

## Division of Household Labor and Social Judgments in Israel: The Influence of Gender and Education

*The study investigated how men and women with high and low levels of education perceive male and female targets who participate or do not participate in household chores. It was found that individuals liked both men and women who participated in the household chores more and wanted to engage in activities with them more than with the low-participating targets. The participating man was perceived as more popular than the low-participating man and was perceived as more feminine but not less masculine. In addition, although participants with both high and low levels of education preferred the participating man, the more educated participants preferred him more, attributed more masculinity to him, and expressed willingness to befriend him and engage in activities with him more than those with a lower level of education. It seems, then, that whereas in the 1990s both highly and less educated individuals perceive a male target who participates in household chores more favorably, this preference is more pronounced among the more educated individuals.*

The increased participation of women in the labor force has served as an impetus for growing inter-

est in the effect of their employment on the division of household labor. The present era has witnessed an escalation in men's adoption of those household responsibilities that have traditionally been viewed as belonging to the feminine sphere. Notwithstanding, there still remain substantial inequalities in the household division of labor (Coverman, 1985; Gershuny & Robinson, 1988; Hochschild, 1989). Accordingly, despite women's employment outside of the home, they are still allocated many of the central household tasks, such as primary caretaker of the children, cook, and cleaner (Thompson & Walker, 1989). These discrepancies extend to perceptions of household responsibility such that when men participate in household activities, they are frequently perceived as *helping* with and not as *sharing* in the responsibility (Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Mederer, 1993).

Several theories have been proposed to explain this inequality in the division of household responsibility. Some emphasize gender differences in the availability and efficient use of time (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Becker, 1981; Kamo, 1988; Presland & Antill, 1987), whereas others focus on discrepancies in the power balance between men and women (Huber & Spitze, 1983; Maret & Finlay, 1984). A third corpus of theory explains unequal divisions in household labor on the basis of gender role ideology. In line with this ideology, most household tasks, such as caretaking of children and preparation of meals, are considered to be traditionally feminine roles. There-

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Department of Psychology, The Gershon H. Gordon Faculty of Social Sciences, Tel Aviv University, Ramat Aviv P.O.B. 39040, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel  
(talma@post.tau.ac.il).

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fore, traditional socialization processes engender the belief that women hold responsibility for these tasks (Brody & Steelman, 1985; Cogle & Tasker, 1982; Hiller, 1984; Thompson & Walker, 1989).

Most studies concerned with home division of labor have focused on issues of the measurement and perception of this division and on its effect on related variables such as marital satisfaction and happiness (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Mederer, 1993; Pina & Bengtson, 1993; Yogev & Brett, 1985). In general, the research domain has not included systematic investigation of the ways in which men's and women's participation in household chores is perceived by others.

The relation between gender stereotypic and counterstereotypic behavior and inferences and judgments has been widely investigated (Biernat, 1991; Berndt & Heller, 1986; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Lobel, Bempechat, Gewirtz, Shoken-Topaz, & Bach, 1993; Lobel, 1994). Within this framework, a distinction has been drawn between cognitive inferences and emotional-motivational judgments (e.g., Lobel, 1994). Cognitive inferences consist of normative stereotypic judgments based on relatively objective knowledge of gender stereotypes. Deaux and Lewis suggested four components of the gender stereotype: traits, roles (e.g., interests, activities), occupations, and physical appearance. Inferences about these four components are considered to be cognitive attributions. Emotional-motivational judgments include personal preferences, feelings, affinity, and willingness to engage in activities. It has been demonstrated that individuals tend to attribute traditionally stereotypic or counterstereotypic traits, interests, occupations, and physical appearance to a target who behaves in a gender stereotypic or counterstereotypic way, respectively (Biernat, 1991; Berndt & Heller, 1986; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Lobel, 1994; Lobel et al., 1993). In these studies, inferences of popularity were also determined by the degree of gender stereotypic or counterstereotypic behavior exhibited (e.g., Lobel, 1994; Lobel et al., 1993). Thus, individuals tend to attribute popularity to a male target on the basis of his stereotypic or counterstereotypic behavior, such that they perceive a male target who behaves in a feminine way as unpopular (Berndt & Heller, 1986; Lobel, 1994; Lobel et al., 1993). In contrast, for girls, the relation between counterstereotypic behavior and both popularity and emotional-motivational judgments is less clear. The majority of studies indicate that the popularity of girls is relatively unaffected by exhibiting traditionally mas-

