Women = Moms but Men ≠ Dads: Stereotype Overlap Between Moms, Dads, Women and Men

E. B. REYNOLDS
University of Colorado at Boulder

The current study explored the idea that the role of 'mom' is more tightly linked to the social category of 'woman' than is the role of 'dad' to the social category of 'man'. We examined overlap in the stereotypes associated with these four categories. The hypothesis was that the stereotypes for women and moms would be more closely related than the stereotypes of men and dads. We found substantial and clear evidence indicating that, when it came to negative traits, moms and women were seen as more similar than dads and men, and this did not depend on the participant's gender. However, when all traits were considered together, or when the positive traits were considered in isolation, this effect was present for female participants, but was not present for male participants.

Keywords: gender, essentialism, stereotypes, sex-trait stereotype, parent

Cette expérience a testé l'idée que le rôle de mère est plus étroitement lié à la catégorie sociale « femme » que le rôle du père l'est à la catégorie sociale « homme » grâce à l'étude des chevauchements entre les stéréotypes associés à ces quatre groupes. L'hypothèse était que les stéréotypes pour les femmes et les mères seraient plus étroitement liés que les stéréotypes pour les hommes et les pères. Les résultats ont indiqué qu'il y avait une preuve notable et claire pour des traits négatifs de telle sorte que les mères et les femmes étaient considérées comme plus semblables que les pères et les hommes, et ceci ne dépend pas du genre des participants. Toutefois, lorsque les traits ont été considérés en un tout ou quand on regarde seulement les traits positifs, l'effet prédit était présent pour les participantes de sexe féminin, mais n'était pas présent pour les participants de sexe masculin.

Mots-clés : genre, essentialisme, stéréotypes, stéréotype du genre, parent

The White House Council on Women and Girls recently released its first comprehensive report on women since the 1960s, in which it reported a trend toward delayed marriage and childbirth. Specifically, "the likelihood of a woman having her first child at age thirty or older increased roughly six-fold" (White House Council on Women and Girls, 2011, p. 5). These trends coincide with increased education amongst women and men, and more women in the workforce. Interestingly, an article that appeared in *The New York Times* shortly before the White House report was released discussed the price women pay for taking time off of work. In the article, Jane Waldfogel, a professor at Columbia University who studies families and work, stated: "Women do almost as well as men today [career-wise] as long as they don't have

children" (as cited in Leonhardt, 2010, p. 2). Given that more women than men take time off of work after a child is born and more women work part-time at some point in their careers to help with their family, it is not surprising that it is women who tend to suffer more professionally. But why is it that women (instead of men) are the ones that are expected to maintain family and home life and thus lose out professionally?

The idea of work-family balance has been a widely researched topic in the field of psychology. The negative side of work-family balance is referred to as work-family conflict. Work-family conflict results from the inability to simultaneously maintain both work and the family. The category of work-family conflict can be understood in two ways: Family interference with work and work interference with family (Greenhaus & Allen, 2010). When looking at parents, research has shown that women report more family interference with work and work interference with with family than men (Byron, 2005). This is notably

problematic given that family interference with work and work interference with family have both been related to employee physical and psychological health. More specifically, work interference with family, for example, has been linked to depression and poor physical health (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997). It is not surprising that when an individual is expected to prioritize and balance competing roles, there are negative consequences.

Perhaps part of this disparity between parents (i.e., women tend to bear the brunt of home and childcare more than men) has its roots in the biological ties women have with their children through pregnancy and childbirth. Previous, well-established studies on attachment show that the separation of a newborn from its mother creates distress for the child (Bowlby, 1973). Maternity leave, which falls under the Family and Medical Leave Act, is supposed to aid in the preservation of family integrity and also reduce the risk of discrimination at work based on sex (U.S. Department of Labor, 2009). The World Health Organization recommended a minimum of 16 weeks of leave from work after childbirth for both the health of the baby and the mother. Despite this recommendation, the law only requires that maternity leave in the United States be 12 weeks of unpaid leave.

While the mother does play an important biological and physical role in the early development of a child, the attachment of a mother to a child (in comparison to the attachment of a father and a child), especially later in life, could be socially constructed. It is important to analyze the ways in which the concepts of 'mother' and 'father' are molded by the views of society. One way to do this is to review the traits we use (as a society) to describe groups of people. For example, the traits used to describe women and moms in general include "gentle" or "caring" (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004). It seems that the adjectives used to describe these two groups are often one in the same. Do the trait adjectives used to describe men and dads have as the same overlap? In this paper, we argue that the role of moms is more similar to the category of being a woman, whereas the role of dads is less tied to being a man (i.e., men do not share as many characteristics with dads as women do with moms).

