

Social Status, Not Gender Alone, Is Implicated in Different Reactions By Women and Men to Social Ostracism

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Abstract Williams and Sommer found that ostracized women, but not men, worked harder on a subsequent collective task, speculating that women's social compensation was motivated by threatened belongingness. The present 2×3 design with 180 U.S. women and men replicated this gender gap in work contributions then closed it using two status-manipulations that favored women's task abilities or the higher education of undergraduates with high school partners. Additional analyses identified three clusters of participants who failed to compensate: only men in the replication control, women scoring low in self-monitoring, and participants who persisted unsuccessfully to resist exclusion. These patterns shift our focus away from gender and threatened belongingness toward control and status as explanations for the original gender difference.

Keywords Social ostracism · Human sex differences · Social compensation · Social loafing

Introduction

The study of gender differences has a long and contentious history in the Psychology of Women, yet it represents a

strand of research likely to continue (LaFrance et al. 2004). Although the question of whether women and men are fundamentally similar or different ultimately may be unknowable (Hare-Mustin and Marecek 1988), a key contribution to our understanding of differences is to fully explore their potential causes, especially by identifying the contexts that widen and narrow differences (Yoder and Kahn 2003). The purpose of the present study is to replicate a documented gender difference in reactions to social ostracism then explore whether status manipulations can reduce this difference. Undergraduate women and men were excluded from an online computer game by two partners with whom they subsequently completed a collective task in which they believed their inputs to be anonymous. Our goal is to show that the original difference between women's and men's contributions to the collective task is better accounted for by considering control and status rather than gender and threats to women's belongingness. This finding would contribute to a growing body of research and theory (Hyde 2005) documenting similarities between women and men when social contexts are made comparable.

Women and Men React Differently to Social Ostracism

Williams and Sommer (1997) brought together two lines of research in social psychology focused on social ostracism and social loafing. Williams' (2001) research on social ostracism demonstrated that people who were socially excluded from group participation experienced threats to their belongingness, control, self-esteem, and desires for a meaningful existence. Research on social loafing showed that people contributed less work to collectivities in which individuals' inputs were thought to be unidentifiable (Latané et al. 1979). This tendency to loaf, however, was

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derailed when group members were motivated to socially compensate (Williams et al. 1993), for example, when working on meaningful tasks with poorly performing coworkers (Williams and Karau 1991). Pulling these lines of research together, Williams and Sommer (1997) predicted that ostracized individuals would socially compensate, rather than loaf, on a subsequent collective task with the group members who had excluded them as a way to re-establish their threatened belongingness.

To test their hypothesis, Williams and Sommer created three conditions using a face-to-face ball tossing game with two same-sex confederates: a no game control, an inclusion version, and an ostracism scenario in which the participant tossed a ball with two confederates for a minute then was excluded by them for the next four minutes. Afterwards, each player participated in a brainstorming task with the same partners in which the group's task was to generate different ideas for using a knife. In the collective conditions, the participant believed that her or his entries were unidentifiable and were combined with those from the partners. However, the confederates entered bogus papers into the pool so that the participant's contributions could be identified later and counted. In the coactive conditions, participants believed that their entries could be identified by their partners. Rounding out their 2×2 (collective, coactive) $\times 3$ (control, inclusion, ostracism) design was participants' gender.

Unexpectedly, different patterns of findings emerged for women and men. Relative to the coactive controls, men in the collective control condition loafed, contributing fewer inputs on the knife task. In contrast, women in these two groups performed comparably. As for the effects of social ostracism in collective groups, comparison of the ostracized men with control men revealed consistent loafing in the form of similar contributions. In contrast, women worked harder in collective groups after being ostracized than did control women, exhibiting the predicted pattern of social compensation. Although not directly compared, the data made it clear that ostracized women produced more inputs to collective groups than did ostracized men, establishing a direct gender difference in response to ostracism. The goal of the present study is to explore an explanation for this gender difference.

What's Gender Got to Do with It?

