eta 2 = .107$ and for group confrontation, $F(1, 115) = 7.43, p = .007, \eta 2 = .060$ were both significant. No other univariate Fs were significant. Multiple comparisons showed that in the stereotyped condition, men endorsed greater individual, $t(58) = -3.39, p = .001$, and group action, $t(58) = -2.05, p = .040$, than did women. In the social experience condition, women endorsed marginally greater individual, $t(58) = 1.89, p = .06$ and group action, $t(58) = 1.80, p = .07$ than men.

Discussion

In he present study we exposed men and women to one of two gendered social identities and examined their responses to a situation of discrimination. A significant sex by identity interaction showed that an identity based on stereotypes was disempowering for women, but not for men. That is, women endorsed taking less action against the discrimination than men did. This is consistent with Branscombe and colleagues' work (e.g., Schmitt & Branscombe, 202) that shows that discrimination is a more negative experience for women than for men. Thus, despite the same identity and experience of discrimination, women were more disempowered than men by

their disadvantaged status. To use the language of SJT, men did not appear to participate in their own oppression to the extent that women did.

Among the men with a stereotyped identity, success in the face of disadvantage may be a function of their past experience with stereotypes and discrimination. In particular, advantaged groups have traditionally benefitted from individualistic-focused societies. For example, in North America we promote a belief in the meritocracy, whereby if people work hard they will succeed. Similarly, the stereotyped identity is individual-based; it implied that failure was due to personality. Men may have been more comfortable with such an identity given their past successes in an individualistic society. Men may have experiences with negative stereotypes (e.g., men participate less in childcare), but have not been disadvantaged by stereotypes to the same extent as women have. Indeed, past successes enhance perceptions of self (Bandura, 1986; Bandura & Jourden, 1991) and collective efficacy (Prussia & Kinicki, 1996; Riggs & Knight, 1994) such that the more an individual/group has experienced success in the past, the more they will believe they will be successful in the future. As such, despite the disempowering nature of stereotypes, men may have felt empowered to change their status.

Men did not. however, show the same empowerment when they were exposed to the social experience identity. Although marginally significant, men with a social experience identity endorsed more action than women did. Thus, discrimination under this identity condition did appear to be a more negative experience for men. This suggests there are circumstances under which the status quo can be altered, namely a reconstructed identity. Bandura's (1986, 1997) theory of self-efficacy may again help to explain this finding. Bandura suggested that people will feel least empowered to act when their personal efficacy beliefs are in conflict with those promoted by the social context. It may be that when exposed to the social experience identity, men perceived this mismatch. In particular, there is research that shows that advantaged groups perceive higher self-efficacy than do disadvantaged groups: European Americans (Aruffo, Coverdale, Pavlik, & Vallbona, 1993; Hillman,

Wood, & Sawilowsky, 1992; Wenzel, 1993), men (Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1997), and higher socio-economic status individuals (Lachman & Weaver, 1998; Young, & Shorr, 1986) report a greater internal locus of control (i.e., the perception that they can affect outcomes) than African Americans, women and lower socio-economic individuals, respectively.

However, the social experience identity highlighted the role of society, rather than the individual, in success. Thus, the high personal efficacy beliefs usually held by men may not have matched the efficacy beliefs promoted by the social experience identity. Being unaccustomed to this inconsistency may have contributed to men's disempowerment.

One limitation of the present study however, is that we did not examine possible mediating variables such as self-efficacy beliefs. Thus the particular reasons for why each social identity was differentially empowering for each gender are still unclear. Another limitation of the present study is that the laboratory simulation of discrimination could be criticized as having little relevance for how women and men experience discrimination on a daily basis. For example, responses to an academic situation of discrimination may indeed differ from other types of discrimination. However, research also shows that outside the laboratory, when women imagine themselves in a similarly described situation of academic discrimination, they define the situation as pervasive across contexts in their life. Thus, the laboratory simulation may have some relevance outside the lab.

Despite these limitations, the findings of the present study lead us to question the assumption that the consequences of discrimination are the same for any group who experiences it. This assumption is often promoted by the mass media, which often give more attention to instances of reverse discrimination than discrimination against lower status groups. For instance, although sexual harassment and stalking are most often experienced by women, Hollywood movies are made about men's experiences of sexual harassment (e.g., Faludi, 1991). Even a social psychology text book discussion of the various types of discrimination refers to tokenism and

reverse discrimination as the "most common" forms (Baron & Byrne, 1994, p. 221). However, the results of the present study suggests that what may appear to be the same experiences are not actually experienced the same way. Although stereotypes can be harmful to anyone, it appears that they may be most harmful to members of disadvantaged groups. In a society where stereotypes are pervasive, higher status groups may therefore continue to gain advantage in the face of disadvantage. Yet the redefinition of social identities may alter the ways in which traditionally advantaged and disadvantaged groups respond to the status quo. Future researchers will need to further explore how the historical experiences of groups interact with their present-day identities to affect their empowerment.

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Endnotes

1.	In this article, "discrimination" refers to the behavior of treating one group differently than another, or the experience of unequal treatment. "Disadvantage" refers to the consequence of receiving discriminatory treatment, namely lower status, less power or fewer opportunities.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Manipulation Checks and Dependent Variables

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	Stereotyped Identity		Experience-based identity	
	Women	Men	Women	Men

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Manipulation checks

Gender differences   6.70(1.96)   5.90(2.45)   6.12(1.85)   6.23(1.01)

Self-label   6.16(1.96)   6.56(2.52)   7.43(2.02)   6.86(1.71)

Meta-contrast ratios   1.31(0.36)   1.36(0.51)   1.29(0.38)   1.26(0.40)

Perceived fairness   3.76(3.40)   3.16(2.51)   2.86(2.50)   3.40(2.90)

Gender discrimination   6.38(2.92)   6.60(3.19)   6.83(2.46)   6.23(3.01)

Dependent variables

Acceptance   3.78(3.65)   3.30(3.30)   3.86(3.09)   5.07(3.58)

Individual Retest   3.43(3.39)   4.07(3.27)   5.10(3.32)   3.90(3.56)

Individual Confrontation   2.75(3.06)   5.86(3.38)   5.30(3.48)   3.44(3.34)

Group Retest   3.16(3.47)   4.69(3.50)   4.80(3.56)   4.01(3.56)

Group Confrontation   2.72(3.42)   4.77(3.53)   5.33(3.54)   3.82(3.25)

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_____

Note : Standard deviations appear in parentheses. Higher scores indicate greater gender differences, self-labeling, meta-contrast ratios, fairness, gender discrimination, acceptance, and actions.