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Gender Schemas at Work

The term *glass ceiling* has become a popular way of referring to the scarcity of women at the top levels of organizations. The phrase suggests that invisible factors—as much as, or more than, overt discrimination—keep women from rising to the top. It also assumes that those hidden influences are unlikely simply to disappear over time; a ceiling is not a structure that evanesces. Finally, the term suggests that women's job performance is at least the equal of their male peers'; a ceiling is something that keeps people down despite their competence. All three assumptions, I will argue, are correct. There *are* invisible barriers; they will not go away on their own; any objective differences in performance are insufficient to explain existing sex differences in salary, rank, and rates of promotion.

There are also, of course, visible problems for women in the workplace, of which sexual assault and harassment are the most obvious examples. I do not discuss those abuses, despite their importance, because I want to explain women's lack of achievement in situations where nothing seems to be wrong. Even in apparently egalitarian environments, women do not advance as far or as rapidly as men. Something invisible limits their progress.

But if there are invisible factors at work, what are they, and how do they operate? My goal in this book is to make the invisible visible: to show what retards women's progress, so that fair and accurate evaluations of men and women will become possible. To do so, I draw on concepts and data from psychology, sociology, economics, and biology.

What Holds Up the Glass Ceiling?

Gender Schemas

The central thesis of this book is that a set of implicit, or nonconscious, hypotheses about sex differences plays a central role in shaping men's and women's professional lives. These hypotheses, which I call *gender schemas,* affect our expectations of men and women, our evaluations of their work, and their performance as professionals.[1] Both men and women hold the same gender schemas and begin acquiring them in early childhood. Their most important consequence for professional life is that men are consistently overrated, while women are underrated. Whatever emphasizes a man's gender gives him a small advantage, a plus mark. Whatever accentuates a woman's gender results in a small loss for her, a minus mark.

We are accustomed to calling our conceptions of certain groups *stereotypes.* The word is misleading, for it implies that something is fundamentally wrong with having such concepts. But hypothesis formation is a natural and essential human activity; it is the way we make sense of the world. We all form hypotheses about social groups. Such hypotheses may contain primarily positive characteristics, mostly negative ones, only neutral ones, or some combination of all three. The word *stereotype* refers to one kind of hypothesis, but *schema* is a better, more inclusive, term. It is not the attempt to develop schemas that is wrong, but the errors that can inadvertently creep into the formation, maintenance, and application of schemas.

Gender schemas are usually unarticulated. Their content may even be disavowed. Most men and women in the professions and academia explicitly, and sincerely, profess egalitarian beliefs. Conscious beliefs and values do not, however, fully control the operation of nonconscious schemas. Egalitarian beliefs help, but they do not guarantee accurate, objective, and impartial evaluation and treatment of others. Our interpretations of others' performance are influenced by the unacknowledged beliefs we all—male and female alike—have about gender differences.

Although most people want to judge fairly, genuine fairness demands that we understand that our reactions to an individual are, inevitably, affected by the group the person belongs to. Our implicit ideas about men

and women as a whole condition our reactions to men and women as individuals. Only by recognizing how our perceptions are skewed by nonconscious beliefs can we learn to see others, and ourselves, accurately. Fairness requires a more sophisticated understanding of social perception than most of us acquire in the ordinary course of life. To be really fair, we need to know what perceptual distortions are likely and what steps we can take to perceive others more accurately.

Thus, although this book is about a particular set of schemas, it can also be seen as a case study of the more general problem of ensuring fair evaluations for members of any group. Schemas based on sex, age, race, class, or sexual orientation have different contents, but all schemas influence how we perceive and treat group members. Only by discovering a schema's content and mode of operation can we make our evaluations of individuals fairer.

Accumulation of Advantage

The long-term consequences of small differences in the evaluation and treatment of men and women also hold up the glass ceiling. A useful concept in sociology is the accumulation of advantage and disadvantage (J. Cole & Singer 1991; Fox 1981, 1985; Long 1990; Merton 1968).[2] It suggests that, like interest on capital, advantages accrue, and that, like interest on debt, disadvantages also accumulate. Very small differences in treatment can, as they pile up, result in large disparities in salary, promotion, and prestige. It is unfair to neglect even minor instances of group-based bias, because they add up to major inequalities.

A computer model of promotion practices at a hypothetical corporation convincingly demonstrates the cumulative effects of small-scale bias (Martell, Lane, & Emrich 1996). The simulation created an organization with an eight-level hierarchy staffed at the bottom level by equal numbers of men and women. The model assumed that over time a certain percentage of incumbents would be promoted from one level to the next. It also assumed a tiny bias in favor of promoting men, a bias accounting for only 1 percent of the variability in promotion. The researchers ran the simulation through a series of promotions. After many series, the highest level in the hierarchy was 65 percent male. The model shows clearly that even minute disadvantages can have substantial long-term effects.