Stereotypes and Social Category Labels

According to Myers (2010), a stereotype is a "generalized (sometimes accurate but often overgeneralized) belief about a group of people" (p. 691).

Stereotypes represent cognitive structures that consist of a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979), and Carnaghi et al. (2008) indicated that social category labels (e.g., female, Jew, African American) serve as cognitive organizing principles and "evaluative reference points" (p. 840). Stereotypes can be negative (e.g., lazy) or they can be positive (e.g., generous). A more specific stereotype is a "sex-trait stereotype", which is defined as a trait that characterizes women more or less than it characterizes men, or vice versa (Williams & Best, 1990). Williams and Bennett (1975) measured sex-trait stereotypes using an *Adjective Check List* to assess whether there was agreement about the masculinity or femininity of sex-trait stereotypes amongst male and female participants; they found masculine traits and feminine traits to be distinct. Other researchers (e.g., Bem, 1974; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975) found similar results through various other methods (e.g., the *Sex-Role Questionnaire* and the *Bem Sex-Role Inventory*).

Building on these previous studies, more recent research on social roles suggests that the perceived characteristics of women and men are becoming more similar. The growing similarity may be due to women increasingly occupying social roles historically occupied by men (e.g., increasing involvement in the work force) (Diekman & Eagly, 2000). By extension, Diekman and Eagly (2000) made the argument that the social roles of men and women are changing, and instead of becoming distinct, they are merging to some degree. In order to test this, they asked participants to consider men and women either in the past (1950), present, or future (2050), and estimate the prevalence of masculine and feminine characteristics of the groups. Findings indicated that moving from the past to the future, women were viewed as becoming more masculine (i.e., they were seen as attaining more masculine traits), while men were seen as remaining constant, maintaining masculine traits and not taking on feminine traits to as large a degree.

In line with Diekman and Eagly's (2000) research, Banchefsky and Park (2010) investigated a similar question, but with regard to 'moms' and 'dads' instead of 'women' and 'men'. Using an almost identical method to Diekman and Eagly (2000), this study examined the perceived prevalence of feminine and masculine behaviors and traits associated with moms and dads over time. The results showed that the concepts of 'moms' and 'dads' were seen as merging,

such that the two were perceived as becoming similar to one another and less stereotypic. More specifically, moms were viewed as attaining masculine characteristics and dads as attaining feminine characteristics. Therefore, participants believed that in the future, moms and dads would become less distinguishable and thus less traditional.

Given that perceptions of women are expected to change but perceptions of men are not (Diekman & Eagly, 2000) and that perceptions of moms and dads are both expected to change (Banchefsky & Park, 2010), it is possible that the concepts associated with women and moms may be more aligned than the concepts associated with men and dads. Perhaps this is because the category of 'mom' is more consistent with the category of 'women' than the category of 'dad' is with 'men'. In a 2010 study, Park, Smith, and Correll found results in concordance with this premise. Using a *Go/No-Go Task* (GNAT), which measures the degree to which two categories are associated, the strength of associations between female names and mom behaviors versus male names and dad behaviors was assessed. Participants were asked to press the space bar ("go") when a stimulus from one of two categories appears and to not press it ("no-go") when stimuli from contrasting categories appear. By having participants "go" whenever they saw a female name (i.e., representing the category women) or a mom word (i.e., representing the category mom), and then comparing that to participant performance on a separate block of male names and dad words, Park et al. (2010) aimed to assess the strength of the association participants made with women and moms compared to men and dads. Their results demonstrated that (implicitly) women were more strongly associated with the role of mom than men were with the role of dad.

To conclude, the literature to date has shown the following: (a) the stereotype content of women is changing to become more similar to men, but male stereotypes remain relatively less changed, (b) moms and dads are seen as becoming more similar to each other and less stereotypic, and (c) the strength of the implicit connection between female names and mom words is stronger than male names with dad words. An important question that has not yet been addressed is: What traits are explicitly associated with moms, dads, women, and men? It seems especially important to look at the *content* of the stereotypes (i.e., the specific sex-trait stereotypes associated with each group) to see if it will be in accordance with the finding that

the expected changes in the social roles of women and moms are parallel, whereas the expected changes with men and dads are not. If the stereotypes of moms overlap to a greater degree with the stereotypes of women relative to those of dads to men, then the role of mom would be more intimately tied to the social category of women than the roles of dads to men. Furthermore, are the ideas associated with women and moms so deeply connected that being a mom can be viewed as an essential characteristic of the social category of women?

