ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Editorial to Part II: Revisioning, Rethinking, Restructuring Gender at Work: Contributors to Gender-Role Stereotyping

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Abstract

The papers in Part II of this Special Issue on "Revisioning, Rethinking, Restructuring Gender at Work" emphasize the factors contributing to gender stereotypes. These papers share the aim of understanding the relevance of individual factors, boundary conditions, and of broadening the scope beyond heterosexual women and men. We summarize the papers of this Special Issue Part II and discuss the key takeaways from the whole Special Issue, including Part I "Revisioning, Rethinking, Restructuring Gender at Work: Quo Vadis Gender Stereotypes?" and Part II "Revisioning, Rethinking, Restructuring Gender at Work: Contributors to Gender-Role Stereotyping", and implications for future research.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Although the papers in Part I of this Special Issue (Hernandez Bark, Junker, et al., 2022) overall support the assumption of prevailing gender stereotypes at work, not all individuals similarly discriminate against others. Instead, individual and contextual factors can reinforce and reduce gender-based discrimination, as the papers in this second part of the Special Issue show.

2 | INDIVIDUAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT GENDER-ROLE STEREOTYPING

Baldner et al. (2022) propose that individuals with a high need for cognitive closure (i.e., a strong desire for epistemic certainty)—as an individual factor—should be more likely to endorse and accept traditional gender stereotypes and, therefore, prefer men in positions of authority. Based on the reactive liberal hypothesis, the authors

further propose that this effect should be more pronounced among individuals with a left-wing political orientation. In three studies, they found support for their predictions. Individuals with a high need for cognitive closure preferred men in positions of authority, which was mediated by perceptions of women not being fit for authority (Studies 1 and 2). As proposed, this effect was stronger among liberals (Study 3). Thus, the authors conclude that individual properties like the need for cognitive closure and their political orientation have to be considered when trying to change gender-based discrimination.

Similar to Baldner et al. (2022), Süssenbach and Carvacho (2022) also focus on individual differences. They examine how individual attitudes influence the evaluation of career women and studied right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance orientation (SDO) as such attitudes. RWA reflects traditionalism such that people high on RWA act in line with traditional norms and values, are obedient toward authorities and aggress against targets. SDO reflects a preference for hierarchies in society and thereby rejects

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egalitarianism. In three experimental studies with German participants, the authors manipulated the type of job background (traditional vs. nontraditional) and the job-related (Studies 1a and 1b) or political (Study 2) success of working women and assessed the perceived warmth and competence of portrayed working women. In all three studies, RWA and SDO affected the liking of unsuccessful women with nontraditional job backgrounds. Here, RWA was associated with *increased* whereas SDO was associated with *reduced* liking. The patterns for working women with traditional job backgrounds and successful working women with nontraditional job backgrounds were inconsistent. Thus, RWA and SDO might have particularly explanatory power in predicting attitudes towards stereotype-inconsistent women.

Nicholson et al. (2022) conducted a meta-analysis on nine of their own studies on gender differences in the individual preference effect. The individual preference effect is a confirmation bias, whereby individuals stick with an initial, suboptimal decision based on limited available information even when later presented with all available information (e.g., Mojzisch & Schulz-Hardt, 2010). Based on a hidden profile task, in which participants were supposed to choose the best out of three potential candidates for the position of president of a new university campus and in which either all available information about each candidate was available from the start or only later during the exercise, they found that women were more likely to overcome the individual preference effect compared to men. However, they did not find gender differences regarding the confidence in their choice—either for the optimal candidate or for another candidate. Therefore, although women made better decisions, they were not more confident in their choices than men. This is in line with the female gender stereotype and highlights, again, the importance of gender stereotypes for individuals' behaviors and perceptions.

3 | BOUNDARY CONDITIONS FOR AFFECTING AND ADDRESSING GENDER-ROLE STEREOTYPING

As several of the studies in this Special Issue have shown (e.g., Henningsen et al., 2022; Süssenbach & Carvacho, 2022), factors within the actors, the recipients and observers can increase gender-stereotypical thinking, behaviors, and its consequences. Yet, further external factors affect gender-role stereotyping (March et al., 2016; Monzani et al., 2021; Obioma, Jaga, et al., 2022). Factors studied in this Special Issue include, amongst others, the cultural context and the stereotyped content.