Williams and Sommer offered some speculation about why their prediction held for women but failed for men. Digging deeper into their data, they concluded that women and men experienced their ostracism as comparably unfavorable. Thus the difference in their contributions to the group following being ostracized resulted, not from their experience of ostracism, but rather from how they perceived and coped with being excluded. Their speculation about women continued to focus on perceived threats to belongingness

and subsequent compensation. Their speculation about men turned to ostracism's threats to control and self-esteem, rather than belongingness, and re-interpreted men's low contributions not as passive loafing but rather as active withholding of work as a way to save face.

Taking our cue from Carroll (1998), who urged gender researchers to examine prevailing gender ideologies and their impact on scientific understanding, we honed in on the assumptions implicit in Williams and Sommer's speculation. If women's social compensation is viewed as normative, then men's withdrawal becomes comparatively deviant. Within this framework, the basic question posed asks why men failed to compensate and the answer lies in men's need to save face.

Alternatively, we can turn this reasoning on its head by regarding men's loafing, a common response when inputs are anonymous and collective, as normative and women's overwork as discrepant. The question implied by this perspective shifts to "Why didn't women loaf?" An easy answer would lie in women's presumably stronger needs for belongingness. However, Baumeister and Leary (1995) concluded that belongingness is a universal need valued similarly by women and men. Instead, where women and men may diverge is in stereotyping of women as "better" at relationships than men. Images of relational women, as opposed to more autonomous men, are bolstered by theories, such as self-in-relation theory (Miller 1976), as well as by popular expectations that women are more intimate in their relationships (Reis et al. 1985) and are more sociable (Swim 1994). If this reasoning is true, then failure in this domain may be more threatening to women's self-esteem, or more specifically, their status and respect from the group (Tyler and Blader 2002). Thus women, but not men, may have worked harder on the subsequent task in response to this stereotype threat (Steele 1997) and as a means to re-establish their standing in the group.

Note that both lines of reasoning focus on how perceptions of control and self-esteem are affected by ostracism; how individuals subsequently seek to re-affirm their status with their partners; and how the process is part of a gender system that affects women and men differently, even in this instance when participants interact in same-sex groups. Status characteristics theory has long identified gender as a diffuse marker that sorts women and men into social categories of differing social value (Berger et al. 2002) and thus creates gendered contexts of unequal statuses (Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999). Women and men need not directly interact to activate gender-status cues, but rather these cues can be exaggerated or mitigated depending on the gendering of the social context (Yoder and Kahn 2003). Given the context dependency of social status, specific contexts can override diffuse status differences by providing context-specific status information

(Ridgeway 1991). Thus by manipulating the task-specific status of ostracized participants, we can explore whether the status values affixed to gender underlie Williams and Sommer's gender difference.

To test our proposal, we first will need to reproduce Williams and Sommer's original gender difference in a replicated condition then go on to reduce that difference in our experimental conditions by manipulating the status of the women and men who are ostracized. Status researchers in general have manipulated task status in two ways. The first approach is process-oriented, adding status by legitimating the skills an individual brings to a task (e.g., Johnson and Ford 1986; Ridgeway and Walker 2001). The second approach simply adds positive status information about low-status individuals (e.g., Cohen and Lotan 1995). Hogue and Yoder (2003) successfully used each approach to enhance women's task status by telling participants in one condition that women as a group were better at the assigned task (a gender-status manipulation) and to heighten both women's and men's status in a second condition by assigning participants with partners of lower educational status (an education-status manipulation).

In this way we created in the present study a 2×3 design in which women and men were randomly assigned to one of three conditions, all of which involved ostracism and collective inputs (believed to be anonymous) on a subsequent brainstorming task. The three between-subjects experimental conditions differed in task status to include a no-status replication of part of Williams and Sommer's design (serving as a status-unmanipulated control group within our design), a gender-status group, and an education-status condition.

