

Research Article

Can an Angry Woman Get Ahead?

Status Conferral, Gender, and Expression of Emotion in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT—Three studies examined the relationships among anger, gender, and status conferral. As in prior research, men who expressed anger in a professional context were conferred higher status than men who expressed sadness. However, both male and female evaluators conferred lower status on angry female professionals than on angry male professionals. This was the case regardless of the actual occupational rank of the target, such that both a female trainee and a female CEO were given lower status if they expressed anger than if they did not. Whereas women's emotional reactions were attributed to internal characteristics (e.g., “she is an angry person,” “she is out of control”), men's emotional reactions were attributed to external circumstances. Providing an external attribution for the target person's anger eliminated the gender bias. Theoretical implications and practical applications are discussed.

During an appearance on a national news program, the chairman of the Republican National Committee asserted that Senator Hillary Clinton was too angry to be elected president (Nagourney, 2006). This comment caught the media's attention because it appeared to be motivated by her gender:

They are casting Hillary Clinton as an Angry Woman, a she-monster melding images of Medea, the Furies, harpies This gambit handcuffs Hillary: If she doesn't speak out strongly against President Bush, she's timid and girly. If she does, she's a witch and a shrew. (Dowd, 2006, p. A21)

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Though politicians have always used such tactics to defame their opponents, this particular case raises interesting questions about whether expressing anger impedes a woman's chances at winning a political race or gaining status in other professional arenas. Generally, emotion theorists suggest that displays of certain emotions, such as anger, can communicate that an individual is competent and is entitled to high social status (Shields, 2002, 2005; Tiedens, 2001). In a study consistent with this hypothesis, Tiedens (2001) found that men who expressed anger in professional settings were more likely to be hired than men who expressed sadness and were also given more status, power, and independence in their jobs.

As Senator Clinton's experience suggests, however, professional women who express anger may experience a decrease, rather than an increase, in their status. Women are expected to be kinder and more modest than men, and they evoke negative responses from other people if they fail to conform to this prescriptive stereotype (Heilman, 2001; Rudman, 1998). Female professionals who express anger violate this feminine norm and therefore may not experience the boost in status enjoyed by angry men (a possibility acknowledged by Tiedens, 2001).

This idea converges with Ekman and Friesen's (1969) concept of emotional display rules, which are “overlearned habits about who can show what emotion . . . males should not cry; females, except in a maternal role, should not show anger” (Ekman, 1984, p. 320). Such an effect is likewise predicted by Rudman and Fairchild's (2004) integrative model of stereotype-based backlash. In their model, counterstereotypical actions are expectancy violations that provoke negative reactions from social perceivers. However, this backlash occurs only if a justification for derogating the counterstereotypical individual is available. In typical workplace situations in which a woman has expressed anger, there is probably enough ambiguity about the reason for her anger that some basis for derogation can be found. As a

result, negative responses to women who express anger could occur readily in professional contexts.

Moreover, the expectation that a woman will not express anger publicly should affect attributions for the cause of her anger. Kelley's (1967, 1973) attribution model stipulates that when a person's behavior is characterized by *low consensus* (i.e., is different from that of peers), social perceivers are likely to attribute the behavior to internal characteristics (e.g., perceive anger as stemming from disposition, as opposed to features of the situation). According to this model, because anger and pride are the only emotions that people believe men express more than women (Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000), a woman's anger should be seen as internally caused (e.g., "she is an angry person," "she is out of control") rather than externally instigated (e.g., "the situation was frustrating"). Thus, people should view a man's anger as a response to objective, external circumstances, but a woman's anger as a product of her personality. As a result, a professional woman's anger may imply that she is not competent at dealing with workplace situations, and may therefore lead perceivers to accord her less status.

OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

We report here three studies that tested these hypotheses. Study 1 examined whether participants conferred lower status on an angry woman than on an angry man and whether attributions for emotional reactions underlay the relation between expression of anger and conferral of status. Study 2 examined whether any low-status individual, and not just women, would be given low status after expressing anger and whether the internal attribution that angry female targets were "out of control" mediated the relation between expression of anger and conferral of status. Finally, Study 3 examined whether an angry woman who offered an external attribution for her anger would be accorded status as high as that of an angry man. Generally, people should view a man's anger as a response to objective, external circumstances, but a woman's anger as a product of her personality. As a result, a woman who expresses anger in the workplace will be accorded lower status than a man who does the same, unless she emphasizes the external circumstances that caused her anger.

All analyses reported in this article included gender of the participant as an independent variable. No interactions involving this variable were significant, and therefore we collapsed across gender for all analyses.