Essentialism

In philosophy, essentialism refers to the Aristotelian view of concepts: a concept has necessary defining features that must be fully satisfied in order to be a part of that concept (Haslam, 2000). When translated into psychology, the term "psychological essentialism" refers to the extent to which social categories are viewed as having an underlying nature/nurture foundation (Keller, 2005). In the literature, these foundations are labeled *incremental* (i.e., nurture: can be learned and changed) or *entity* (i.e., nature: essential to group; Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995). Someone that has an incrementalist or constructionist view of gender would believe that there are traits associated with each gender that have been socially agreed upon; someone that has an entity or essentialist view of gender would believe that gender resides within a person, as a part of her fundamental attributes and that is separate from environment (Bohan, 1993).

Research has shown that essentialist views can lead to stereotyping and prejudice (Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Keller, 2005) and that when considering categories, gender ranks as highly associated with "natural kinds" or essentialist beliefs (Haslam, 2000). When it comes to gender and parenting, we hypothesized that society views these categories through an essentialist lens and conflates the two categories for females but not males. McQuillan, Greil, Shreffler, and Tichenor (2008) investigated the importance of motherhood to women in the United States and concluded that being a mom has been firmly linked to femininity (i.e., being a woman). It seems that men have a lot of diversity in what they can be or how they are considered (only some pertaining to being a dad), but women have an underlying essence that relates in many ways to being a mom. In this paper, we argue that a possible explanation for why motherhood is more intimately tied to women than fatherhood is to men is because the role of mom is to some degree viewed as an essentialistic

characteristic of the category of 'woman', whereas the role of dad is less so for the category of 'man'. If this is indeed the case, then essentialist thinking could be part of the reason that, culturally, women are expected to naturally exhibit mother traits and possibly forgo professional goals for the sake of their family.

Current Study

This research seeks to examine the gender stereotypes associated with women and moms versus those associated with men and dads. We examined whether the traits that describe women and moms would be more closely related than the traits that describe men and dads. When people think about women as a group, what they bring to mind is very similar to what is evoked when they consider the group 'moms'. In contrast, when people think about men as a group, the attributes that spring to mind might share some overlap with their conception of 'dads', but not to the same degree as with women and moms. This finding would provide some support for the role of mom as being more of an essentialistic category of a woman than the role of a dad is for a man.

In two studies, our hypothesis was examined in two ways: By identifying the traits that make up the stereotypes of the four groups (moms, dads, women, men) and examining the overlap within; and by simply gathering a broad spectrum of traits and analyzing the perceived overlap between moms and women versus dads and men across all traits. In Study 1 we identified the traits most relevant to the groups and examined overlap, and in Study 2 we asked for judgments across all of the traits. This enabled us to examine overlap across both the full set of traits and across the traits selected as most relevant to the group stereotypes. The prediction with both studies was that women and moms would have more overlap than men and dads.

Study 1

Method

Participants. Study 1 consisted of two parts, for which two separate groups of participants were recruited. Seventy-five undergraduate Introductory Psychology students (37 women) participated in the first part of Study 1, and 163 undergraduate Introductory Psychology students (83 females) participated in the second part. All of the students took part in the research for partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

Procedure and Materials. In order to construct a pool of traits that adequately described the stereotypes of moms, dads, women, and men, we included adjectives primarily from Williams and Best's (1990) sex stereotypes *Adjective Check List*, and also from the selection of adjectives used in Diekman and Eagly (2000), Ganong and Coleman (1995), and Troilo and Coleman (2008). In total we selected 11 positive traits and 10 negative traits to describe each of the categories: mom, dad, woman, man. We also added a fifth 'neutral' category of traits. In total, the trait pool consisted of 105 traits adjectives.

The 105 traits were randomly ordered and put into survey form using *Qualtrics Survey Software*. The first part of Study 1 consisted of participants completing this survey. Up to 10 participants completed the survey at a time, using a laptop computer at an individual desk in the laboratory. The survey was designed to take 30-45 minutes to complete, and participants were required to remain seated until everyone had finished to reduce noise and distraction.

The aim of the survey was to identify relevant traits that describe each of the categories. Participants were asked to rate the traits that they perceived to be most characteristic of each group (i.e., moms, dads, men, and women). Participants were instructed to consider each group separately, and to pick the ten positive traits and the ten negative traits that *best* described each group. This formed a total of eight lists, from which we derived the most frequently chosen traits.