Hypotheses and a Procedural Note

We hypothesize that each status manipulation will close the replicated gap between ostracized women's and men's brainstorming contributions by producing a significant two-way interaction (Hypothesis 1). Further exploratory probing of this interaction will speak to the two lines of reasoning we have outlined. If men's withdrawal underlies the original

gender difference, then we anticipate that better educated status-elevated men will contribute not only as much as women, but also more than men in the replicated condition (Hypothesis 1a). In this case, holding higher status than their high school partners will free men from having to save face and instead promote the social compensation Williams and Sommer's originally expected. On the other hand, if stereotype threat is at the heart of women's social compensation, then we expect both groups of status-enhanced women not only to contribute like men but also to contribute less than women in the replicated condition (Hypothesis 1b). Women's higher status will mitigate their need to socially compensate the partners who ostracized them so they will be freed to loaf. These hypotheses are noted in Table 1.

Our procedures for creating social ostracism with a ball tossing game and for measuring work contributions during the subsequent brainstorming task parallel those used by Williams and Sommer (1997) in face-to-face collective groups. Subsequent research on ostracism concluded that the ball tossing game can be simulated successfully via computer in a cyberball format (Williams et al. 2000, 2002; Zadro et al. 2004). However, we were concerned that moving from a face-to-face to a computerized format might affect women and men differently, most notably by drawing on computer skills and comfort and by muting the social cues more apparent in a face-to-face exchange. To assess the former, we included self-report measures of computer comfort and videogame experience. To tap the latter, we added the Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder and Gangestad 1986) as an individual differences measure of attentiveness to social cues. We expect to find that the higher an individual scores in self-monitoring, the harder she or he will work to compensate the previously ostracizing partners.

Method

Participants and Design

Ninety women (median age=20, range=18–59) and 90 men (median age=20, range=18–40) were recruited for

Table 1 Mean number of uses for a knife contributed by women and men across conditions.

	Experimental Condition		
	Replication Control	Gender-Status	Education-Status
Women	6.73 (4.15) _a	5.83 (3.47) _a	6.23 (4.82) _a
Men	5.57 (2.96) _b	6.73 (3.27) _{a,b}	8.63 (5.32) _a

Standard deviations are in parentheses. Entries sharing a subscripted letter within columns and across rows are not significantly different. Probing the hypothesized interaction, Hypothesis 1a predicted a pattern of no differences across the row for women and significantly higher contributions among men in the education-status as compared to the control condition. Hypothesis 1b projected no differences among the men and significantly greater contributions by women in both the gender-status and education-status conditions relative to the controls.

course credit from the subject pool of a large U.S. Midwestern university. They were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental conditions (replication control, gender status, and education status) in our 2×3 complete factorial design. A power analysis confirmed that with 30 participants per cell, we could detect medium-sized main effects and an interaction with $\alpha = .05$ and power over 80%. Due to the education manipulation, postsecondary students were excluded from all conditions.

Materials and Procedure

Recruiting procedures and informed consent sheets told participants that we were investigating the effects of verbal reasoning abilities on brainstorming in computer groups. Participants were lead to believe that they were one of three partners working concurrently but separately on the same computerized task; however, all partner information was bogus. After the same-sex experimenter appeared to check via cell phone that the alleged partners were in place, the participant was left alone in a small lab room in the psychology department with a desktop computer preset to run an experimenter-specified experimental condition. Initial questions asked the participant to enter her or his own first name, sex, age, class rank, major, and two hobbies as a way to introduce her/himself to the two unseen partners. Participants also rated on 7-point scales how comfortable they felt working on a computer and how often they played videogames.

While presumably processing this personal information about each partner, the participant completed the 18-item Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder and Gangestad 1986). Each item described a social situation (e.g., “I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others”) then asked respondents to indicate whether or not each statement is “true/false or mostly true/false as applied to you.” Entries were scored as 0 or 1, then summed so that higher scores reflected greater attentiveness to social cues. These totals ranged from 2 – 18 for women and from 3 – 18 for men. Coefficient alpha was acceptable at .71.