culine behavior (e.g., Huston, 1983), although some contradictory evidence has arisen that reports that girls who exhibit masculine behavior are considered less popular (Berndt & Heller, 1986). It should be noted, however, that most of these studies were conducted with children and adolescents and not with adults. Despite this accumulating evidence of the differential inferences based on the stereotypic and counterstereotypic behavioral patterns, the relation between stereotypic and counterstereotypic behavior regarding household chores and both cognitive inferences and emotional-motivational judgments has not been investigated. The purpose of the present study was to investigate this relation with the inclusion of two demographic variables—the perceiver's gender and level of education. The study was conducted in Israel, which is a Western country characterized by an increase in women joining the work force. Statistics document (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1998) that in 1998 46% of all women above the age of 15 in Israel were employed. This statistic shows a significant increase from the 1970s, when only 29% of all women were employed, the 1980s, when 36% were employed, and the 1990s, when 41% of women in Israel were employed. Among married women, the increasing pattern is even more marked. Statistics document that in the 1970s 27% of married women in Israel worked, in the 1980s 39% worked, in the 1990s 47% worked, and in 1998 53% of married women in Israel were employed.

The rationale behind inclusion of the perceiver's level of education is its implication in the content of attitudes, with many studies demonstrating the relation between higher education, tolerance, and liberal attitudes (Golebiowska, 1995; Phelan, Link, Stueve, & Moore, 1995; Ray, 1990; Schmida & Katz, 1992). This heightened tolerance has been found to extend to a higher prevalence of liberal attitudes concerning issues of sexual morality (Ray, 1985) and less ethnic prejudice (Wagner & Zick, 1995). However, the relation between education and division of household tasks remains equivocal (Abbott, Koopman, & Peggy, 1981; Ericksen, Yancey, & Ericksen, 1979), with some studies reporting associations between a high level of education and shared roles (Blair & Lichter, 1991; Ericksen et al., 1979) and others that do not support this correlation (Abbott et al., 1981).

In line with the prominent direction of these findings, the present study proposed three hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated that men and women of both higher and lower education will

attribute more femininity and less masculinity to a male target who participates in household chores than to one who does not participate in such chores, and more masculinity and less femininity to a female target who does not participate in household chores than to one who participates in such chores. Thus, cognitive inferences will be affected only by the high and low participation of the target and not by the gender and level of education of the participants. This would be true also for inferences of physical appearance. In contrast, the second hypothesis predicted that the emotional-motivational judgments of individuals would be affected by their gender and level of education. It was predicted that women more so than men would express greater willingness to befriend a male target who participates in household chores and would express more desire to consult and engage in activities with him. This hypothesis was based on the assumption that women will perceive greater benefit to themselves from a man willing to participate equally in household tasks. Furthermore, we predicted that individuals of higher education, more so than those of lower education, would express greater willingness to befriend and to desire to engage in activities with a man who participates and a woman who does not participate in household chores. We further hypothesized that a high-participating man would be perceived as more liked and appreciated by his friends than a low-participating man. This would be especially true for people with high education. This hypothesis was based on the assumption that individuals of higher educational level would be more tolerant toward counterstereotypic behavior.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

Participants included 96 adults (48 men and 48 women, aged 25 to 59 years) who were randomly sampled from various industrial plants in Israel. Participants were evenly divided according to their level of education, with half having post-graduate academic backgrounds (15–20 years of education) and half having a lower academic level (8–12 years of education). Participants' age was comparable for men and women and for those with high versus low education.

### *Instruments*

Participants were presented with four descriptions, two of male targets and two of female targets.