In fact, the simulation *under*estimates the problem women have in rising to the top, for it reflects only what occurs at the stage of promotion. At every point along the path to the first promotion possibility, however, advantages or disadvantages can accumulate. If conditions for women are only very slightly unfavorable along the way, they are less likely even to be considered for promotion.

One example of how advantage and disadvantage can accrue occurs in a common professional setting—the meeting. Let's say I am attending a meeting with a group of people who know each other but whom I have never met. I notice that some people's comments are taken seriously by the group, while other people's are ignored. Although my assessment of individual participants is formed in part by my own evaluation of the content of their remarks, I cannot always independently evaluate that content. Further, I am likely to be influenced by the reactions of others in the group. Through observing the group dynamics, I learn who has high status and who does not. By the time the meeting ends, people who were equal in my eyes when it began are unequal.

Those whose remarks were ignored have suffered a small loss in prestige, and their contributions have been labeled, implicitly, as low in value. Because they now have less prestige, they will be listened to less in the future; they will carry their previously earned labels into the next professional encounter, losing a little more standing with each negative experience. The gap between them and people who are gaining attention for their remarks will widen as their small initial failures accrue and make future failures more likely.

Successful people seem to recognize that one component of professional advancement is the ability to parlay small gains into bigger ones. Ambitious people worry if their comments are ignored and are pleased if they are taken seriously. A series of disregarded comments can signal failure, while remarks discussed by superiors and coworkers contribute to success. If everyone understood explicitly what some people understand implicitly—that success comes from creating and consolidating small gains—no one would counsel women to ignore being ignored. The concept of the accumulation of advantage lets us see that the well-meaning advice often given to women—not to make a mountain out of a molehill—is mistaken. That advice fails to recognize that mountains *are* mole-

hills, piled one on top of the other. Fairness requires appreciating the importance of each molehill of advantage and disadvantage and taking steps to ensure that molehills do not accrue to individuals on the basis of their group membership.

But even that is not enough. Everyone must also understand that in most organizations women begin at a slight disadvantage. A woman does not walk into the room with the same status as an equivalent man, because she is less likely than a man to be viewed as a serious professional. Moreover, since her ideas are less likely to be attended to than a male peer's, she is correspondingly less likely to accumulate advantage the way he might. A woman who aspires to success *needs* to worry about being ignored; each time it happens she loses prestige and the people around her become less inclined to take her seriously.

The concept of the accumulation of advantage explains another, otherwise puzzling, difference between men and women: women talk less in public and professional settings than men do (see discussion in Haslett, Geis, & Carter 1992).[3] Let us assume that women know—through experience—that their remarks are likely to be ignored. They may then correctly infer that they are better off not speaking and staying at their current level than making a comment and accruing a disadvantage. Saying nothing exacts its own toll, for no one acquires prestige through silence. Still, the tacit loss brought about by saying nothing is smaller than the explicit loss of prestige incurred by speaking and being ignored. A slower accumulation of disadvantage is, on a rational analysis, preferable to a faster accumulation of disadvantage. I am not suggesting that women explicitly or consciously formulate such a policy, only that it *is* rational: women risk less disadvantage overall by remaining silent. (We can also interpret women's behavior more simply: being ignored is painful and humiliating, and people seek to avoid pain.)

This may be a good time to emphasize that, although I speak of *women,* I am not claiming that what is true of women in general is true of every woman on every occasion. Nor do I argue that men are never ignored in favor of women. At a recent faculty meeting, in fact, I observed a reversal of the usual effect. The chair of my department gave me the credit for an excellent comment that a junior male colleague had made earlier in the meeting. (I was so bemused and amused by the reversal that

I failed to correct him.) The exceptions should not, however, obscure the rule. The existence of an exceptional woman who frequently speaks out in public settings and whose contributions are acknowledged and valued does not invalidate the rule that women in general have lower professional status than men and are less likely than men to profit from their positive contributions.

Schemas, Exceptions, and Fairness

Several problems are encountered in efforts to ensure fairness. One of them is convincing ourselves that our judgments really are prone to error. We all want to believe we are unbiased and unaffected by stereotypes we have consciously rejected. We are convinced that we know quality when we see it. Even people who are overtly prejudiced think they can judge others impartially; the facts, they believe, speak for themselves.

A compelling laboratory experiment, however, demonstrates that people are unable to evaluate others accurately, even when a completely straightforward quality like height is involved (Biernat, Manis, & Nelson 1991). In this experiment, college students were shown photographs of various people and asked to guess their heights in feet and inches (including shoes). The photos always contained a reference item, such as a desk or a doorway, to help students with their estimates.