The second part of Study 1 consisted of the second group of participants rating the favorability of the 105 traits on a seven-point scale (1 = *very unfavorable*, 7 = *very favorable*). The aim of this part of the study was to provide an independent assessment of valence (positive or negative). Participants were provided with an alphabetized trait list with definitions for each word in order to avoid confusion and possible language barriers.

Results

In order to establish trait valence, the data from the second group of participants were examined to determine whether the ratings were significantly different from the midpoint (which would indicate a trait was either positive or negative) and in the intended direction. With the exception of six negative traits and two positive traits, all traits were significantly

Table 1
Negative and Positive Trait Correlations

	Negative Trait Correlations			Positive Trait Correlations		
	Men	Dads	Women	Men	Dads	Women
Dads	.37			.54		
Women	-.09	.27		-.28	-.18	
Moms	-.10	.72	.68	-.18	.38	.44

Note. This is a table of the negative and positive traits correlations, which are correlations in the frequency count for each group. Higher numbers indicate that participants viewed the group comparison as more similar.

different from the midpoint and in the intended direction. Three traits that were intended to be negative (i.e., perfectionist, flirtatious, and opinionated) were rated positively by participants, and another three traits that were intended to be negative (i.e., autocratic, dependent, and impulsive) were rated as neutral. The two traits that were intended to be positive (i.e., authoritative and frank) were rated as neutral by participants. Our overall aim was to identify the traits that were viewed as most descriptive for each group from a set of traits that shared a clear valence (e.g., "Considering a set of negative traits, what are the 10 that best describe men?"). For this reason, the traits that did not conform to our original valence classification were dropped from the analyses. Therefore, we included 44 of the 50 negative traits and 53 of the 55 positive traits in the final analyses.

Once the rated valences were confirmed, we analyzed the traits determined to be most characteristic for each group. To do this, we found the frequency with which each trait was chosen, and we calculated a corresponding percent by dividing the frequency by the number of participants. This percentage provided a clearer picture as to which traits were chosen as most typical of each group across all participants.

In order to assess if the categories of moms and women were seen as more redundant groups than dads and men, we examined the correlations in the frequency counts across traits. Higher correlations indicated that two groups were seen as having similar trait profiles (i.e., the higher the correlation, the more similar two groups were considered to be by participants).

When examining the correlations for the negative traits, we found women and moms ($r(44) = .68$) to be more highly correlated than men and dads ($r(44) = .37$), which descriptively supported our hypothesis that the categories of women and moms would be seen as more closely associated than those of men and dads. In order to examine the negative trait data fur-

ther, we conducted z-tests to see if two independent sample correlations are significantly different. Again, we found the predicted trend, where the categories of women and moms varied more together than those of men and dads ($z = 1.99$, $p = .046$). Interestingly, the most highly correlated groups with the negative traits were dads and moms ($r(44) = .72$). As shown in Table 1, the correlations of the positive traits did not support our hypothesis that women and moms ($r(53) = .44$) would be more closely linked than men and dads ($r(53) = .54$), because there was no difference between these correlations ($z = -.66$, $p = .50$). All other z-tests were not significant.

Next, we examined the top trait choices, which we defined as those traits that were chosen by at least 25% of the participant sample within each group. These reflect the traits that participants overall rated as most typical of each group. Fourteen negative traits were within the top 25% for men, dads and moms, and 13 traits for women. For the positive traits, there were 13 positive traits for dads and women, 14 for men, and 16 for moms. Once the top traits were ascertained, we assessed the trait overlap. For the positive trait overlap within the top trait choices, women and moms shared more traits (seven: emotional, affectionate, softhearted, gentle, understanding, good-natured, and sympathetic) than did men and dads (five: determined, provider, assertive, courageous, and decisive). Furthermore, within the positive top trait choices, men had the highest number of traits (seven) that were not shared with other groups, meaning that there were more traits that were exclusively descriptive of men than any of the other categories.

In terms of the negative trait overlap within the top trait choices, there was a similar pattern of more trait overlap with women and moms (four shared traits: nagging, high-strung, complaining, and fussy) than men and dads (three shared traits: aggressive, forceful, and unemotional). Much like the positive trait overlap, men had many negative traits that were not shared

with any other group (six traits: show-off, egotistical, reckless, boastful, lazy, and careless). Moreover, for the negative top traits, there was a cluster of four traits (demanding, stressed, bossy, and pushy) that were found to describe moms, dads, and women. Instead of the overlap between only women and moms, we found an overlap between parents and women.