Two descriptions depicted male targets, one who participated actively in household tasks and one who did not. The other set of descriptions depicted two female targets, one who participated actively in the household tasks and the other who did not. In all cases, the tasks referred to child care and to household chores. The participating and the low-participating stories were parallel. For example, in the version in which targets participated in the household chores, they were described as waking up in the middle of the night to change diapers, participating actively in the education of the children (such as attending school parent meetings), and preparing meals for their children and spouses. In the low-participating version, the targets were described as waking their spouses in the middle of the night to change diapers, letting their spouses attend school parent meetings, and letting their spouses prepare meals for their children and for themselves. The following is the story that depicts the low-participating male target:

Dan is the father of three children, two daughters and a baby son. He is 40 years old, and his wife is 36. When the baby was born Dan's wife made all the arrangements such as buying the bed, the bath, diapers, and clothing for the baby. When the baby wakes at night, Dan's wife goes to comfort the baby and change diapers, and if she does not hear the baby crying, Dan wakes her up. Dan sees the children for a short time in the morning before he leaves for work, and when he returns home in the evening he spends a little time with them and then continues with his own affairs. His wife prepares the family meals, clears the dishes, bathes the children, and puts them to bed. She deals with all school matters including help with homework and attending parent-teacher meetings.

Parallel stories were presented for the participating male target and for the two female targets.

Participants were presented with each description and then requested to answer questions about the target in two categories, cognitive inferences and emotional-motivational judgments. The categories were composed of either single questions or conceptually connected and highly correlated groups of questions. The measure were as follows.

### *Cognitive Inferences*

*Masculinity and femininity inferences.* In order to determine inferences regarding targets' personal traits, participants were asked to assess targets according to 18 personality traits selected from the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974). For

example, traditional feminine traits included sensitive and gentle, and traditional masculine traits included competitive and aggressive. For each trait, participants were requested to note the extent to which the trait applied to the target on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 indicating *does not apply* to 5 indicating *applies greatly*.

*Popularity inferences.* Participants were asked to rate, on a 4-point scale, three questions relating to the popularity of the target. The first question was how much the target is liked by his or her friends, the second one was how much the target's friends appreciate him or her, and the third question was how successful the target is with the other gender. The correlations between the three popularity questions were high and ranged from .65 to .77; they were therefore combined into one measure.

Cronbach's alpha for the cognitive inferences measure was quite high,.82, indicating good internal reliability.

#### *Emotional-Motivational Judgments*

*Willingness to befriend the target.* Participants were asked to rate, on a 4-point scale, the extent to which they would like to befriend the target, with 1 indicating *not at all* and 4 indicating *very much*.

*Perceived similarity to the target and willingness to be similar to the target.* Participants were asked to rate on a 4-point scale the extent to which they perceived themselves as similar to the target and the extent to which they wanted to be similar to the target, with 1 indicating *not at all* and 4 indicating *very much*.

*Consultation about social and personal matters.* Participants were asked five questions relating to their willingness to consult with the target about matters such as purchasing a gift for a friend, purchasing personal clothing, and consulting about a personal problem. Participants were asked to rate their responses on a 4-point scale, with 1 indicating *would not like to at all* to 4 indicating *would like to very much*. These five questions were highly correlated among one another (the correlations ranged from .62 to .75) and therefore were combined into one measure.

*Professional involvement.* Participants were asked three questions relating their willingness to be involved professionally with the target. They were

asked to rate on a 4-point scale the extent to which they would like to work at the same office as the targets, become business partners with them, and consult them about professional difficulties. Responses were rated on a 4-point scale, with 1 indicating *would not like to at all* to 4 indicating *would like to very much*. These three questions were highly correlated among one another (correlations ranged from .50 to .78) and therefore were combined into one measure.

Cronbach's alpha for the cognitive inferences measure was quite high,.87, indicating good internal reliability.

#### *Photographs*

This measure represented an assessment of the physical appearance component of the gender stereotype.

Photographs of both masculine and feminine male and female targets were presented to the participants in order to investigate perceived physical appearance. The photographs were selected following a pretest in which several photographs of men and women were presented to subjects who rated the femininity and masculinity of each photograph. Based upon this pretest, four photographs were chosen, two of men, one perceived as masculine and one as feminine, and two of women, one perceived as feminine and one as masculine. For each target, participants were shown two pictures depicting two people of the same gender as the target and asked to indicate which photograph most resembled the target.