Without telling the students, the experimenters chose the test items so that every photograph of a male student of a given height was matched by a picture of a female student of the same height. Here, then, was an easily visible characteristic that could be measured in objective units— feet and inches—rather than in subjective terms like *short* and *tall*. The students' judgments should have been accurate. They were not. They were affected by one component of gender schemas—the knowledge that men are, on average, taller than women. When exposed to a sample contrary to the general rule, the students saw the women as shorter and the men as taller than they actually were.

Using a scale marked in objective units does not, therefore, prevent error. (Of course, if the students had had an actual ruler they could have estimated the heights more accurately.) If people have a schema about gender differences, that schema spills over into their judgments. The problem is exacerbated when the schema is accurate—as it is in the case

of height differences—because erroneous judgments of individuals are supported by real overall differences between groups. Individuals who diverge from the schema are perceived in the light of the observers' schemas. The implications for judgments of professional competence are clear. Employers faced with a man and a woman matched on the qualities relevant to success in a particular field may believe they are judging the candidates objectively. Yet, if their schemas represent men as more capable than women, they are likely to overestimate the male's qualifications and underestimate the female's.

A second problem in the attempt to ensure fair evaluations is that people find creative ways to justify their perceptions. To take one example, to reassure themselves—and others—that they have rejected stereotypical attitudes or can judge fairly in spite of them, people point to professional women they admire and respect. For another example, people point to women who are successful as evidence that hiring and promotion practices are based on merit. Finally, people use examples of incompetent women to explain women's overall lack of success.

Such examples, however, are irrelevant if they are not representative of the general population. My claim is that they are not. They are atypical—exceptions to a general rule confirmed by the preponderance of the evidence. Examples that represent exceptions do not refute general findings. For instance, on Wall Street in 1996 only 8 percent of the managing directors were women (Truell 1996). Each of the women in that 8 percent is an exception someone might cite as evidence that women can succeed in the investment business. Invalidation of a general rule, however, requires proof that the rule typically does not hold; it is not good enough to show that it occasionally fails to apply. The existence of successful women shows that *some* women are evaluated positively *some* of the time. Fairness demands much more: the guarantee that there is no consistent advantage for members of one group relative to another.

Gender Schemas at Work

Keeping in mind the obstacles to ensuring fairness, we can consider the story of a university department. During the past ten years fifteen men and three women were added to the faculty. When he is queried about the ratio, the chair of the department explains that his only interest is to hire

the best, most able, people in order to build the strongest possible department. He makes it clear to search committees that quality is the only issue, and informs them of his views of the candidates. He is sincere in his belief that he is gender-blind and confident of his ability to judge others' competence. And, since the people he chooses *are* able, he has no reason to doubt his judgment or leadership. Even if he were to track the careers of the women he failed to hire, he would probably not question his decisions. Those women are likely to have been undervalued by other prospective and actual department chairs and to have, as a result, careers that are on average less stellar than those of the men he hired.

For the chair to see that the facts call for more self-doubt, he needs an education in social cognition and gender. He needs, first, to learn that people are likely to misperceive men and women in professional settings, to overrate the former and underrate the latter. Clear marks of prestige, ranging from having a degree from an elite institution to sitting at the head of a table, are interpreted differently, depending on whether the person is a man or a woman (see chapters 7, 10, and 11). Even judgments of height, as described earlier, are affected by the person's gender.

Second, the chair needs to understand how errors of evaluation mount up over time and affect the career trajectories of young professionals and Ph.D.s. Data suggesting that women must meet higher standards than men to gain promotion, partnership, or tenure (see chapters 10 to 12) demonstrate the detrimental consequences of the accumulation of disadvantage, showing for example, that only a few years after earning their degrees, young men and women with the same on-paper qualifications have different professional lives. Finally, the chair needs to learn how expectations of men's and women's achievements can affect their actual performance, as well as their aspirations.

He needs, in short, to see that his confidence is misplaced, that it is the product of ignorance. (He needs this book!) He is unlikely to be exempt from the processes that affect everyone else, unlikely to have equally high expectations of men and women, and unlikely to know how to change his perceptions and decisions to adjust for the advantages men have incorrectly received. He believes he is different, but that is what everyone thinks—just as we all think we are above average. Even those who are actively concerned about gender equality are affected by gender schemas;

the odds are that he is, too. As a good scholar, he should entertain the possibility that his judgments are skewed and consider what steps he can take to make them more accurate. He needs, in sum, a better theory and better data. Then he can be more alert to the pitfalls inherent in making judgments about ability.

Not long ago, a new grandfather happened to read a draft of chapter 2, "Gender Begins—and Continues—at Home" just before meeting his infant granddaughter for the first time. As he held her in his arms he said automatically, "You're so soft"—which of course she was. As the words reverberated in his ear, they reminded him of the data he had just read about fathers' misperceptions of infants' characteristics. He paused, squeezed the baby gently, and added, "and firm"—which of course she also was. There is nothing like observing yourself in the act of an inaccurate or partial perception to engender humility about your freedom from gender schemas and to help you change your perceptions.