Next, personal information for each of the two presumed partners appeared on the screen. Paralleling Williams and Sommer’s procedure, partners were always the same sex as the participant, conveyed by the names Karen and Lisa or Brian and Gary. Kasof (1993) suggested these names to convey equal and high attractiveness and competence. In the replication control and gender status conditions, both partners were college freshmen of traditional age (18 and 19) majoring in Psychology and Sociology. In the education status condition, both partners were described as 17-year-old high school students logged into a computer at the high school across the street from the psychology building. Partners were given hobbies deemed gender-appropriate for

adolescent women (dancing and watching TV; camping and going to the mall) and men (playing basketball and watching TV; camping and fishing) (Philipp 1998). As manipulation checks and to make this information salient to participants, they were asked to fill in their partners’ names and ages and check their class rank (high school student or college freshman). Their progress was blocked if incorrect or incomplete information was provided, referring them back to the prior screen.

The cyberball game was introduced to participants as a way to familiarize them with working with their partners prior to engaging in the collective brainstorming task. They were told that their performance was unimportant and that the game would be played for 5 minutes, with a countdown clock appearing at the bottom of the screen. Outlines of human figures represented their partners, and by clicking on a button, a virtual ball could be tossed to either player and visually tracked. For the first minute of the game, the research participant was included in the toss. Then she or he helplessly watched the ball move back and forth between the two partners for the remaining four minutes, creating the experience of social ostracism. The computer program automatically recorded any mouse or keystrokes attempted by the participant during the exclusion phase.

At the end of the game, the computer program moved to the brainstorming instructions:

We are investigating the effects of verbal reasoning abilities on brainstorming in computer groups. You will be completing an exercise that is used to measure verbal reasoning ability for future employers who utilize computer groups within their place of employment.

In the replication control, these instructions simply concluded:

From previous research, we know that many cognitive abilities are related to job performance across many types of occupations, and employers are always looking for better ways to predict the future job performance of applicants.

The gender and education status manipulations duplicated those used by Hogue and Yoder (2003). To operationalize the gender-status condition, the last sentence above was replaced with an expanded explanation:

From previous research, we know that men and women have different cognitive strengths. Women tend to have stronger verbal reasoning skills. For example, girls tend to start speaking earlier than boys, and in elementary school, they have larger vocabularies and better reading scores. Women also tend to perform better on tasks that require quick memory of word-related information.

In addition to the earlier description of the two partners as high school students, the education-status manipulation was completed with the following:

From previous research, we know that college students tend to have stronger verbal reasoning skills than high school students have. As college students, you have already successfully graduated from high school and scored well enough on college placement exams to be admitted into college. You are now in the process of completing courses much more rigorous than those you took in high school. All of these experiences strengthen your verbal reasoning abilities and lead you to have more powerful verbal reasoning skills than most high school students have.

To confirm and make salient these manipulations, all participants completed a multiple choice question asking if research shows that women are better at these verbal reasoning tasks than men, men better, college students better, high school student better, or no information given. If a participant's response did not match the assigned condition, she or he was referred to the previous page until the correct choice was made.

Turning to the brainstorming task itself, each participant now was asked to "generate as many uses as possible for the object 'knife.'" Each entry was recorded in a textbox, which was replaced by a new blank box when submitted. Participants were told that we were only interested in group performance and that entries would be anonymously combined with those contributed by their partners. They were urged to be creative and to generate as many ideas as they wished, then click the finish button. The number of entries submitted by the participant was recorded by the computer program.

The final screens asked participants to rate their partners together on 5-point scales assessing their warmth, competence, likeability, attractiveness, and friendliness, capturing the warmth and competence dimensions identified by Fiske and her colleagues (2002) as central aspects of gender stereotyping. They also completed a modified checklist of attributions used by Williams and Sommer describing why they thought they had been excluded from the cyberball game. They were free to check as many of the following attributions as they wanted: I stopped; partners' rudeness; trouble throwing; partners' dislike; participant's slowness; easier with two players; partners knew each other; participant's disinterest; stuck up partners; part of the experiment; and don't know. An overall question asked participations to rate if their exclusion was because of 1-something about me, 3-both me and them, to 5-something about them. Finally, participants rated on a 5-point scale if they would like to work with these partners on another experiment.