#### RESULTS

We employed mixed-model analyses of variance (ANOVAs) with participants' sex and participants' level of education as between-group factors and with target's sex and participation level in household chores as within-subject factors. Thus, we conducted several mixed-model ANOVAs of 2 (Participants' Sex)  $\times$  2 (Participants' Education)  $\times$  2 (Targets' Sex)  $\times$  2 (Targets' Participation in Household Chores) for each of the following dependent variables: inferences about masculine traits, inferences about feminine traits, inferences about popularity, consultation about personal-social matters, consultation about professional involvement, affinity for the target, willingness to befriend the target, perceived similarity to the target, and desire to be similar to the target.



### *Masculine Traits*

The ANOVA on masculine traits yielded a main effect for the target's sex,  $F(1, 175) = 6.20, p < .05$ , and for the target's participation in the household chores,  $F(1, 175) = 30.95, p < 0.001$ , such that greater masculinity was attributed to the male targets and to the low-participating targets. In addition, the interaction between target's sex and participation was significant,  $F(1, 175) = 12.88, p < .001$ , but the three-way interaction of target's sex, participation, and education was also significant,  $F(1, 175) = 0.54, p < .05$ . Duncan post hoc comparisons showed that both participants with a high level and participants with a low level of education perceived the low-participating female target as more masculine than all the other targets. The means of this interaction are presented in Table 1.

### *Feminine Traits*

The ANOVA on feminine traits yielded a significant main effect for target's sex,  $F(1, 175) = 6.13, p < .05$ ; participation,  $F(1, 175) = 338.47, p < .0001$ ; and education,  $F(1, 175) = 20.34, p < .001$ , such that greater femininity was attributed to the female targets and to the participating targets. Also, the more highly educated participants attributed more femininity than did the less educated ones. In addition, the interaction between household participation of target and participant's educational level was significant,  $F(1, 175) = 8.09, p < .005$ , and the three-way interaction between participation, education, and target's sex tended toward significance,  $F(1, 175) = 2.93, p = .08$ . Duncan post hoc comparisons revealed that individuals of both lower and higher education perceived the participating female and male targets as more feminine than the low-participating female and male targets. Additionally, individuals of higher education perceived the low-participating female target as less feminine than did those of lower education. The means of this interaction are presented in Table 1.

### *Target's Popularity*

The ANOVA on popularity yielded a main effect for participation,  $F(1, 175) = 18.97, p < .001$ , such that targets who participated in household chores were perceived as more popular than those who did not participate. Additionally, the interactions between participation and target's sex

tended toward significance,  $F(1, 175) = 3.44, p = .06$ , and the interaction between target's participation and subject's sex was significant,  $F(1, 175) = 5.06, p < .05$ . Duncan's post hoc comparisons showed that the low-participating male target was perceived as less popular than all the other targets. No difference emerged between the participating and the low-participating female targets. In addition, Duncan's post hoc comparisons revealed that men perceived the low-participating targets as less popular than the participating targets ( $M_s = 2.61$  and  $3.16$ , respectively), whereas women did not distinguish between the targets ( $M_s = 2.87$  and  $3.04$ , respectively). Men also perceived the low-participating targets as less popular than did women.

### *Willingness to Befriend the Target*

The ANOVA yielded a main effect for participation,  $F(1, 175) = 73.14, p < .001$ ; a main effect for education,  $F(1, 175) = 3.62, p < .05$ ; an interaction between participation and target's sex,  $F(1, 175) = 3.73, p < .05$ ; and between participation and education,  $F(1, 175) = 4.14, p < .05$ . However, the three-way interaction between target's sex, participation, and participants' level of education was significant,  $F(1, 175) = 8.83, p < .01$ , and the three-way interaction between target's sex, participation, and subject's sex,  $F(1, 175) = 5.31, p < .05$ , was also significant. Duncan's post hoc comparisons regarding the first interaction showed that both participants with a high level of education and participants with a low level of education wanted to befriend the participating female target more than the low-participating female target. However, whereas individuals with a high level of education wanted to befriend more the participating than the low-participating male target, individuals of low educational level did not distinguish between these two male targets. In addition, individuals with a low level of education wanted to befriend more the participating than the low-participating woman. They also wanted to befriend more the low-participating male target than the low-participating female target. Individuals with a high level of education did not distinguish between low-participating male and female targets and wanted to befriend the participating man more than the low-participating man. In addition, individuals with a high level of education wanted to befriend the low-participating woman and the participating man more than did individuals of low