In the remainder of this introduction, I touch on some of the issues related to the origins of gender schemas and their role in the professional lives of women. In the ensuing chapters I supply the experimental and observational data that support my claims, develop my argument that common cognitive processes are at the heart of gender schemas, trace the effects of schemas on men's and women's professional lives, and suggest remedies for breaking through the glass ceiling.

The Origins and Effects of Gender Schemas

Childhood Learning
Where do ideas about sex differences come from? Expectations about gender differences, and plans to inculcate them, occur even before children are born. Here's a conversation between a man and a woman who are thinking of having a baby:

She: If we have a girl, I'll get her a truck.

He: Of course.

She: If we have a boy, I'll get him a doll.

He: Well, . . . if he *asks* for one.

Infancy and childhood are a critical period for the development of implicit hypotheses and expectations about the self and others. Small children observe unequal divisions of labor between men and women—both in the home and in the wider world—and notice that adults treat girls and boys differently. Like adults, children search for explanations of the differences they observe, aided by what they are implicitly—and sometimes explicitly—taught. As the conversation quoted above suggests, children are provided with data that require an explanation, such as paternal readiness to give a girl a truck and paternal reluctance to give a boy a doll. The explanation suggested to children, and the one they arrive at themselves, is that there is a causal link between their biology (about which they understand very little) and their talents, interests, preferences, attitudes, and behaviors. Children learn very early that they are not simply children, they are boys and girls. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on how adults treat children and what children learn.

Saying that children *learn* to be boys and girls does not deny the possibility that there are biologically based differences above and beyond reproductive capacity and the organs that mediate reproductive behavior. In some domains, such as rough-and-tumble play and skill at mentally rotating three-dimensional figures, there is good evidence that hormonal differences are important. But in every domain—including those with a clear hormonal influence—there is good evidence for social and cultural influences. Neither biology nor society act alone, nor could they. Chapters 4 and 5 summarize important findings on the role of hormones in behavior and cognition, and explain how to understand those findings.

Sex, Gender, and Schemas
The terms *male/female, man/woman,* and *boy/girl* distinguish people on the basis of their reproductive role, but do not imply that the characteristics of those groups are due to that role. If, for example, I refer to the superior spelling skills of females, I am not implying a link between the female reproductive role and spelling, though there may conceivably be one. Rather, I am saying that the people we single out on the basis of their having XX chromosomes are superior at spelling to those we single out on the basis of their having XY chromosomes. The difference in spelling skill may be partly influenced by chromosomal status, or it may be solely

influenced by differences in how we treat people with XX status versus XY status; females may be especially good at spelling for reasons that have no direct link to their chromosomes. The term *sex difference,* then, refers to a difference between males and females, with no implication that the difference noted is directly linked to chromosomal or reproductive status.

When I speak of *gender,* on the other hand, I am highlighting our psychological and social conceptions of what it means to be a man or a woman. Thus, the term *gender schemas* refers to our intuitive hypotheses about the behaviors, traits, and preferences of men and women, boys and girls. Correspondingly, the term *gender roles* refers to our ideas about how men and women are expected to behave. In sum, *sex* is used to categorize people into two groups, and *gender* is used to describe our beliefs about sex-based categories.[4]

In discussing the contents of gender schemas I sometimes use the adjectives masculine and feminine. When I mention *masculine* characteristics, I refer to the characteristics we traditionally associate with men. I do not mean to suggest that only men have those characteristics. Similarly, if I talk about *feminine* toys, I am referring to toys seen as appropriate for girls to play with. I do not intend to suggest that there is anything inherently suitable for girls or unsuitable for boys about feminine toys. I am indicating only that those toys are seen as the "right" toys for girls. Although I am sometimes tempted to put quotation marks around the words feminine and masculine—to indicate that I do not believe such traits are inherently more natural for women or men—I do not do so. In my terminology, the words are part of gender schemas, part of our belief systems, not a description of the way things are.

Expressions in popular culture, such as "Real men don't eat quiche," are not intended as biological claims. Instead, they are comments about our notions of masculinity and femininity. The idea of a really good example of something—a "real" man or "real" woman—occurs with other concepts as well. For example, people judge the number 2 as a "better" even number than the number 736. At the same time, people agree that both numbers are even numbers and that it is ridiculous to talk of one even number being better than another (Armstrong, Gleitman, & Gleitman 1983). But 2 is psychologically a better example of evenness than

736 is; it is closer to our prototype of what even numbers are. Similarly, at least in North America, men who don't eat quiche are closer to our prototype of what men are than men who do.