Participants then were directed to contact the experimenter who debriefed them and talked with them about the social ostracism manipulation, stressing that their partners were not real and that their exclusion was contrived. Additional explanations and research about social ostracism were provided to participants through the participant pool's web site.

Results

Before testing the two central hypotheses we proposed, we need to first establish that the experience of being ostracized was negative and comparable between women and men and across conditions in our design. Also by moving from a face-to-face to a cyberball medium, we introduced potential individual and gender differences that need either to be ruled out or to be controlled in the tests of our hypotheses.

Impact of Social Ostracism

The preponderance of evidence confirmed that the experience of being socially ostracized was negative for participants as well as comparable for women and men and across status conditions. Averaging the five ratings of participants' partners ($\alpha=.79$), 77% rated their partners unfavorably at 3 or less on this 5-point scale; 95% below 4 ($M=2.78$, $SD=.62$, $range=1-4.6$). When asked to rate on a 5-point scale if they would like to work with these partners again on another experiment, 88% checked 3 or lower ($M=2.57$, $SD=1.05$, $range=1-5$). For each of these indicators, a 2×3 ANOVA yielded no main effects nor interaction, confirming no differences across cells. Furthermore, only four women and five men checked their own disinterest in the game as a reason for why they were excluded, signaling that most participants were engaged in the game.

Most players attributed blame for their ostracism to their partners, not themselves. Asked if something about themselves or their partners caused participants to stop receiving tossed balls, 68% blamed just their partners and 27% blamed both themselves and their partners, skewing significantly toward partner blame, $\chi^2(2) = 108.13$, $p < .001$. No differences emerged by gender, $\chi^2(2) = 3.97$, $p = .14$, nor across status conditions within each gender (women: $\chi^2(4) = 3.03$, $p = .55$; men: $\chi^2(4) = 6.00$, $p = .20$). Responding to the checklist of reasons why participants thought they were ostracized, only two believed it was because they had trouble throwing and six others thought they themselves were slow. Combining these two shortcomings, no gender difference was found, $t(178) = 1.45$, $p = .15$. More participants characterized their

partners as rude ($n=34$) or stuck up (11) or thought they were disliked (15), again without a gender difference, $t(178)=.83$, $p=.41$. The most frequent selections, that the partners knew each other (51) or found the game easier with two players (49), were noted similarly by women and men, $t(178) = 1.04$, $p=.30$.

During the 4-minute period of exclusion, 64% of participants exhibited impatience by making ineffectual mouse or keystrokes, typically five (range=1–64, with an outlier of 448 deleted). This behavioral indicator of attempted control did correlate negatively with contributions to the collective task, $r(N=179) = -.18$, $p=.02$, such that the more individuals tried to influence the cyberball game during the ostracism period, the less they later contributed to the group. No gender difference emerged in these attempts to intervene, $t(177) = .27$, $p=.79$.

From Face-to-Face to a Computerized Format

We identified two potential contaminants resulting from our decision to use a computerized over a face-to-face format. The first focused on possible gender differences in computer usage. Although women and men reported similar levels of comfort working on a computer, men ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.80$) reported playing videogames more frequently than women ($M=2.12$, $SD=1.12$, unequal variances), $t(149) = 6.91$, $p<.001$. Subsequent analyses including videogame usage as a covariate found no effects so no further exploration of this variable will be reported.

Our second concern explored the likely impact on the immediacy of social cues from Williams and Sommer's (1997) more proximal face-to-face exclusion to our cyberball format. Using the Self-Monitoring Scale as an individual differences measure of attentiveness to social cues, higher self-monitoring was associated with more contributions to the collective task, $r(N=180) = .21$, $p=.005$. As we predicted, the more an individual presumably paid attention to social cues, the harder she or he worked on the collective task after being ostracized.