TABLE 1. PARTICIPANTS' INFERENCES ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND TARGETS' PARTICIPATION<sup>a</sup>

Dependent Variables	Targets	Education Level of Participants	
		High Education	Low Education
Masculinity	Participating female	2.67	3.06
	Low-participating female	3.77	3.65
	Participating male	2.98	2.98
	Low-participating male	3.04	3.28
Femininity	Participating female	4.1	4.42
	Low-participating female	2.43	2.96
	Participating male	4.11	4.06
	Low-participating male	2.07	2.82
Willing to befriend	Participating female	2.8	3.03
	Low-participating female	1.9	1.74
	Participating male	3.3	2.45
	Low-participating male	2.15	2.19
Similarity	Participating female	2.6	2.83
	Low-participating female	1.81	1.29
	Participating male	2.7	1.96
	Low-participating male	1.84	1.65
Social consultation	Participating female	2.41	3.05
	Low-participating female	2.11	2.42
	Participating male	2.8	2.5
	Low-participating male	1.56	1.99
Professional involvement	Participating female	2.22	2.86
	Low-participating female	2.63	2.76
	Participating male	2.83	2.59
	Low-participating male	1.84	2.43

<sup>a</sup> All dependent variables were assessed using a 4-point scale, with the exception of masculinity and femininity, which were assessed using a 5-point scale.

educational level. The means of this interaction are presented in Table 1.

Regarding the second three-way interaction between target's sex, participation, and subjects' sex, Duncan's post hoc comparisons showed that the only difference between men and women was with regard to the low-participating female target. Men liked her less than did women. The means of this interaction are presented in Table 2.

#### *Perceived Similarity and Willingness to Be Similar to the Target*

The ANOVA yielded a main effect of participation,  $F(1, 175) = 59.16, p < .001$ ; a main effect of education,  $F(1, 175) = 7.9, p < .01$ ; and an interaction between participation and target's sex,  $F(1, 175) = 5.23, p < .05$ . However, the three-way interaction between target sex, target participation, and subjects' education was significant,  $F(1, 175) = 8.85, p < .01$ . Duncan's post hoc comparisons showed that both individuals with high educational levels and individuals with low educational levels distinguished between partici-

pating and low-participating female targets and perceived the participating woman as more similar to themselves and wanted to be more similar to her than to the low-participating target. However, whereas participants with a high educational level also perceived the participating male target as being more similar to themselves and wanted to be more similar to him than to the low-participating male target, individuals of a low educational level did not distinguish between these two targets. In addition, individuals with a low educational level perceived the participating female target as being

TABLE 2. WILLINGNESS TO BEFRIEND ACCORDING TO PARTICIPANTS' GENDER AND TARGET'S PARTICIPATION<sup>a</sup>

Targets	Participant's Gender	
	Male	Female
Participating female	2.65	2.81
Low-participating female	1.87	2.26
Participating male	2.68	2.78
Low-participating male	1.8	1.65

<sup>a</sup> Willingness to befriend was assessed using a 4-point scale.

more similar to themselves and wanted to be more similar to her than to the low-participating woman. They also perceived the low-participating man as being more similar to them and wanted to be more similar to him than to the low-participating woman. Individuals with a high educational level did not distinguish between the low-participating male and female targets, and they perceived the low-participating man as more similar to themselves and wanted to be more similar to him. In addition, individuals with a high educational level perceived the low-participating woman as being more similar to themselves and wanted to be more similar to her than did individuals with a low educational level. In contrast, individuals with a high level of education perceived the participating male target as more similar to themselves and wanted to be more similar to him than did those with a low level of education. The means of this interaction are presented in Table 1.