For all the studies reported in this article, we recruited adult participants in order to obtain a relatively representative, non-college-student sample with workplace experience (Sears, 1986). We recruited these adult participants by placing flyers advertising the study at locations throughout a public park in Connecticut. Participants contacted us if they were interested in participating, completed the experiment individually in isolated laboratory rooms on campus or at a private off-campus location, and were compensated with their choice of a lottery ticket or

\$1.00. Most were Caucasian (85% on average), well educated, and politically moderate ($M = 3.91$ on a 7-point liberalism-conservatism scale).

STUDY 1

Method

Participants and Procedure

Thirty-nine males and 30 females (mean age = 38.75 years) were randomly assigned to view a videotaped job interview in which either a male or a female professional described feeling either anger or sadness. The study employed a 2 (target's gender: male vs. female) \times 2 (emotion: anger vs. sadness) between-subjects design.

We obtained the videotapes used by Tiedens (2001) and created two additional videotapes using a female target pretested to be equivalent to Tiedens's male target in attractiveness, age, and ethnicity. In all three studies reported here, targets wore professional attire and were ostensibly being interviewed for a job while sitting at a table; the interviewer was out of view of the camera. Targets described an incident in which they and a colleague lost an important account, and when asked by the interviewer how it made them feel, responded that the incident made them feel either angry or sad.

Dependent Measures

Participants completed dependent measures in the order listed in this section.

Status Conferral. Following Tiedens (2001), we created a composite measure of status conferral. This measure included four items assessing how much status, power, and independence the candidate deserved in his or her future job (1 = *none*, 11 = *a great deal*) and whether the participant would hire the target person (1 = *never*, 11 = *definitely*; $\alpha = .91$).

Salary. Participants reported the yearly salary they would pay the target.

Competence. Participants rated the target on the trait dimensions of competent-incompetent and knowledgeable-ignorant, using 11-point trait semantic differential scales ($\alpha = .79$).

Attributions. Two questions assessed internal attributions (i.e., "she/he became angry because of her/his personality," and "she/he is an angry person"), and two questions assessed external attributions ("she/he became angry because of the situation with her/his colleague," and "her/his colleague's behavior caused her/his anger"). These four questions were answered using 11-point scales (1 = *completely disagree*, 11 = *completely agree*). We reverse-scored the internal-attribution items and summed all four responses to create a composite measure ($\alpha = .72$).

TABLE 1
Results From Study 1: Mean Ratings of Male and Female Targets Expressing Anger or Sadness

Dependent variable	Anger		Sadness	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Status conferral	6.47 (2.25)	3.75 (1.77)	4.05 (1.61)	5.02 (1.80)
Yearly salary (\$)	37,807 (13,825)	23,464 (10,496)	30,033 (9,255)	28,970 (9,884)
Competence	7.55 (1.08)	5.44 (2.79)	5.79 (1.08)	6.17 (1.79)
External attributions	7.72 (1.99)	5.80 (2.52)	6.57 (2.08)	6.94 (1.55)

Note. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents mean scores for all four targets for all of the dependent measures. We hypothesized that there would be an interaction between emotion and the target's gender. Specifically, we expected to replicate Tiedens's (2001) finding that an angry man receives higher status, a higher salary, and higher competence ratings than a sad man. We also expected that participants would give the angry woman lower status and lower salary than the angry man, would perceive her as less competent than the angry man, and would be more likely to attribute her anger than his to internal, dispositional causes.

Status Conferral

A 2 (target's gender: male vs. female) \times 2 (emotion: anger vs. sadness) analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted on the status-conferral scores revealed a significant interaction, $F(1, 64) = 16.38, p_{\text{rep}} = .996$. As in Tiedens's (2001) study, participants conferred higher status on the angry male target than on the sad male target, $t(32) = 3.59, p_{\text{rep}} = .986$. Participants also conferred significantly higher status on the angry male than on the angry female, $t(31) = 3.85, p_{\text{rep}} = .986$.¹ Furthermore, participants conferred significantly higher status on the sad female than on the angry female, $t(32) = 2.07, p_{\text{rep}} = .882$.

Salary

The salary measure also showed a significant interaction between gender of the target and emotion expression, $F(1, 55) = 5.46, p_{\text{rep}} = .921$. Participants were willing to pay the angry male more than the sad male, $t(26) = 1.77, p_{\text{rep}} = .840$, and significantly more than the angry female, $t(25) = 3.05, p_{\text{rep}} = .966$. Participants were willing to pay the angry female marginally less than the sad female, $t(29) = 1.51, p_{\text{rep}} = .778$.

Competence

Perceptions of competence likewise showed a significant interaction between the target's gender and emotion expression, $F(1, 65) = 7.56, p_{\text{rep}} = .956$. Participants viewed the angry male

as significantly more competent than the sad male, $t(32) = 3.91, p_{\text{rep}} = .996$. As expected, participants also viewed the angry male as significantly more competent than the angry female, $t(32) = 2.99, p_{\text{rep}} = .966$. However, the sad female was not seen as significantly more competent than the angry female.

