The World According to Men: It Is Hierarchical and Stereotypical[1]

Marianne Schmid Mast[2,3]

The present research was designed to test whether people who expect social relationships to be structured like pecking orders (interpersonal hierarchy expectation, IHE) are also prone to stereotyping and whether this relation is moderated by gender. In two studies, a total of 203 participants completed a self-report questionnaire on IHE (Interpersonal Hierarchy Expectation Scale, IHES) and either a questionnaire that measures a general tendency to stereotype (Acceptance of Stereotyping Questionnaire, ASQ, Study 1) or a projective measure that assesses the specific gender stereotype that low dominance positions are occupied by women and high dominance positions by men (Study 2). Results showed that both stereotyping measures were related to IHE, but only for men. Moreover, trait dominance did not mediate the relation between IHE and stereotyping.

KEY WORDS: hierarchy; social perception; stereotyping; gender.

Stereotypes are the cognitive precursors of prejudice and discrimination. They function as powerful shortcuts when people assess others, affect how people behave toward others, and they entail, more often than not, detrimental outcomes for people who are the targets of stereotypes (e.g., Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner, 1996; Hamilton, 1981; Stangor, Sullivan, & Ford, 1991). The first step toward preventing stereotyping is to ascertain the characteristics of people who are most prone to stereotype. The present research was designed to test whether people who expect social interactions and relationships to be organized like pecking orders (interpersonal hierarchy expectation, IHE; Schmid Mast, 2005) are the ones who are particularly prone to stereotype others and whether gender moderates this expected relation.

IHE is defined as the expectation that interpersonal interactions and relationships are organized in a hierarchical way with some people at the top and other people at the bottom of the dominance hierarchy. IHE can be regarded as the lenses through which we perceive social interactions. Indeed, research has established an association between IHE and the perception of interpersonal interactions and relationships as particularly hierarchically structured (Schmid Mast, 2005). Dominance is defined as having or striving for control or influence over another or as having privileged access to restricted resources. This broad definition encompasses both status and power. Hierarchy is defined as dominance differences among group members.

In the present research, it was hypothesized that IHE would be positively related to stereotyping because both are characterized by a polarized view of individuals. A person high on IHE views others in a polarized way with regard to status or dominance. Stereotyping means processing information about a member of a certain group according to the characteristics supposedly possessed by persons who belong to that group (e.g., Allport, 1954; Judd, Ryan, & Park, 1991). Knowledge and beliefs about specific

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[2]Department of Psychology, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts.

[3]To whom correspondence should be addressed at Department of Psychology, Social and Health Psychology, University of Zurich, Rämistrasse 66, CH-8001 Zurich, Switzerland; e-mail: m.schmidmast@psychologie.unizh.ch.

social groups are then generalized to members of those groups. The individual characteristics of the stereotyped person become irrelevant in comparison to the group-typed characteristics. As a consequence, differences among individuals who belong to different groups are accentuated (Taylor, 1981). To illustrate, women are stereotypically viewed as less dominant than men even when they express the same type of dominance behavior as men do (Henley & Harmon, 1985).

It has been proposed that a person's dominance or status position is related to stereotyping (e.g., Fiske, 1993; Goodwin, Operario, & Fiske, 1998). Goodwin et al. suggested that individuals in high status positions (i.e., powerholders) are motivated to stereotype their subordinates in order to maintain the hierarchical order and, thereby, their high status positions, which are regularly associated with certain privileges. There is some empirical evidence that high dominant people attend more to stereotype-consistent information than to stereotype-inconsistent information about subordinates (Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000). However, there is also research to show that high-power people remember more information about low-power people and therefore stereotype low-power people much less than low-power people stereotype high-power people (Overbeck & Park, 2001). Also, it has been found that whether high-power people stereotype low-power people depends on context, leaders' motives and beliefs, and cultural stereotypes (Vescio, Snyder, & Butz, 2003). Jost and Banaji (1994) pointed out that both high- and low-status people endorse stereotypes about each other in order to justify the hierarchy in which they find themselves. The present research is different from the aforementioned studies in that I did not look at how a specific position within a hierarchy (e.g., having high or low power or status, being dominant or submissive) affects stereotyping. Rather I asked how people's attunement to hierarchies (regardless of their standing within the hierarchy or their level of dominance) affects stereotyping. A positive relation between IHE and stereotyping was predicted even after dominance was controlled.