#### *Consultation About Personal and Social Matters*

The ANOVA on willingness to consult with the target about personal and social matters yielded a significant main effect for the target's sex,  $F(1, 175) = 8.86, p < .005$ ; for participation,  $F(1, 175) = 52.151, p < .0001$ ; and for education,  $F(1, 175) = 8.19, p < .005$ . Participants expressed more willingness to consult with the female than with the male targets and with participating than with low-participating targets. Participants with lower educational levels expressed more willingness to consult with targets on personal and social matters than did those of a higher educational level.

In addition, the two-way interactions between target sex and participation,  $F(1, 175) = 4.91, p < .05$ , and between target sex and education,  $F(1, 175) = 4.52, p < .05$ , were significant, but the three-way interaction between target sex, participation, and participants' education was also significant,  $F(1, 175) = 7.18, p < .005$ . Duncan's post hoc comparisons revealed that individuals of both lower and higher levels of education were less willing to consult on personal and social matters with the low-participating male target than with any other target. However, individuals of higher education were less willing to consult with this target than were those of a lower educational level. Additionally, those of a higher educational level expressed more willingness to consult with the low-participating female target than did those of a lower education level. Individuals of a lower educational level expressed more willingness to

consult with the participating female target than with all other targets, and more than those with higher education did. The means of this interaction are presented in Table 1.

#### *Professional Involvement*

For this analysis, we combined the questions about the desire to work with the target, the readiness to consult with the target regarding professional matters, and the willingness to be business partner of the target.

A significant main effect emerged for the target's household participation,  $F(1, 175) = 4.05, p < .05$ , and participants' educational level,  $F(1, 175) = 7.06, p < .01$ . Participants expressed more desire to be involved in a professional relationship with participating than with low-participating targets. Individuals with a higher educational level wanted to be more professionally involved with the targets than did those with a lower educational level.

In addition, the two-way interaction between target's sex and participation,  $F(1, 175) = 11.03, p < .001$ , was significant, but the three-way interaction between target sex, participation, and education,  $F(1, 175) = 9.85, p < .005$ , was also significant. Duncan post hoc comparisons revealed that participants of a higher educational level wanted to engage in a professional relationship with the low-participating male target less than with the participating male and female targets. They also wanted to engage with this target less than did those with a lower educational level. In addition, those of a higher educational level expressed more willingness to engage professionally with the participating male target than with the participating female target. In addition, those of a lower educational level wanted to engage professionally with the low-participating female target more than with the participating female target. The means of this interaction are presented in Table 1.

#### *Physical Appearance*

In order to examine whether the low-participating targets were perceived as more masculine and the participating targets as more feminine regarding their physical appearance,  $\chi^2$  tests were performed, separately for male and female targets and separately for individuals with high and low levels of education, comparing participating and low-participating targets. The results revealed no

significant results for individuals with a high educational level. In contrast, both male and female individuals with a low level of education attributed the masculine picture to the low-participating targets more often than to the participating targets,  $\chi^2 = 11.36$ ,  $p < .01$  for female targets, and  $\chi^2 = 3.71$ ,  $p < .05$  for male targets.

### DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to examine the way in which men and women of high and low educational levels perceived male and female targets who either participated or did not participate in household chores. These perceptions fell into two categories, cognitive inferences and emotional-motivational judgments. The cognitive inferences related to perceived masculinity and femininity and perceived popularity of the targets, whereas the emotional-motivational judgments related to willingness to befriend the targets, willingness to engage in activities both socially and professionally with the targets, and perceived similarity to the targets.

Regarding cognitive inferences, as hypothesized, both individuals of high and low educational levels perceived the participating targets as more feminine than they perceived the low-participating targets. Thus, participation in household chores was associated with traditionally feminine traits such as warmth, sensitivity, and tenderness. Interestingly, both individuals of higher and lower educational levels perceived the participating male target as more feminine, but not less masculine, than the low-participating male and female targets. In other words, this man is perceived as more sensitive, warm, and affectionate, but he is not perceived as less dominant, assertive, and competitive than his low-participating male counterpart. Thus, a man's participation in household chores can be seen as adding to his perceived femininity without detracting from his perceived masculinity.