Study 1 provided a list of traits that describe moms, dads, women and men, and this allowed us to look at the overlap among those traits to determine whether there was evidence for our hypothesis. In Study 2, we sought to extend our analysis by looking at the overlap in judgments for women and moms in comparison to the judgments for men and dads, across the original (full) set of traits as well as the top traits list derived in Study 1.

Study 2

Method

Participants. Eighty-two undergraduate Introductory Psychology students (42 females) completed the overlap ratings between the categories of moms and women as well as between dads and men. Again, all of the students took part in the research for partial fulfillment of a course requirement.

Procedure. Using the same full set of 105 traits from Study 1, participants were asked to make a judgment about the adjectives associated with women and moms versus men and dads in a *Qualtrics* survey. The context and length of the study was the same as Study 1: There were up to ten participants in the laboratory at a time, using laptop computers at individual desks, and the survey took between thirty to forty-five minutes to complete. Participants were randomly assigned to an order (women/mom first, or men/dad first), and were asked to write 3-5 sentences about the typical woman (or man) and another 3-5 sentences about the typical mom (or dad) in order to orient them to the task at hand. Next, on a scale of 1 to 7, participants rated the extent to which each of the 105 traits was "much more characteristic of moms [dads]" (1), "equally characteristic of moms and women [dads and men]" (4), or "much more characteristic of women [men]" (7).
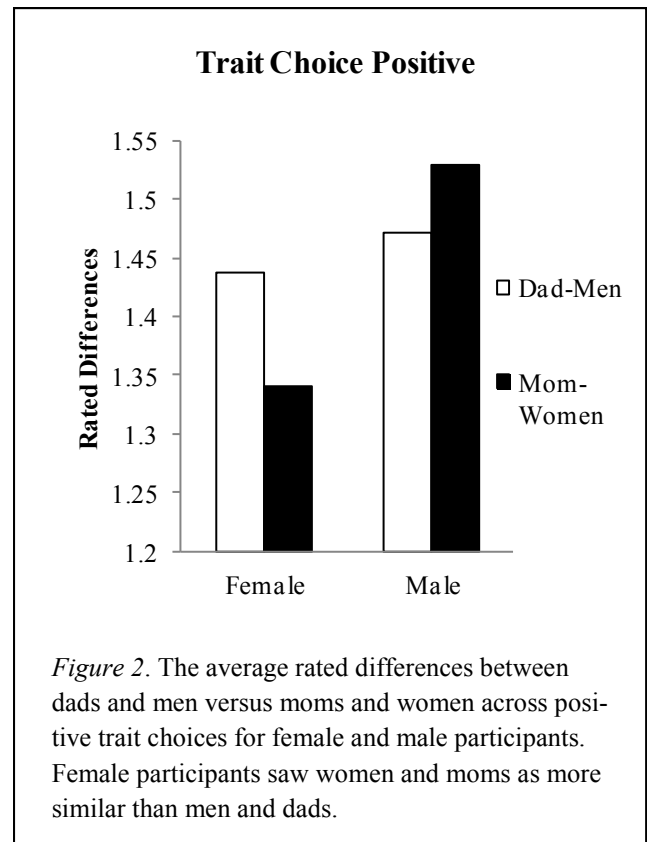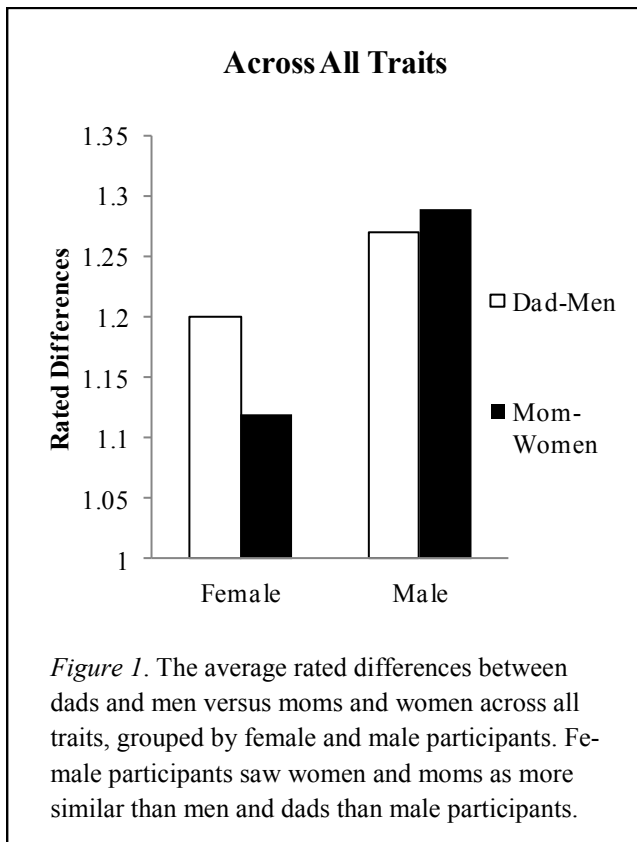
A rating of 4 would indicate that the participant was unable to rate an adjective as more characteristic of women than moms (men than dads) and vice versa, and instead the adjective was considered equally char-