Attributions

Attributions also showed a significant interaction between the target's gender and emotion expression, $F(1, 63) = 5.20, p_{\text{rep}} = .915$. As expected, participants attributed the woman's anger more to internal factors and less to external factors than the male's anger, $t(31) = 2.44, p_{\text{rep}} = .927$. Moreover, attributions partially mediated the effects of expressing anger on the status accorded female professionals (Baron & Kenny, 1986). When we controlled for attributions, the coefficient (β for anger was significantly reduced, from .59 to .35, Sobel $z = 2.20, p < .05$. However, the effects of anger remained significant, which suggests that attributions partially accounted for the observed effects.

STUDY 2

The results of Study 1 suggest that expressing anger is an effective means of attaining higher status for professional men, but not for professional women. To replicate Tiedens (2001), we used sadness as a comparison emotion in Study 1. However, sadness has its own unique connotations and therefore may not be a neutral control. Thus, in Study 2, we compared the effects of anger and of expressing no emotion.

In Study 2, we also varied the targets' occupational rank. Perhaps angry women are given lower status than angry men simply because women, on average, have lower status than men initially. People may find it presumptuous for *any* low-status person, male or female, to display a high-status emotion such as anger. But if an angry woman receives lower status than an angry man because of her gender, expressing anger should reduce her status regardless of whether she is a powerful executive or a lowly trainee.

In Study 2, we also attempted to clarify why angry women are accorded low status by employing a more targeted measure of internal attributions—belief that angry women are out-of-

¹The findings of this study were replicated in a study in which participants read a transcript of the videos from Study 1 and rated the targets' status. The angry female target received lower status than the angry male target and sad female target, whereas the angry male received higher status than the sad male.

control individuals. To the extent that anger is attributed to the individual's personality rather than external circumstances, expressing that anger is likely to be perceived as a self-regulation failure. Therefore, we hypothesized that participants would view an angry woman as being out of control, and that this internal attribution would help explain why angry women are accorded low status.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants (70 males, 110 females; mean age = 42.46 years) were randomly assigned to view one of eight videos. The study utilized a 2 (target's gender: male vs. female) \times 2 (emotion: anger vs. no emotion) \times 2 (occupation: high vs. low rank) between-subjects design.

Dependent Measures

As in Study 1, participants completed measures of perceived competence, status conferral, and salary allocation. An additional item assessed the specific attribution that the target was, in general, an "in control" or "out of control" person (1 = *out of control*, 11 = *in control*).

Stimulus Materials

Professional actors, different from those in Study 1 and matched for age (middle to late 30s), ethnicity (Caucasian), and attractiveness, played the part of the interviewee in the videos. (In pretesting, 19 participants rated the actors as similarly attractive and believed they were the same age, $F_s < 1$.) The script was identical to that used in Study 1 except that at the beginning of the interview, targets described their occupation (either low-rank assistant trainee or high-rank CEO) and, in the no-emotion condition, the targets were not asked how they felt as a result of the botched work situation.

In the anger condition, the actors appeared moderately angry when responding to the interviewer's question, "How did that make you feel?" In the no-emotion condition, the actors were not

asked how the situation made them feel and, in general, were instructed to not express emotion. In pretesting, participants accurately labeled the angry actors' emotion and rated the different actors' anger as similarly intense and sincere, $F_s < 1$; all participants indicated that the no-emotion actors were not expressing emotion.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents the mean scores for the eight targets for all of the dependent measures.

Status Conferral

A 2 (target's gender: male vs. female) \times 2 (emotion: anger vs. no emotion) \times 2 (occupation: high vs. low rank) ANOVA conducted on status conferral revealed a main effect of the target's occupational rank, $F(1, 174) = 9.25, p_{\text{rep}} = .974$, and an interaction between the target's gender and emotion expression, $F(1, 174) = 6.69, p_{\text{rep}} = .95$. For female targets, only a main effect of emotion expression emerged, $F(1, 85) = 5.12, p_{\text{rep}} = .915$; women were accorded lower status when they expressed anger than when they were unemotional. For the male targets, only a main effect of target's occupational rank emerged, $F(1, 85) = 7.28, p_{\text{rep}} = .956$.