The low-participating female, that is, the woman who behaved counterstereotypically, was perceived by individuals of both high and low education as being more masculine than even the low-participating male target. This can be explained in light of the perpetuated stereotype that the major responsibility for household maintenance is assigned to women. Accordingly, this perception implies that women, as opposed to men, must be particularly self-assured or forceful to refrain from participation in household chores,

because when exhibited by women, this behavior is against societal expectations.

Whereas the male target behaving counterstereotypically was perceived as more feminine but not less masculine, the female target behaving counterstereotypically was not only perceived as more masculine, but was also perceived as less feminine than the other targets by both individuals of higher and lower education. However, individuals with a lower educational level perceived her as even less feminine than did those with a higher educational level. This suggests that most people, regardless of education, still believe in the stereotype that a woman who does not participate in household chores is less feminine. However, those of a lower educational level tend to adhere more to this deeply ingrained stereotype. Interestingly, those of a lower educational level also perceived the participating targets as more feminine and the low-participating targets as more masculine regarding their physical appearance. Individuals with a high level of education did not relate physical appearance to participation or nonparticipation in household chores.

Regarding popularity of the targets, different results emerged for male and female targets. The participating male target was perceived as more popular, valued, and highly regarded by his friends than the low-participating male target. Thus, individuals believed that the contribution of men to household maintenance is valued, even though it is considered to be a traditionally feminine behavior. It is possible that they perceived the participating man as being a less selfish and more considerate individual and therefore assumed that he would be preferred by others.

However, contrary to our predictions, no difference emerged in the perceived popularity of the participating and the low-participating female targets. Thus, the low-participating woman was not perceived as less popular, and conversely, the participating woman was not perceived as more popular. One plausible explanation may be that the participating woman is perceived as behaving according to societal role expectations of her, and as such, she is not assigned any special credit for her efforts. In contrast, underlying perceptions of the participating man is the implicit belief that he has actively chosen to participate, and this confers upon him attributions of thoughtfulness and amiability. In addition, masculinity in women is usually highly regarded, and the current Western social climate encourages women to be more assertive and dominant. It is possible that women



who behave in a traditionally masculine manner are perceived as having sufficient courage to behave nonstereotypically. The low-participating woman described in our story might therefore have been perceived as a liberated, forceful woman who is assertive enough not to follow social expectations and may be highly regarded for these qualities. Conversely, however, the participating woman may be valued and esteemed for different reasons; for example, she may be perceived as being nurturing and helpful.

The second category of perceptions studied were emotional-motivational judgments. Our findings showed that, regardless of level of education, individuals generally preferred to associate the least with the low-participating man than with all other targets. Nevertheless, individuals of a lower educational level preferred to consult with the stereotypic targets, the low-participating man and the participating female, more than did those of a higher educational level. As for willingness to befriend and perceived similarity, all subjects, regardless of level of education, preferred to befriend more the participating than the low-participating woman. However, only individuals with a high educational level distinguished between the two male targets, preferring the participating man to the low-participating man. Individuals of lower education did not distinguish between the two male targets.

It seems that although a women's contravention of the traditional feminine stereotype does not affect her popularity, there was less expressed affinity with her and less willingness to befriend her. This perception is even stronger among individuals with a lower educational level. This suggests that the low-participating woman is perceived as the one who most contravenes the traditional stereotype of the woman as primarily responsible for household and family duties.

A different trend emerged regarding willingness to consult on professional matters, where contrasting results emerged for the male and female targets. Whereas individuals of higher educational levels preferred to engage in a professional relationship more with the participating than with the low-participating male target, the opposite result emerged for the female targets. Individuals preferred to engage in a professional relationship with the low-participating more than with the participating female target.

It seems that the man who takes part in household maintenance was perceived as doing it in addition to his professional duties, whereas the

woman who attends to the household was perceived as doing it at the expense of her professional achievements. People of higher education did not appear to believe that a man's participation in household duties affects his professional ability, and thus they expressed more willingness to engage with him not only socially but also professionally than with the man who takes no part in home maintenance. One possible explanation for this is that participants in the study seemed to believe that a man should be more active in childrearing, and therefore, they held such a person in esteem more than the man who transfers the weight of these responsibilities to his wife. He was therefore perceived as an affectionate, sensitive, warm, and caring person rather than a selfish person who relinquishes all duties to his wife. It seems very logical to want to associate both socially and professionally with such a person. It is also plausible that a man who participates actively at home is perceived not only as warm and sensitive, but also as more capable and efficient because he manages to do both. This could be regarded as an asset when considering a professional relationship with this type of man.