acteristic of both. The greater the absolute deviation from 4, the more dissimilar the participants saw the two groups on any given trait. Because our prediction was that moms and women would be seen as more similar (and therefore have more overlap in adjectives) than dads and men, the absolute deviation from 4 for women and moms was predicted to be smaller than that for men and dads.

Results

We examined the data across all 105 traits in order to assess whether there is greater overlap in the characterization of women and moms than that of men and dads. In our analysis, we set up a 2×2×2 design: (Group: Women/Moms vs. Men/Dads)×(Order: Women/Moms first vs. second)×(Participant Gender: Women vs. Men). We tested the primary prediction by the Group main effect, and we found it to be insignificant. Next, we tested the interaction between the Group and the Order with which participants rated either men/dads or women/moms, and we found the effect to be insignificant. We found the Participant Gender to have a marginally significant interaction effect with the Group, $F(1,79) = 3.67$, $p = .059$. Looking within each Participant Gender group, the predicted main effect of group was not significant for male participants, but was significant for females, $F(1,40) = 5.19$, $p = .028$. Accordingly, whereas the male participants did not rate women and moms as more similar than men and dads, the female participants did (that is, in comparison to males, female participants saw moms and women as more similar than dads and men). A graph of this effect from the calculated means is shown in Figure 1.

As Study 1 provided data that identified the traits that were most characteristic (called "top trait choices"), we examined overlap for those traits in Study 2 using an ANOVA comparing Groups (Women/Moms vs Men/Dads), Valence (positive/negative) and Gender (Male/Female). The primary predicted effect of Group was not statistically significant, $F(1,79) = 3.01$, $p = .087$. However, the Group interaction with Valence (whether the traits were positive or negative) was significant, $F(1,79) = 4.00$, $p = .049$. More specifically, within the set of negative traits, the Group main effect was significant $F(1,79) = 5.58$, $p = .021$. Accordingly for the negative traits, participants saw the categories of moms and women as more similar than those of dads and men. Within the set of positive traits, there was not a significant Group main effect, but there was a significant interaction

Across All Traits

Figure 1. The average rated differences between dads and men versus moms and women across all traits, grouped by female and male participants. Female participants saw women and moms as more similar than men and dads than male participants.

Trait Choice Positive

Figure 2. The average rated differences between dads and men versus moms and women across positive trait choices for female and male participants. Female participants saw women and moms as more similar than men and dads.

between the Group and Participant Gender, $F(1,79) =$ 4.94, $p = .029$. To examine this further, we assessed the positive traits when modified by Participant Gender and found that there was not a significant effect for male participants, but there was a Group main effect for female participants, $F(1,40) = 4.17$, $p = .048$. This means that when considering the positive traits, female participants saw women and moms as more similar than men and dads (see Figure 2).

In sum, when looking across all traits, we found that while male participants did not see moms and women as more similar than dads and men, the female participants did. Then, when looking across the empirically derived set of traits, there was support for the hypothesis across the set of negative traits, such that all participants saw greater overlap between moms and women than dads and men. For the set of positive traits, the predicted effect was present only for female participants.

Discussion

This study explored the idea that the role of moms is more closely associated with the social category of 'woman' than the role of dad is to the social category

of '*man*', by examining overlap in the stereotypes associated with these four groups. The results indicate that the categories of moms and women were seen as more similar in terms of negative traits than were the categories of dads and men, and this did not depend on participant gender. However, the predicted effect was present for female but not male participants when the set of the positive traits were considered, and when all the traits were examined overall.

Although these results are compelling, one of the main limitations of this study has to do with trait selection. We constructed the trait pool for the study from various fixed responses methods; it cannot be known if respondents would have selected different attributes to more specifically describe their perceptions of the groups. Also, the data was collected from students in the United States, which has a very specific culture. Because stereotypes pertaining to the roles of moms, dads, men, and women, are deeply influenced by cultural circumstances, it is crucial that the implication of this study be associated with the culture specific to the United States; it is likely that the same study would yield very different results in other cultural contexts, particularly where women's movements have not emerged.