The cultural context has long been known to be an important boundary condition that affects gender stereotypes (e.g., Schein et al., 1996). Yet, most of these studies focused on Western or Asian societies, whereas much less is known about gender stereotypes in countries on the African continent (Bosak et al., 2018). Complementing this study, Obioma, Hentschel, et al. (2022) compared gender stereotypes in Germany and Nigeria. In their study, Nigerians and

Germans rated themselves and women and men, in general, in their respective countries. Nigerian women were perceived and rated themselves as more agentic and more communal than German women. In contrast, Nigerian men were perceived as similarly agentic but less communal than German men—however, they ascribed themselves more communal traits than German men. Within Germany, there were no gender differences in perceived agency and communion, whereas Nigerian women were rated as similarly agentic but more communal than Nigerian men. These differences in self- and other-ratings as well as the cross-national differences might influence the results obtained from samples comprising different nations and should be taken into account when designing future studies. They should also be considered when conducting studies in certain countries or organizations concerning intersectionality. For example, being an African American, Asian, Hispanic, or White woman may affect how women rate themselves and are rated by others, not merely as women but also as holding other meaningful identities.

Focusing on the stereotyped content, Kahalon et al. (2022) studied appearance comments from a target's and an observer's perspective. From a target's perspective, women especially rated comments regarding sexualized appearance (e.g., "that tight shirt really emphasizes your great figure") as less appropriate than men and believed that they would be perceived as less warm (i.e., communal) due to receiving such comments, implying a perceived penalty of receiving such comments. Conversely, men believed to be perceived as more competent when receiving such comments. From an observer's perspective, appearance comments were seen as inappropriate, particularly in a work context compared with a nonwork context, by both women and men. Again, women perceived sexualized comments as less appropriate than nonsexualized comments, whereas there was no difference between these two types among male observers. Workplace training on gender sensitivity should incorporate such gendered perspectives on receiving and perceiving appearance comments.

Focusing on how to deal with sexism (i.e., "biases and discriminatory practices that position one sex as inferior to another"; Hidalgo & Royce, 2017, p. 1), Dray and Sabat (2022) conducted a series of three studies. In Study 1, they show that sexism confrontations differ in how they include the identity of the confronter (being a target or nontarget of sexism), the tone (assertive vs. gentle), the location of the confrontation (in public or private), the number of confronters, and the timing of the confrontation. In the subsequent Studies 2 and 3, they show that any type of confrontation is beneficial for women targets of sexism. Confronting sexism—irrespective of who (a target or nontarget of sexism), how, where, and when—resulted in lower job stress and turnover intentions and more job satisfaction, perceptions of a better diversity climate, and higher perceptions of organizational support. These findings are particularly important as research has shown that perpetrators are less likely to enact discriminatory behaviors once they have been confronted (e.g., Czopp et al., 2006) and as they take everyone into the responsibility when confronting sexism: the target of sexism but also nontargets or bystanders, who observed the sexist act.

4 | IT IS NOT ONLY ABOUT HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN AND MEN!

Thus far, all studies in this Special Issue have focused on women's and men's perceptions and experiences. Yet, two studies in this Special Issue attempt to take on a broader perspective on the role of gender at work, focusing on individuals' sexual orientation (Niedlich et al., 2022) and the nonbinary conceptualization of gender (Klysing et al., 2022). Focusing on biases in a hiring context based on sexual orientation, Niedlich et al. (2022) studied whether gay candidates would be evaluated differently from heterosexual candidates and whether being in a nonnormative (polyamory) versus a normative (monoamory) relationship would affect perceptions of agency, communion, and hireability. The results of an online experiment, in which the participants adopted the recruiter's perspective, did not provide evidence of discrimination against gay job candidates. Instead, irrespective of sexual orientation, women candidates were preferred over men candidates. In addition, gay candidates and particularly gay male candidates were preferred over heterosexual candidates, which was explained by higher ratings in agency and communion. In a second online experiment among German participants, the authors further found that polyamorous men were perceived as more agentic than monoamorous men. Again, gay men were rated higher in communion than heterosexual men, but there were no differences in agency or hireability. Overall, neither study supported the idea that homosexual individuals would fare worse in a recruiting context compared with heterosexual individuals (see also Van Hoye & Lievens, 2003). Instead, they might even fare better—at least under some circumstances. However, more research is needed to examine the robustness of this effect and whether the same patterns can be observed in organizational data.