The Cognition of Gender

Reproductive status is one way of distinguishing people. It is a distinction most cultures find psychologically compelling, and around which they form the implicit hypotheses I call gender schemas. As I mentioned earlier, all humans form implicit hypotheses to explain their social world.[5] Whenever there is an observable difference between social groups, people develop hypotheses to explain the difference and look for data to support their hypotheses. Hypothesis-formation and hypothesis-testing are natural and valuable human activities. Human cognition seeks explanations of physical and social phenomena. Schemas and their impact on perception and evaluation are discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

The sexual division of labor is one example of a social phenomenon. One way to explain and justify it is to appeal to differences in men's and women's natures (Eagly 1987; Hoffman & Hurst 1990). To explain and justify the fact, for example, that almost all engineers are men and almost all homemakers are women, people may say that men have traits and abilities that fit them to be engineers and cause them to choose engineering over homemaking, and women have traits and abilities that fit them to be homemakers and cause them to choose homemaking over engineering.

Such an explanation is an implicit appeal to the deterministic power of built-in, essential differences. As I will show in the following chapters, there is no evidence in favor of such a picture and considerable evidence against it. There are built-in differences, but biology is not destiny. Biology is one factor in a multifactor equation. In considering the role of hormones in physical and cognitive differences between males and females in chapters 4 and 5, I try to avoid both extremes of an increasingly polarized discussion. Biology is not destiny, but neither is the social environment. Neither determines behavior; both influence it.

Our cognitions—how we interpret information, store it in memory, reason with it, draw inferences from it—are yet another important factor.

The role of cognition in our everyday understanding of sex differences has not, I think, been adequately examined. In this book I am proposing that cognitive processes are at the heart of our conception of sex differences and help to create and maintain the inequalities among us.

Expectations and Gender Traits

Having attributed different traits and behaviors to men and women to explain the sexual division of labor, people then treat men and women in accordance with their expectations about those characteristics, setting in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton 1948; Rosenthal & Jacobson 1968). All of us—boys and girls, men and women—become in part what others expect us to become, thereby confirming hypotheses about the different natures of males and females. While no one is infinitely malleable, no one is completely indifferent to others. One way we learn who we are is through others' responses to us. As men and women, we also develop expectations for our own behavior, based on characteristics we believe we possess. We then explain our successes and failures in terms of those abilities and traits. Chapters 8 and 9 review the findings on the impact of schemas on people's behavior.

In white, western, middle-class society, the gender schema for men includes being capable of independent, autonomous action (agentic, in short), assertive, instrumental, and task-oriented. Men act. The gender schema for women is different; it includes being nurturant, expressive, communal, and concerned about others (Bakan 1966; Spence & Helmreich, 1978; Spence & Sawin 1985). Women nurture others and express their feelings. Men who are nurturant and emotionally expressive are perceived as feminine; women who are agentic and assertive are seen as masculine. Schemas are not wholly inaccurate: on the whole, men have more masculine traits than feminine ones; women have more feminine traits than masculine ones.

But gender schemas oversimplify. Masculine and feminine traits are not opposites of each other; they are not contradictory. Everyone has both to some degree and expresses different traits in different situations. Differences exist, but the sexes are more alike than they are different. It is easy to lose sight of that reality, even though most differences between the sexes are small.

In college I took a vocational-interests test in a psychology course. This test supposedly matched people's dominant interests and traits with different occupations. At the time, I was planning to become a clinical psychologist—not that I knew exactly what that meant—and I had a male friend, Richard, who wanted to be a psychoanalyst. I had learned that women tended to score higher on social and aesthetic traits and that men tended to score higher on, as I recall, scientific and analytic traits. Because the test items pitted the traits against each other, I had to express preferences I often didn't have. I found myself splitting the difference from answer to answer. Richard, half teasing and half taunting, said he could guess what my profile looked like. When I showed it to him, he pounced on how high my social traits were compared to his. "But look at my analytic traits," I insisted.

I now look at the test and my reactions rather differently. First, I should have said, "Richard, you're a jerk. You want to be a psychoanalyst and your social traits are low?" Second, I see that the test is based on misguided assumptions: it portrays occupations as unidimensional, and it forces people to be one thing *or* another. I now know that being a scientist is a social activity, as well as a solitary activity, as well as an analytic activity, as well as an aesthetic activity. Indeed, what I find wonderful about science is how many different parts of myself are satisfied in the doing of it. Third, I see that I accepted the assumptions of the test and felt correspondingly trapped by my feminine traits: I felt that if I acknowledged them, I would be condemned to a feminine future, always acting in the service of others, never acting for myself. I did not see a way to be nurturant *and* agentic. The either-or implication of gender schemas ruled out the self I wanted to be.