However, two unexpected gender differences emerged. First, the correlation between self-monitoring and work contributions held only for women, $r(N=90) = .27$, $p=.009$, not for men, $r(N=90) = .10$, $p=.33$. Second, we tested for group differences across our design using a 2×3 ANOVA with self-monitoring as the dependent variable. Although the main effect for conditions, $F(2,174) = 2.26$, $p=.108$, and the interaction, $F(2,174) = .37$, $p=.69$, were not significant, a significant main effect for participants' gender emerged such that men's scores ($M=10.57$, $SD=3.16$) were significantly higher than women's ($M=8.77$, $SD=3.45$), $F(1,174)=13.43$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.072$. Because of the significance of this gender difference, self-monitoring was used as a covariate in subsequent hypothesis testing.

Gender Comparisons of Contributions to the Collective Task

Congruent with Hypothesis 1, a 2×3 analysis of covariance using self-monitoring as a covariate and crossing participants' gender with the three status conditions for brainstorming entries yielded a significant interaction, $F(2, 173) = 3.39$, $p=.04$, $\eta^2=.04$. Neither the condition, $F(2, 173) = 1.33$, $p=.27$, nor gender, $F(1, 173)=.20$, $p=.66$, main effects was significant. The self-monitoring covariate was significant, $F(1, 173) = 6.84$, $p=.01$, $\eta^2=.04$, arguing that self-monitoring is related to work contributions independent of the other variables in the model. Post hoc gender comparisons probing the interaction revealed that women's and men's contributions differed in the replication condition, $F(1, 57)=4.35$, $p=.04$, $\eta^2=.071$, but not in the gender status groups, $F(1, 57) = .36$, $p=.55$, nor in the education status conditions, $F(1, 57) = 2.65$, $p=.11$ (see Table 1).

Further probing of the interaction across conditions within genders uncovered a pattern consistent with Hypothesis 1a. For women, the status manipulations had no impact on their brainstorming contributions, $F(2, 87)=.35$, $p=.71$. However, for men, a difference across conditions emerged, $F(2, 87) = 4.52$, $p=.01$, $\eta^2=.09$. Tukey comparisons showed that men in the education status condition contributed more knife uses than the control group (see Table 1). In contrast, men in the gender status condition submitted as many entries as men in both the control and the education status groups.

Discussion

Our data are consistent with Williams and Sommer's (1997) argument that social ostracism is experienced negatively and similarly by women and men. Most critically, our findings replicate Williams and Sommer's gender difference such that women contributed more than men to the collective task in which they engaged with the same-sex partners who previously had ostracized them. Our study then extends beyond this prior work to close the gender gap in task contributions by manipulating participants' task-relevant status. When women's status was enhanced through an introduction that noted women's general task superiority and when women's and men's education status as college students outstripped that of their presumed high school partners, women and men as groups made similar anonymous contributions. Probing within each gender, women's contributions remained comparable across conditions in contrast to men's. Men whose status was higher than their less educated partners contributed more to the collective task than men in the control condition. Additionally, self-

monitoring was associated with task contributions, but only for women. The higher women scored in self-monitoring, the more they contributed to the collective brainstorming task.

In sum, the two gendered anomalies across the six cells of the experimental design and with self-monitoring as an individual differences measure are men in the replication control and women scoring low in self-monitoring, respectively. In addition, the more both women and men tried to re-insert themselves back into the cyberball game, the less they later contributed. It is these three groups that contributed less, responding more to the conditions that typically allow for loafing (anonymous collective inputs) over the conditions that presumably spark social compensation (threats to belongingness). Note how our analyses have moved away from simple gender differences to ask more complex questions about what links control men, low self-monitoring women, and participants of both gender who tried to terminate their ostracism.