Klysing et al. (2022) studied the gender divide in a recruiting context. In two experiments, they tested how binary (e.g., women and men have equal opportunities for career advancement) versus multigendered (e.g., women, men, and individuals with nonbinary gender identity have equal opportunities for career advancement) versus degendered (e.g., everybody, regardless of gender identity, has equal opportunities for career advancement) Equal Employment Opportunities statements influenced the organization's attractiveness from the applicants' perspectives. In a Swedish, primarily gender-binary sample, they did not find any differences in the organization's attractiveness between the three conditions. However, in a US sample comprising half gender-binary and half gender-nonbinary individuals, they found that the gender-nonbinary participants preferred the multigendered Equal Employment Opportunities statement over the other two statements. In a third scenario experiment among Swedish participants who adopted a recruiter's perspective, they did not find evidence that recruiters would discriminate against gender-nonnormative applicants. Instead, these received higher ratings in suitability and higher starting salaries than gender-normative applicants. However, similar to Niedlich et al.'s (2022) study, it is not yet clear whether these findings generalize to other, less gender-egalitarian contexts or whether these findings

display an overcompensation for existing stereotypes similar to the "women-are-wonderful" effect (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994).

4.1 | Where to go from here? Avenues for future research

Together, the studies presented in both parts of this Special Issue shed new light on gender stereotypes at work and show that these are persisting (e.g., Gartzia, 2022; Nett et al., 2022) but also raise hope that individuals can mitigate these (e.g., Gloor et al., 2022). Notably, several studies could not support (parts of) their assumptions, resulting in no differences in presumably stereotyped groups or even reverse effects (e.g., Klysing et al., 2022). As Special Issue Editors, we strongly believe in the importance of publishing such null findings instead of contributing to the so-called "file drawer problem." Only if we gain a complete picture of when gender stereotypes are found and when they are not can we advance theory and practice and contribute to policy development. Additionally, we see it as a strength that the majority of studies included in both parts of this Special Issue used experimental study designs (Baldner et al., 2022; Gloor et al., 2022; Hernandez Bark, Seliverstova, et al., 2022; Kahalon et al., 2022; Klysing et al., 2022; Nett et al., 2022; Niedlich et al., 2022; Obioma, Hentschel, et al., 2022; Raymondie & Steiner, 2022; Sczesny et al., 2022; Süssenbach & Carvacho, 2022) which allows drawing causal inferences. Nevertheless, we see the need for future research on this topic. We highlight some avenues that we perceive as particularly fruitful in the following.

The study of the consequences of gender stereotypes for men is still underrepresented. However, the studies in Part I of this Special Issue (Hernandez Bark, Seliverstova, et al., 2022; Sczesny et al., 2022) and recent research (e.g., Moss-Racusin & Johnson, 2016; Moss-Racusin, 2014) show that gender stereotypes affect not only women, but the perceived (in)congruity of the male stereotype to certain behaviors and occupations can also affect men. Thus, gender stereotypes represent a corset for all genders as traditional gender stereotypes are still used as a basis for evaluation—of oneself and by others—and, consequently, determine behavior, career choices, career advancement, and so forth. Therefore, future research should more carefully extend its focus by explicitly including men in counter-stereotypical roles (i.e., roles that are typically associated with women) and how such roles can become more attractive for men.

Building on the findings by Henningsen et al. (2022, in Part I of this Special Issue), one way to do so could be to emphasize other men in such roles and align these with agentic career goals or, more generally, emphasize the agentic side in these roles. Such a balanced approach, targeting women and men, is particularly important as stereotypes of women have changed over the last decades and are assumed to continue to change in the future, whereas stereotypes of men have been relatively stable (Eagly et al., 2020; Lopez-Zafra & Garcia-Retamero, 2011; Wilde & Diekman, 2005; see also Gartzia, 2022, in Part I of this Special Issue).