Schemas and Professional Evaluations

People and occupations are multidimensional, but our schemas simplify both. They portray the professions as suitable for men, and men as suitable for the professions. Without exception, every prestigious or high-paying profession in the United States is dominated by men, dominated numerically and in terms of who wields power (Gutek 1993).[6] A man or woman who goes into law or business or academia is entering a field in which positions at the highest levels are disproportionately occupied by

men and those at the lowest levels are disproportionately occupied by women. All prestigious professions are professions for men, not simply professions.

The immediate consequence for a woman entering a profession is that those around her, both men and other women, perceive her as at least slightly unsuited to that profession, because her gender doesn't fit in. The schema for women is incompatible with the schema for a successful professional, resulting in lower expectations of a woman's potential achievement. Those low expectations will, in turn, affect evaluations of her work. There is usually room for disagreement about the quality of someone's work. Observers of women will lean in a negative direction, in line with their low expectations. If she performs badly, that will confirm their expectations. If she performs well, she may still fail to receive her due, because her achievement runs counter to expectation. Or, she may be appropriately rewarded, but be seen as an exception to the general rule that women do not make good professionals.

There are a number of potential pitfalls for women professionals that originate in the perceived discordance between the two schemas. Women must appear neither too feminine nor too masculine (see chapter 7). At either extreme they make others uncomfortable. A woman who is very feminine runs the risk of seeming less competent; the more she typifies the schema for a woman, the less she matches the schema for the successful professional. On the other hand, a woman with masculine traits runs the risk of appearing unnatural and deviant. The more she typifies the schema for the successful professional, the less she matches the schema for a woman.

Some women—such as the subject of the following admiring description—manage to appear both competent and feminine: "She is a tough, tough lady. She has a soft, genteel way about her, but she is an adversary of steel." That characterization of Janet Reno was offered shortly after her 1993 nomination for U.S. Attorney General (Rohter 1993, quoting a former judge and prosecutor who had hired Reno as state attorney in Florida). Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, with her sobriquet "The Iron Lady," has been described in similar terms. It is possible, then, to be perceived simultaneously as "tough" (masculine) and a "lady" (feminine), as having a "soft" and "genteel" manner while being

"an adversary of steel." Although such a blending of opposites may appear almost impossible, observation suggests that it is reasonably common among successful women.

Less common is the woman who concentrates on competence and ignores femininity. It is the rare woman who is completely unconcerned about whether she is perceived as feminine, and the rare environment that is similarly unconcerned. Women who do not have a "soft, genteel way" about them may be told—despite their manifest competence—that they should wear more make-up and go to charm school. That was what Ann Hopkins's evaluators wrote about her when, despite her outstanding record, they rejected her bid for a partnership at Price Waterhouse, an accounting firm (see chapter 13; Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux & Heilman 1991).

The partners were openly critical of a woman who didn't act like a prototypical woman. Other people's overt beliefs in equality may cause them to avoid making such stereotypic statements, but their nonconscious schemas may not prevent them from making stereotypic judgments. People who eschew statements such as, "Women do not command respect from their subordinates," may nevertheless feel comfortable saying, "Lee does not command respect from her subordinates." The latter comment is just a "fact" about Lee, arrived at through impartial and fair observation. In their laudable resolutions to judge fairly, people may be unaware that their perceptions are guided not only by someone's objective performance, but in addition by their nonconscious expectations of the person's performance.

Lee, then, may be misperceived due to the influence of gender schemas. She might genuinely have her subordinates' respect but be perceived otherwise because of a gender schema that says women do not command respect. Or, her subordinates might express their respect for her somewhat differently than they would for a man. Onlookers, failing to see traditional marks of deference and tacitly believing that women are poor authority figures, might conclude that respect is absent. Finally, Lee might lack her subordinates' respect, not because of her behavior but because her subordinates resent having a woman superior and therefore refuse to grant her the respect they would give a man exhibiting the same behavior. Observers, because of their expectations about women, could mistakenly

locate the problem in Lee's performance, rather than in her subordinates' schemas.

A story about a science department at a prestigious university, circa 1990, illustrates how expectations stemming from gender schemas can affect a woman's career. A young Ph.D. who has just been hired has a conference with her department chair about what courses she will teach. She is eager to teach a large introductory lecture course. The chair refuses, saying that students won't accept a woman instructor in that format. The woman presses a bit, saying she thinks she can do it and would like to try. The chair doesn't want to take a chance and instead assigns her to a laboratory course. The woman is not happy with the substitution, because laboratory courses are extremely time-consuming. As a young faculty member, she needs to spend as much time as she can developing her research and getting it published, in order to earn promotion and tenure. She will now have less time for research than will her male peer who is assigned to the lecture course.