There are gender differences in how men and women relate to hierarchies. For instance, men prefer inequality in status/power among social groups, as measured by the Social Dominance Orientation Scale (Pratto, Stallworth, & Sidanius, 1997), and men are more motivated to lead in hierarchic organizations than women are (Eagly, Karau, Miner, & Johnson, 1994). Men in all-male groups have

been shown to be more hierarchically organized than women in all-women groups at the beginning of an encounter among strangers (Schmid Mast, 2001). Furthermore, men have been shown to be associated with hierarchies and women with egalitarian structures, and this association was stronger in men than in women (Schmid Mast, 2004). It might be the case that men are not only more likely than women to occupy the top positions within a hierarchy and to prefer hierarchical structures, but that also the relation between IHE and stereotyping is different for men and for women. That is, the relation between IHE and stereotyping might be stronger for men than for women. The expectation that interpersonal hierarchies will be present or will form is most likely a positive thing for men because it means that they themselves can occupy the top ranking positions in cross-gender groups. Note that the vast majority of teams in the workplace consists of women and men. Therefore, stereotyping, and in particular gender stereotyping (e.g., seeing men as higher status than women), is self-serving for men. For women, it is a negative thing to expect interpersonal hierarchies to be present or to form because women are more likely to be at the bottom of the hierarchy. Therefore, the link between IHE and stereotyping might be weaker, or even absent, in women. This is the reason why gender was included as a moderator.

The aim of this research was to test whether IHE predicts stereotyping. Two studies were conducted, and each used a different stereotyping measure. In Study 1, I tested whether IHE was related to a general tendency to stereotype; and in Study 2, I tested whether IHE was related to the specific gender stereotype that low dominance positions are occupied by women and high dominance positions by men (i.e., the gender-stereotyped view of status). Also, I wanted to know whether gender moderated the association between IHE and stereotyping and whether trait dominance mediated a potential relation between IHE and stereotyping. Because Studies 1 and 2 were conducted in a similar way they are reported in an integrated fashion.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students from Northeastern University who received partial credit toward their course requirements. In Study 1, participants were 46 women, 26 men, and 23 students who did not mark their gender. In Study 2, participants

were 66 women and 42 men. In Study 2 participants were on average 19 years old; 77% were European American, 7% Asian, 3% African-American, 3% Indian, 4% Hispanic, and 6% other. In Study 1, participants' age and ethnic background were not assessed; however, they were drawn from the same participant pool as in Study 2.

Procedure

In Study 1, participants were tested in small groups and completed (in random order) the Interpersonal Hierarchy Expectation Scale (IHES; Schmid Mast, 2005) and the Acceptance of Stereotyping Questionnaire (ASQ; Carter, Hall, Carney, & Rosip, 2004), both described in more detail later. In Study 2, participants were tested individually and first completed a measure of gender-stereotyped view of status (described in more detail later) followed by the IHES.

Measures

Interpersonal Hierarchy Expectation Scale (IHES)

This scale measures how prone a person is to expect dominance hierarchies to be present or to form in interpersonal interactions or relationships. The IHES is an 8-item self-report measure (Schmid Mast, 2005). Participants are asked to indicate how much they agree with each statement on a scale of 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 6 (*agree strongly*). Sample items are "If people work together on a task, one person is always taking over the lead" and "I feel more comfortable if I know the hierarchical structure of a group of people I am introduced to." The IHES is scored by averaging across all 8 items ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.80$; $M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.71$; Study 1 and 2, respectively). A high score indicates a pronounced expectation for interpersonal hierarchies to exist or to form. Cronbach's alpha for IHES was .74 in Study 1 and .69 in Study 2.

Acceptance of Stereotyping Questionnaire (ASQ)

The ASQ (Carter et al., 2004) assesses the tendency to generalize about social or cultural groups. The higher one scores on the ASQ, the more willing one is to regard stereotypes as functional (i.e., useful, inevitable) and harmless. The ASQ consists of 12 items to which participants respond on a scale from 0 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). Sam-

ple items are "In daily life, there's so much to pay attention to, it helps if you can make a few assumptions about a person," and "People differ so much from one another, it is impossible to generalize about them" (reversed scored). Scores are obtained by averaging across items ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 0.79$). Higher scores indicate more willingness to stereotype. Cronbach's alpha for the ASQ was .79 in the present study.