Interestingly, however, participants did not think the same thing about a woman. Whereas they did not determine her popularity or their willingness to engage with her socially on the basis of her participation in household chores, they preferred to associate professionally with the low-participating woman. This suggests that, to a certain extent, they believe that a woman's work efficiency will be increased only if she does not take the major responsibility for the household chores. The traditional feminine stereotype does not include professional success, and thus a woman who contravenes expected feminine behavior is attributed more professional esteem than a woman who behaves according to expectation. This discrepancy between willingness to be involved professionally with the low-participating woman and personal preferences toward her suggests that one may not particularly like the low-participating woman yet might recognize her possible social status. This discrepancy does not exist for the low-participating male target. It appears that in today's society, a man who shirks all responsibility for the household is perceived very negatively. This has ramifications both for personal preferences as well as for perceived popularity among others.

A general trend emerges from these disparate findings. All participants, regardless of gender and

educational level, were least disposed toward the low-participating male target. On the other hand, there was a clear social and professional preference for the male target participating in a role that has traditionally been considered feminine, such as household chores and childrearing. This finding was stronger for participants of a higher educational level. At first, these judgments and inferences seem to contrast with the vast literature that shows that a man who behaves in a feminine way is perceived as less popular and is harshly sanctioned (Berndt & Heller, 1986; Ruble & Martin, 1998). In line with this, one would have expected that men's nonparticipation in household chores would not affect others' willingness to consult or associate with them. This seems to indicate that there is some consensus in the 1990s that men should participate in at least some way in household tasks. The experimental description in the present research portrayed the low-participating man as one who took no responsibility in household task sharing at all. The results suggest that such a man is probably perceived in a derogatory way, and as such, there is less willingness to consult and associate with him. It should be noted that the participating man depicted in our story worked both inside and outside of the home. In other words, he did not neglect his "masculine" role but rather expanded his roles by taking on the extra "feminine" role. Future studies should examine perceptions of men who work only inside the home. This will enable us to examine how far the stereotype holds. We suspect that in such a case, this man would not necessarily be as highly regarded as the participating man portrayed in our study.

One of the emergent trends in our results was a consistent significant difference between the perceptions of individuals with a high educational level and of individuals with a low educational level. Participants with a high educational level held a generally more positive attitude toward the participating man than did participants with a low educational level. Our results concur with other studies that have found more liberal and tolerant attitudes among individuals with a high educational level (Golebiowska, 1995; Phelan et al., 1995). It is plausible that education contributes to the ability to adopt perspectives and to enhance flexibility in attitudes toward others. A word of caution is needed, though. It is possible that more highly educated individuals are more aware of the politically correct attitudes and therefore only claim to like the participating male target more.

As opposed to level of education, participants' gender did not affect inferences and judgments in most cases. It appears that for many variables, attitudes toward household equality are formulated within the general social and cultural climate, irrespective of participants' gender. However, the social ethos may be different for individuals of higher and lower educational levels, resulting in differential attitudes according to educational level. One of the few exceptions was that men liked the low-participating woman less than they liked the other targets and less than women liked her. This implies that men have a greater expectation for women's fulfillment of the traditional feminine role and that they judge a woman who contravenes this more harshly. On the other hand, women seem to adopt a more lenient stance toward women who do not hold the strictly conventional feminine stereotype, and indeed, some may identify with her.

In sum, studies show that equality has not yet been attained in household task sharing and that domestic tasks still remain highly segregated (Blair & Lichter, 1991). Our results suggest that some distance has been covered toward this goal. It has become normative that men should contribute to household chores at least minimally. This norm is more firmly embedded among individuals with a higher educational level than among those with a lower educational level. It should be noted that this study was conducted in Israel, a Western culture similar in many respects to other Western countries such as the United States. However, the generalizability of our results would be extended by repeating the study in other countries, both Western and non-Western.

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