The example nicely captures the many different factors—especially gender expectations—that intersect to place a woman in a poor position. The chair believes he is being objective about the students' preferences and is minimizing any risk to an important course. Nothing about the conference causes him to consider the possibility that his decision is guided by gender schemas or might be unfair. The conference has also set a bad precedent. In the conference, the chair activated his nonconscious views of women and attached them to the new faculty member. He explicitly articulated the view that, as a woman, she would not do a good job as a lecturer. In the future, he is likely to reactivate his views about women when he is evaluating her. In a way, she has already failed, because he has already labeled her to himself as an unacceptable lecturer.

What might the chair have done if he had been aware of gender schemas and committed to gender equality? He would still have been concerned about the students' reception of a woman lecturer, but he could have tried to work out with her some techniques to ease her acceptance. He could have recommended that the woman speak to experienced colleagues to learn what has worked well in the past and to plan her response to the authority-challenging events that large lecture classes are prone to no matter who is teaching—newspaper reading, whispered conversations,

snoring, and so on. He could have suggested that, to solidify her author-ity, she schedule several moderately rigorous quizzes early in the semester. Finally, he could have been prepared with statements of full support for her, were students to bring complaints to him. As things stand, however, the chair has put the woman at an objective disadvantage: he has taken time away from her on the basis of her gender.

Statistics on women's progress in the professions (reviewed in chapters 10 through 12) back up the idea that a succession of small events, such as not getting a good assignment, results in large discrepancies in ad-vancement and achievement. They also suggest that gender schemas work to women's disadvantage in other ways. Women generally benefit less from their positive achievements than men do. In their first academic ap-pointment, for example, men benefit more than women do from the pres-tige of the institution where they received their training. Men get better jobs. Men are promoted more quickly. Men are tenured more quickly. Men make more money. Men are overrepresented at senior levels. As the discussions in chapters 11 and 12 make clear, the differences hold even when men and women are equated on performance (to the extent that they can be).

What is true for academia holds even more strongly in the corporate world. A 1990 *Fortune* magazine survey of 799 of the largest U.S. indus-trial and service companies found that only nineteen women—less than one-half of 1 percent—were listed among the more than four thousand highest-paid officers and directors (Fierman 1990). In business, as in aca-demia, women earn less than men (two of those nineteen women had cash compensation under $85,000 per year), are promoted more slowly, and work in less prestigious firms. Women's salaries have improved. In a 1996 survey of the twenty most highly paid women, the lowest salary was $152,977 (Greene & Greene 1996). But 615 men earned more than the twentieth woman on the list. Again, as in academia, to the extent that performance can be accurately measured, men and women appear to per-form equally well.

Independent of all other factors, gender appears to play a major role in people's ability to get ahead. Gender schemas are objectively costly for women. Relative to women, men have a leg up. Men look right for the job.

Qualifications and Responsibilities

In the same way that some theorists have suggested a deterministic role for biology, others have suggested a deterministic role for educational and professional qualifications. In both cases, women's lower professional status is attributed to something they lack. There often are sex differences in qualifications (as chapters 10 to 12 review). But, like biology, qualifications are not destiny. They too are but one factor in a multifactor equation, as is evident from the fact that men and women with equal qualifications do not advance at the same rate. In evaluating the role of qualifications in chapters 10 through 12, I have tried to avoid both extremes of a polarized discussion. I conclude that qualifications influence people's ability to advance but do not fully determine advancement. Gender schemas play an important role in disadvantaging women.

Men's lack of responsibilities outside of work may also contribute to their faster professional advancement. Men accept less responsibility than women do for the day-to-day operation of their households, as documented in chapter 2. Men are less likely than women to work part-time in order to raise their children. Inequities at home reverberate in the work place. But men's advantages and women's disadvantages on the job are not solely a function of their differing participation in family life. Men receive a greater reward for their performance than do women, independent of all other factors.

Self-Perception

Subjective costs add to the objective costs of gender schemas. Consider again the young professor who has not been permitted to teach a large lecture course. If she is rational, she must now wonder what other jobs she will be perceived as unable to fill. She may reaffirm to herself that she is competent and willing to work hard. Or she may begin to question her competence and motivation. Either way, she has borne and continues to bear an emotional cost that a comparable man will not have had.

Everyone experiences successes and failures and must then explain to themselves just why they succeeded or failed (as discussed in chapter 9). A somewhat oversimplified description of men's reactions to success and failure is that they take the credit for their successes but do not accept the blame for their failures. A similarly oversimplified description of women's

reactions is that women take the blame for their failures but do not take the credit for their successes.

Because the professions are perceived as requiring masculine abilities and traits, a successful man can reasonably credit himself with the abilities and traits that are necessary for success—and feel masculine into the bargain. A man's success and his masculinity reinforce each other. A man's failure is incompatible with his masculinity. Since people want to feel compatible with their gender—and to perceive others the same way—a man will attempt to interpret his failures in terms that leave his masculinity intact (and others will attempt to do the same for him). One response is to try to escape the blame. Paradoxically, another response is "the-buck-stops-here": the man shoulders the responsibility. Tone seems to be everything here. By taking responsibility in the right way, a man can actually seem more masculine and more in control. Although he acknowledges his failure, he also manages to reduce its overall importance.