Looking more closely at the papers included in this Special Issue, we see that most studies still rely on gender as a binary

construct—although addressing gender as nonbinary was an explicit part of our call for proposals. We believe that using a more complex and nonbinary concept of gender is possible and of societal relevance (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). Therefore, we encourage future research to go beyond the dichotomous conception of women and men. Most of all, and as the congruence between individuals' gender identity and the organization's inclusivity matters (see Klysing et al., 2022 in this part of the Special Issue), further research is needed that helps understanding how organizations can communicate gender inclusivity in a way that attracts individuals of *all* genders.

Moreover, only one paper in this Special Issue had a cross-national focus (Obioma, Hentschel, et al., 2022, in this part of the Special Issue), and none used an intersectional approach within one country. However, gender and ethnic background, especially being a minority member, or gender and socioeconomic background might create faultlines that reinforce and worsen gender-based discrimination, thus making it even more difficult for these individuals to "fit in." We know from previous research in the United States that examined discrimination experiences of Black Americans that the intersectionality of gender and race is important. Similarly, in Europe, Black women report facing stereotypes and stereotype-based expectations, including "Black British" misconceptions like not being well educated or needing government support. Further, they experience the need to validate their competence in the workspace. Thus, being a Black female professional seems to require additional emotional resources and explanatory work (Atewologun & Singh, 2010; for a review, see also Rosette et al., 2018). In our opinion, future research needs to address such intersectionality—especially given the ongoing global developments that induce more refugee and migration streams as well as organizations' increasing attempts to diversify their workforce. Thus, we encourage future studies to take into account intersectionality and to explore intersecting identities.

Per definition, (gender) discrimination focuses on the negative side and disadvantaging individuals due to their social roles and attributes (such as gender and ethnicity). Even though stereotypes, per se, are mostly neutral and can include positive attributes, these have also typically been studied from the perspective of disadvantaging those to whom these stereotypes apply (e.g., Braun et al., 2017; Schein et al., 1996). This focus on the negative side has further inspired research on what individuals and organizations can do to reduce stereotypes and discrimination or to buffer their adverse consequences (e.g., Hideg et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2013; see also, e.g., Gloor et al., 2022, in Part I of this Special Issue).

However, social roles also fuel the development of resources. Particularly with regard to (potential) parenthood, an emerging stream of studies have reported that—despite violating ideal worker norms of being fully committed employees (Acker, 1990; Blair-Loy, 2003)—parents, and particularly mothers, can benefit from this social role, in fact becoming more effective and efficient employees (Carlson et al., 2006; Dumas & Perry-Smith, 2018; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Ruderman et al., 2002; for an overview, see also Junker et al., 2020). Conversely, researchers also found that the work role can benefit the family role (cf., Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This perspective goes beyond "reducing an incongruence" between social roles to ask how social roles can be combined in the most beneficial way so that these mutually enrich each other. Adopting such a perspective to studying gender at work could potentially spark a new set of research questions and provide a somewhat different outlet for future gender studies. Some of these research questions could be: Which unique skills and abilities do women, men, and individuals with other gender identities bring to the workplace? How can employees and employers capitalize on these in the best possible way? How can we enable employers to focus on the gain (rather than the potential challenge) of hiring individuals of all genders?

Another avenue of future research is the study of the consequences of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which have not been the focus here. However, other research shows that the pandemic retraditionalized gender roles, particularly when childcare was lacking: women disproportionally shouldered the additional household and childcare responsibilities—even though men also contributed more than before the pandemic (e.g., Giurge et al., 2021). Therefore, the question arises whether these changes are temporary or fixed and for whom? How and when do couples "switch back" to their pre-pandemic distribution of responsibilities? What and who guides their decisions?

In conclusion, although gender stereotypes have been studied for decades, we believe that we are far from "knowing it all," so they will continue to be an important field of research.

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