Gender-Stereotyped View of Status

Men are stereotypically associated with high dominance roles, and women are stereotypically associated with low dominance roles (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Eagly, 1987). In cross-gender interactions, men assume leadership positions much more frequently than women do (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 1991). To test whether IHE was related to this role-specific gender stereotype, a measure of "gender-stereotyped view of status" was used. It measured how much more status is allocated to a man than to a woman in a cross-gender interaction.

Participants indicated the relative status of university employees who were photographed while interacting in cross-gender dyads. Twenty photographs were rated, which represented a total of 40 employees. The photographs came from an unrelated study (Hall, LeBeau, Reinoso, & Thayer, 2001) in which university employees were asked to interact in dyads while four candid photographs were taken. For the present research, one of the four candid photographs from each dyad was randomly selected, and participants rated the relative status of the two target people in the photograph with respect to each other on a scale from 1 (*person A is much higher status than person B*) to 5 (*person B is much higher status than person A*). The middle point of 3 indicates no status difference. In all photographs, the target person on the left was labeled "person A" and the one on the right "person B." The gender-stereotyped view of status was calculated by averaging how much more status was allocated to the man than to the woman across the 20 cross-gender photographs ($M = 0.50$, $SD = 0.26$). The positive mean indicates that participants generally gave more status to male targets than to female targets.

Dominance Measure

Personality dominance also was assessed in Study 2. Participants were asked to indicate how well each of three dominance characteristics (dominant, assertive, act as leader) describe themselves on a

Table I. Relationship Between IHE and Stereotyping Separately for Men and Women

		Men		Women	
Stereotyping measure	Study	df	r	df	r
ASQ	1	24	.67 (.0001)	44	.25 (.099)
Gender-stereotyped view of status	2	40	.40 (.011)	63	.06 (.665)

Note. Entries are Pearson correlation coefficients (*r*). Numbers in parentheses are two-tailed, significance levels (*p*). *df*: degrees of freedom.

Table II. Linear Regressions for Stereotyping, Men and Women Separately

	Men		Women	
Variable	B	p	B	p
Interpersonal hierarchy expectation	.33	.041	.07	.558
Dominance	.21	.182	−.25	.053

Note. For men: $R^2 = .20$, $F(2, 37) = 4.69$, $p = .013$; for women: $R^2 = .06$, $F(2, 61) = 2.02$, $p = .142$.

scale of 1 (*does not describe me at all*) to 11 (*describes me very well*). Cronbach's alpha for the three items was .80. The items were averaged ($M = 7.14$, $SD = 1.82$), such that a high score indicates high dominance.

RESULTS

Men scored higher ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 0.73$) on the IHES than women did ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.65$) in Study 2, $t(106) = 2.13$, $p < .05$, effect size Cohen's $d = .41$, but not in Study 1, $t(72) = 0.87$, $p > .10$, effect size Cohen's $d = .20$, although the means pointed in the same direction (men $M = 3.70$, women $M = 3.54$). Men scored higher than women on the ASQ, $t(72) = 2.31$, $p < .05$, effect size Cohen's $d = .54$ (men $M = 2.30$, women $M = 1.86$). Men and women did not differ significantly on their gender-stereotyped view of status, $t(106) = 1.38$, $p > .10$, effect size Cohen's $d = .27$ (men $M = 0.54$, women $M = 0.47$). There was no significant gender difference in self-reported dominance, $t(103) = 1.07$, $p = .287$, effect size Cohen's $d = .20$ (women $M = 6.98$; men $M = 7.37$).

It was predicted that IHE scores would be positively related to stereotyping. Table I shows that the correlation of IHE and ASQ (for each gender) yielded a significant relation for men but only a marginally significant relation for women (Study 1). This was a significant gender difference, $Z = 2.15$, $p < .05$ (Rosenthal, 1991). Also, correlations of IHE with gender-stereotyped view of status yielded a significant relation for men but none for women (Study 2). This was a marginally significant gender difference, $Z = 1.79$, $p < .10$ (Rosenthal, 1991).