Another limitation concerns the narrow age range of our participants. It is likely that college-aged young adults (presumably between the ages 18-25) see sex-trait stereotypes in a different way than older participants might. One surprising finding was the participant gender difference: the results were stronger for the female participants than they were for the male participants. Perhaps this reveals a trend among young adults' attitudes toward the multiplicity of roles that adults must adapt to as parents in the future. Friedman and Weissbrod (2005) concluded that college-aged males were more likely than their female counterparts to report *not* thinking about family roles. In a more recent study, Brown and Diekman (2010) examined gender differences in possible selves. They asked participants to think about themselves in the near future (i.e., one year) and the distant future (i.e., ten to fifteen years); when considering the distant future, women were more likely to identify possible selves that were family-related, and men were more likely to identify career-related selves. If young men report not thinking about family, and instead mainly associate their distant future selves with a career, maybe the gender differences in our results reveal a status (rather than an attitude) of male participants. Perhaps the college-aged men in our sample have simply not thought that far ahead yet to consider family roles. This distinction is significant because it shows that the implications of this study must be interpreted within the specific bracket of college-aged students, with varying maturity levels in relation to family considerations.

Despite these limitations, the study yielded thought-provoking results. Because the role of mom was often perceived as similar to the social category of woman, it could be viewed as an essentialistic property. This finding serves as a partial explanation of current research on role conflict. As stated earlier, women do as well professionally as men until they have children (Leonhardt, 2010). Once a woman becomes a mom, there will be times when she will be asked to choose between being a professional and being a mom. Men and dads seem to have to make this choice less often – or put another way, do not have the choice to stay home in the same (socially acceptable way) as women do. Now that women are increasingly working and succeeding professionally, it seems that a shift in parental duties is necessary, despite essentialistic thinking that women and moms are more closely associated categories than those of men and dads. Expecting women and moms to "do it all" ostensibly places an unfair burden on women, as well as men who may want the option to stay at home or at least participate more in the home. In line with this, a recent study found that mothers who multitask find it to be a negative experience, whereas fathers do not report as much stress when multitasking (Shira & Schneider, 2011).

To help alleviate some of those societal pressures for women and men, not only should we as a society try not to conflate the ideas of woman and mom, administrators should also consider policies that allow men to help with their family. This would allow men to have a more active role in the household if they desired. Negative repercussions could result from the strong association between moms and women. For example, a childless woman may be considered less of a woman to society because she is "missing" something that many consider to be integral to the essence of being a woman. This idea has a very negative connotation and could potentially be very damaging for one's identity. In fact, it has been found that when a person is a part of a highly essentialized group, feelings of rejection from that group are often exacerbated (Bernstein, Sacco, Young, Hugenberg, & Cook, 2010); therefore, women who are not moms could potentially feel ostracized and socially punished.

Extending this idea further, results from another study indicated that essentialistic attitudes are linked to ideas about the futility of social change, but when people disengage from essentialist thinking, there is potential for change (Yoder, Fischer, Kahn, & Gorden, 2007). Interestingly, results from the stereotype overlap of this study show participants' tendency to cluster women, moms, and dads together on certain traits. If college-aged participants (i.e., the next generation of parents) cluster dads with women and moms, perhaps this is an indication that change is already underway. Perhaps merely considering that dads can take on the traits that were traditionally only associated with women and moms may eventually strengthen the connection between all four groups. It seems plausible that the stereotypes of moms, dads, women and men will continue to change, especially if people engage in behaviors that are non-stereotypical of their group. Dasgupta and Asgari's (2004) paper suggested this same idea. They reported that observations of counter-stereotypical women leaders (i.e., someone in a non-traditional role) could change stereotypes temporarily. Exposure to these nontraditional roles (e.g., men who want to be stay-at-home dads) seems central to alleviating some of the pressure placed on women and moms to "do it all," and allowing men and dads to pursue nontraditional roles at home, thus integrating the gender and parent roles in a more egalitarian way.

References

Ashmore, R. D., & Del Boca, F. K. (1979). Sex stereotypes and implicit personality theory: Toward a cognitive-social psychological conceptualization. *Sex Roles, 5,* 219-248.

Banchefsky, S., & Park, B. (2010). *Dynamic stereotypes of moms and dads of the past, present, and future.* Unpublished manuscript.

Bastian, B., & Haslam, N. (2006). Psychological essentialism and stereotype endorsement. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 42,* 228-235.