For a woman, success and failure work differently. If a woman is professionally successful, she must either see herself as having masculine traits—and thereby run the risk of seeming unfeminine to herself and others—or as having compensated in some way—through luck or extraordinary effort—for a lack of masculine characteristics. Unlike a successful man, a woman has something to lose from success: her gender identity or belief in her ability. Conversely, failure and femininity reinforce each other. Women are expected to fail and potentially have something to salvage from failure, namely, reinforcement of their femininity. A woman who fails is more of a woman than one who succeeds.

For men, then, there is complete congruence between professional goals and the need to feel like a good example of their gender. For women there is a potential conflict. Naturally, not every woman, on every occasion, will perceive herself or be perceived in terms of a conflict between competence and femininity. But even a small dilemma of that sort, occasionally experienced, will accrue disadvantage for a woman relative to a man, who never has to choose between competence and masculinity.

In experimental investigations, people are asked to apportion the reasons for their success or failure at a task among four different factors: ability, effort, luck, and easiness or difficulty of the task. The results are reviewed in chapter 9. Women and men contrast most in how they view

the role of luck. Women see luck as more important for both their successes and their failures than men do.

"Luck" may be a grab-bag category in such experiments—a reason people use when they don't know exactly why something happened, when they cannot establish a clear cause-and-effect relation. Because luck is by its nature unstable and uncontrollable, attributing outcomes to it is deleterious. If you see a success or failure as due to luck, you cannot learn anything from it. There is no point in trying to figure out what went wrong or right, no point in developing a plan for the future based on the past, no point in putting forth a lot of effort the next time. Chance undoubtedly enters into every result, but consistent success demands competence, strategic analysis, and effort.

Although an emphasis on luck is detrimental to achievement, it is also a rational response for women. Luck, in the guise of an unstable and uncontrollable set of external circumstances, plays an unwarranted role in women's professional lives. Women do not reliably profit from their competence, strategic analysis, and effort to the same extent men do, as the research reviewed in chapters 10 through 12 demonstrates. Yet no professional woman can succeed without those qualities. One might even argue that they are more important for women than for men, because women's objective circumstances are more difficult than men's. But individual effort is insufficient. Trailing behind every successful woman are the unsuccessful women—who knows how many?—who were equally competent, strategic, and hardworking, but not lucky.

Women would have to close their eyes to the facts to deny the role of factors outside their control and to insist on the potential efficacy of their own actions. Yet how effective can women be unless they act as if luck were irrelevant? Here is another small dilemma women face that men do not—one that, over time, takes its toll.

I remember a heated discussion with my mother when I was a young teenager. I showed her a poem I had read about being the captain of one's ship. To me the poem was a validation of what I most deeply believed: that my longing and determination to achieve something significant would make reality conform to my will. Here was a poem—a voice from the outside world I planned to succeed in—to lend authority to my certainty that I could control my future. I wanted my mother to have the

same opinion, not just about me, but about herself. I wanted her to have high aspirations as well.

But she argued with me. "No," she said, "it isn't so." One wasn't the captain of one's ship, one couldn't do exactly what one wanted.

I was upset and angry. Of course you couldn't be the captain of your ship if you didn't *believe* you could be, if you didn't *try* to be. I rejected my mother's defeatism and took comfort from the poem.

It is of course true that the race is not always to the swift. But women, as a group, do not experience as tight a fit between cause and effect as men do. Women enjoy fewer successes and suffer more failures than comparable men. Men and women live in different environments, environments that are the same only on the surface. Women have puzzles to solve that men do not. Some women decide that they are exceptional and will succeed where others have failed. Others ignore the unstable relationship between cause and effect, action and result. Still others forgo professional ambition, perhaps without realizing why.

Remedies

What can we do to foster equality? In chapters 13 and 14, I propose remedies. Affirmative action policies, legislation, and recourse to the courts remain important avenues to change in the workplace. The courts make it harder for employers to use gender schemas to justify denying women advancement in the form of salary, promotion, partnership, and tenure.

But the unexpressed and nonconscious nature of gender schemas and their subterranean mode of action require more subtle remedies as well. The first, and most important, remedy is learning about gender schemas: how they develop, how they work, how they are maintained, and how they influence aspirations and expectations. Using this knowledge, organizations and individuals can devise procedures and programs to neutralize gender schemas, as I recommend in chapter 14.

I hope that this book will itself serve as a remedy. Fairness is the leitmotif of this chapter and this book. I trust that understanding what is required for fairness will help to bring it about.