In sum, there was a positive relation between IHE and both a general measure of stereotyping (the ASQ) and a group-specific measure of stereotyping (the gender-stereotyped view of status) for men but not for women. This result became even clearer

when the general and the group-specific measures of stereotyping were combined for each gender separately; the combination yielded a significant positive relation between IHE and stereotyping for men, mean $r = .52$, weighted (by sample size) mean $r = .49$; $Z = 4.10$, $p < .0001$, but no significant relation between IHE and stereotyping for women, mean $r = .16$, weighted (by sample size) mean $r = .14$; $Z = 1.54$, $p > .10$ (overall statistical significance was calculated according to a fixed effects approach, i.e., the Stouffer method; Rosenthal, 1991). Also, the gender difference for the combined results (Studies 1 and 2) was significant, contrast $Z = 2.58$, $p < .001$ (Rosenthal, 1991).

Study 2 showed that IHE was significantly related to personality dominance for men, $r(40) = .34$, $p = .031$, but not for women, $r(64) = .12$, $p = .345$, and the gender difference was not significant, $Z = 1.12$, $p > .10$. Linear regressions calculated separately for women and men with stereotyping as the dependent variable and IHE and personality dominance as the independent variables showed that for men, IHE was significantly positively related to stereotyping, whereas dominance was not (see Table II). For women, dominance was marginally significantly negatively related to stereotyping, but IHE was not (see Table II).

DISCUSSION

The goal of the present research was to test whether IHE was related to stereotyping and whether gender moderated the relation. Results showed a significant gender difference: when men expected social relationships to be structured like pecking orders (high IHE), they were also prone to stereotyping, whereas when women expected pecking orders, no relation with stereotyping was found.

Also, there was a positive relation between IHE and dominance for men, which can be seen as additional support for a gender-specific stereotype about dominance, this time not applied to others but to

themselves: Seeing social interactions as hierarchical not only implies stereotyping others, and in particular seeing men as more powerful than women, but also seeing oneself (as a man) as particularly powerful or dominant.

IHE seems to result in different things for women and for men. Men generally occupy higher status positions in our society, and they assume leadership positions in social interactions more easily than women do (Eagly & Karau, 1991; Eagly et al., 1994). Therefore, the more men endorse pecking orders (high IHE), the more self-serving it is for them to stereotype, and in particular, to gender stereotype. This is because stereotyping serves as a justification for men's higher position within the hierarchy. For women, endorsing pecking orders (high IHE) was not related to stereotyping and not related to dominance. When women think about or perceive pronounced hierarchies (high IHE), they may be reminded of their lower status in comparison to men. Stereotyping would legitimate their low positions within the hierarchy, which is probably the reason why they are less likely to stereotype. The lack of a connection between IHE and stereotyping therefore seems to be self-serving for women.

As previously stated, there is a debate about whether high- or low-status people are more prone to stereotyping (Fiske, 1993; Goodwin et al., 2000; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Overbeck & Park, 2001; Vescio et al., 2003). The present research adds a new layer of understanding to this debate in that it suggests that maybe the variable to investigate is not the high- or low status position per se, but rather it is the tendency to see social interactions as pecking orders (IHE), at least for men. Note also that the relation between IHE and stereotyping (in men) remained unchanged when personality dominance was controlled. Although personality dominance is not necessarily equivalent to occupying a high status position, it hints at the possibility that the dominance position within a hierarchy might be less important to understanding stereotyping.

Results of this study have real-world implications. For instance, women are underrepresented in top managerial positions, and the majority of people responsible for hiring others into leadership positions are men. If those men are particularly focused on hierarchies (high IHE)—which is reasonable to assume—they are also prone to see women as less dominant than men and, therefore, to see women as less apt or capable for leadership positions. This could help to explain the relative lack of women in high status positions.

To counteract stereotyping effectively, it is necessary to know the characteristics of people who engage in stereotyping. The present research adds to our knowledge by showing that how much men embrace the existence of a dominance hierarchy in social interactions goes hand in hand with stereotyping. This relation was not found for women. Future researchers could address whether less stereotyping occurs if men's hierarchy expectations are lowered. Also, on a more general note, it would be interesting to investigate whether stereotyping is more frequent in organizations with pronounced hierarchical structures than in organizations with more egalitarian structures.

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