Bem, S. L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 42,* 155-162.

Bernstein, M. J., Sacco, D. F., Young, S. G., Hugenberg, K., & Cook, E. (2010). Being "in" with the in-crowd: The effects of social exclusion and inclusion are enhanced by perceived essentialism of ingroups and outgroups. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 36,* 999-1009.

Bohan, J. S. (1993). Essentialism, constructionism, and feminist psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 17,* 5-21.

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 2. Separation anxiety and anger.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Broverman, I. K., Vogel, S. R., Broverman, D. M., Clarkson, D. M., & Rosenkrantz, P. S. (1972). Sex-role stereotypes: A current appraisal. *Journal of Social Issues, 28,* 191-210.

Brown, E. R., & Diekman, A. B. (2010). What will I be? Exploring gender differences in near and distant possible selves. *Sex Roles, 63,* 568-579.

Byron, K. (2005). A meta-analytic review of work-family conflict and its antecedents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 67,* 169-198.

Carnaghi, A., Maass, A., Gresta, S., Bianchi, M., Cadinu, M., & Arcuri, L. (2008). Nomina sunt omina: On the inductive potential of nouns and adjectives in person perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 94,* 839-859.

Cuddy, A. J. C., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2004). When professionals become mothers, warmth does not cut the ice. *Journal of Social Issues, 60,* 701-718.

Dasgupta, N., & Asgari, S. (2004). Seeing is believing: Exposure to counterstereotypical women leaders and its effect on the malleability of automatic gender stereotyping. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40,* 642-658.

Diekman, A. B., & Eagly, A. H. (2000). Stereotypes as dynamic constructs: Women and men of the past, present, and future. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26,* 1171-1188.

Dweck, C. S., Chiu, C., & Hong, Y. (1995). Implicit theories and their role in judgments and reactions: A world from two perspectives. *Psychological Inquiry, 6,* 267-285.

Ganong, L. H., & Coleman, M. (1995). The content of mother stereotypes. *Sex Roles, 32,* 495-512.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Allen, T. D. (2010). Work-family balance: A review and extension of the literature. In J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology 2nd ed.* (pp. 165-183). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Haslam, N. (2000). Essentialist beliefs about social categories. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 39,* 113-127.

Friedman, S. R., & Weissbrod, C. S. (2005). Work and family commitment and decision-making status among emerging adults. *Sex Roles, 53,* 317-325.

Frone, M. R., Russell, M., & Cooper, M. L. (1997). Relation of work-family conflict to health outcomes: A four-year longitudinal study of employed parents. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 70,* 325-335.

Keller, J. (2005). In genes we trust: The biological component of psychological essentialism and its relationship to mechanisms of motivated social cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 88,* 686-702.

Leonhardt, D. (2010, August 3). A labor market punishing to mothers. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/04/business/economy /04leonhardt.html.

McQuillan, J., Greil, A. L., Shreffler, K. M., & Tichenor, V. (2008). The importance of motherhood among women in the contemporary United States. *Gender & Society, 22,* 477-496.

Myers, D. G. (2010). *Psychology.* New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Park, B., Smith, J. A., & Correll, J. (2010). The persistence of implicit behavioral associations for moms and dads. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 46,* 809-815.

Shira, O., & Schneider, B. (2011). Revisiting the gender gap in time-use patterns: Multitasking and well-being among mothers and fathers in dual-earner families. *American Sociological Review, 76,* 809-833.

Spence, J. T., Helmreich, R. L., & Stapp, J. (1975). Ratings of self and peers on sex role attributes and their relation to self-esteem and conceptions of masculinity and femininity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 32,* 29-39.

Troilo, J., & Coleman, M. (2008). College student perceptions of the content of father stereotypes. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 70,* 218-227.

U.S. Department of Labor. (2009). *The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.* Retrieved from http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/benefits-leave/fmla.htm

Williams, J. E., & Bennett, S. M. (1975). The definition of sex stereotypes via the adjective check list. *Sex Roles, 1,* 327-337.

Williams, J. E., & Best, D. L. (1990). *Measuring sex stereotypes: A multination study.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

White House Council on Women and Girls. (2011, March). *Women in America: Indicators of social and economic well-being.* Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites /default/files/rss_viewer/Women_in_America.pdf

Yoder, J. D., Fischer, A. R., Kahn, A. S., & Gorden, J. (2007). Changes in students' explanations for gender differences after taking a psychology of women class: More constructionist and less essentialist. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 31,* 415-425.