One potential commonality centers on status and control. Our data are consistent with Williams and Sommer's speculation that men in their study (and in our replication control) actively withdrew from the collective task as a way to save face. The need to re-assert one's status became moot with lower status partners (and to some degree may have been muted by the male-disparaging gender-status manipulation). Gangestad and Snyder's (2000, p. 547) most recent and extensive exploration of what the Self-Monitoring Scale measures speculates that: "the Self-Monitoring Scale relates to status-oriented impression management motives." Low self-monitors are less motivated to "cultivate public images that connote social status" and "to strive to construct social worlds that function as effective instruments of status enhancement" (p. 547). Thus women whose self-monitoring style freed them from concerns about status were simply not threatened by ostracism enough to socially compensate. Finally, those women and men who unsuccessfully worked at their keyboards to try to infiltrate the cyberball game and who made few contributions to the open-ended brainstorming task arguably demonstrated a high need for control. Given that their attempts were thwarted, it becomes more consistent to regard their subsequent lower contributions as a reflection of actively chosen withdraw motivated by threatened and frustrated control than as passive resignation.

Two points stand out in this discussion. First, gender alone cannot account for these patterns in our data. It is not the case that women consistently did one thing and men another. Rather some women and men worked less, and other women and men contributed more. Second, a consistent picture does emerge when one speculates about social ostracism in this setting as threatening one's sense of control and self-esteem. Common to all participants is a negative reaction to ostracism. Furthermore, there may be a shared construal of this experience as threatening to one's

sense of control and self-esteem. What may then differ is their reaction to this threat: active withdraw in some cases (for men in our control group, for women low in self-monitoring, and for participants of both genders high in control-seeking behaviors) and heightened contributions in the remaining cases. This possibility re-frames how we think about the original women who worked harder after being ostracized. They may not have been trying to restore their belongingness but rather to re-assert themselves as valuable, respected contributors.

Obviously, there is much speculation in the preceding interpretation of our data. The need for follow-up research to test this speculation is clear. The most obvious next step is to explore the processes underlying the motives of participants, both by ruling out the influence of needs for belongingness and by documenting the roles played by threatened self-esteem and control. Overall, continuation of this line of exploration may raise important questions about the roles played by gender and status in core areas of social psychology including social ostracism, social loafing, social compensation, and self-monitoring. For example, although most explorations of self-monitoring failed to report gender comparisons, Frazier and Fatis (1980), like us, found that men's scores exceeded women's. Our data also speak to the status interpretation of self-monitoring proposed by Gangestad and Snyder (2000). Finally, our findings offer implications for status characteristics theorists (e.g., Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin 1999) by raising the possibility that status values accompanying the social categories of female and male can carry over into same-sex interactions.

Overall, the present data are important in that they highlight our needs to explore gender differences more deeply and to identify status differences that are culturally pervasive but often unacknowledged (Yoder and Kahn 2003). Our exploration exemplifies how easy it is to see differences from the one vantage that fits with our stereotyped images of women and men rather than considering alternate views (Carroll 1998). In the present case, even arguing that belongingness is a universal need and that women fundamentally want from relationships what men want (intimacy), it was easy to fall into the trap of thinking about women's relational needs as different from men's (cf., Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982) such that ostracism would motivate women to want to restore their connection with other women more than men with men.

Without absolute standards from which to evaluate differences between women and men, researchers are left to make relative comparisons. The long history of androcentric bias in psychology documents how these relative comparisons traditionally established men as the standard from which women deviated and were seen as deficient (Yoder and Kahn 1993). The present analyses warn us that simply reversing this trend by making women the standard

also may fall prey to stereotyping by researchers, in this case by drawing on the halo that surrounds an idealized view of women as relational (Kerber 1986) and hence motivated by needs to belong. However positive this presumably generic image of “good” women may appear (Eagly and Mladinic 1989), stereotyping researchers show that this image does not represent real women (Fiske et al. 2002) and can even contribute to benevolent sexism by restricting women to roles consistent with societal definitions of goodness (Glick and Fiske 2001). The ultimate value of the present data, as they currently stand, is that they remind us to dig deeper when we explore gender differences, first by framing our research questions from multiple vantages, then by designing our studies more fully to address these different possibilities.

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