Salary

Results for salary paralleled those for status conferral. A three-way ANOVA conducted on salary allocation revealed a main effect of the target's occupational rank, $F(1, 155) = 7.07, p_{\text{rep}} = .953$, and a significant two-way interaction between the target's gender and emotion expression, $F(1, 155) = 3.03, p_{\text{rep}} = .840$. Participants' suggested salary for the female targets was not based on their occupational rank, but rather was based on whether the targets expressed anger or remained unemotional. Participants were willing to pay the unemotional female targets more than the angry female targets, even when the targets were high-rank CEOs, $F(1, 80) = 4.13, p_{\text{rep}} = .883$. In contrast, participants were willing to pay the male CEOs more than the

TABLE 2

Results From Study 2: Mean Ratings of Male and Female High- and Low-Rank Targets Expressing Anger or No Emotion

Dependent variable	Anger				No emotion			
	High rank		Low rank		High rank		Low rank	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Status conferral	6.19 (2.23)	4.69 (2.03)	5.31 (2.02)	3.92 (1.60)	5.90 (2.27)	5.65 (2.31)	4.34 (2.14)	4.98 (2.38)
Yearly salary (\$)	66,434 (53,823)	42,526 (17,765)	30,781 (10,458)	24,590 (10,069)	82,368 (92,456)	54,404 (25,731)	41,404 (55,340)	56,318 (90,441)
Competence	7.36 (2.31)	5.39 (2.25)	6.70 (2.12)	6.26 (2.04)	6.66 (2.23)	7.85 (2.25)	6.64 (1.77)	6.54 (2.18)
Out of control	4.12 (2.70)	6.41 (3.16)	4.77 (2.78)	6.61 (2.17)	3.73 (2.62)	4.24 (2.55)	4.59 (2.72)	4.35 (2.72)

Note. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.

male trainees, regardless of their expression of emotion, $F(1, 75) = 7.61, p_{\text{rep}} = .959$.

Competence

The competence scores showed a two-way interaction between gender of the target and emotion expression, $F(1, 172) = 7.52, p_{\text{rep}} = .959$, as well as a three-way interaction, $F(1, 172) = 4.82, p_{\text{rep}} = .910$. The two-way interaction mirrored the pattern found for status conferral and salary, and the three-way interaction indicated a particularly negative response to the high-rank angry female target. A planned contrast indicated that participants rated the angry female CEO as significantly less competent than all the other targets, $t(172) = 3.01, p_{\text{rep}} = .953$.

Mediational Analyses

For the internal-attribution ratings, a three-way ANOVA revealed the theoretically expected two-way interaction between gender of the target and emotion expression, $F(1, 172) = 5.78, p_{\text{rep}} = .938$. A planned contrast indicated that participants viewed the angry female targets as significantly more out of control than the angry male targets and the unemotional male and unemotional female targets, $t(174) = 4.80, p_{\text{rep}} = .986$.

A series of regression analyses tested the prediction that perceptions of angry women as out of control would explain their failure to attain high status. For female targets, expression of anger was significantly related to the internal attribution of being out of control, $r(89) = .39, p < .01$, and status conferral, $r(89) = .23, p < .05$. Furthermore, internal attribution was related to status conferral, $r(89) = .46, p < .001$. When we used internal attribution and emotion expression as independent variables to predict status conferral, only the coefficient for internal-attribution ratings remained significant, $\beta(89) = .44, p < .001$. The coefficient for emotion expression fell from .23 to .06 and was no longer significant, Sobel $z = 2.87, p < .01$. Thus, the internal attribution that an angry woman was out of control fully mediated the relationship between her expression of anger and the status she was accorded (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

STUDY 3

Studies 1 and 2 found that angry women are accorded lower status than angry men, and Study 2 indicated that this is true regardless of the woman's actual status (i.e., whether she is a CEO or an assistant trainee). Moreover, attributions appear to play a role in this phenomenon: People may confer low status on an angry woman because they see her behavior as arising from something deep and inherent—that is, from her being an angry and out-of-control person. If inherent, internal attributions underlie this phenomenon, then an intervention designed to direct attributions away from internal factors and toward external factors might be effective at mitigating the bias. Lending support to this hypothesis, Heilman and Okimoto (2007) demonstrated

that preventing negative attributions for violations of gender-based norms reduces penalties for counterstereotypical behavior. Therefore, in Study 3, we tested the hypothesis that if an angry female professional provides an objective, external reason for being angry, she should evoke less negative reactions. Experimentally manipulating this proposed mechanism (i.e., attributions)—rather than treating it as a continuous variable—would further establish its validity as a mediator of the bias against angry women (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005).

The potential effectiveness of such an intervention is also supported by Rudman and Fairchild's (2004) model of backlash effects. They proposed that violations of prescriptive gender stereotypes are most likely to provoke negative reactions when a potential rationalization for derogating the stereotype violator is available. To the extent that an angry female professional can provide an objective, external reason for being angry, she should evoke less negative reactions.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants (51 males and 82 females; mean age = 38.70 years) watched one of six videos. The study utilized a 2 (target's gender: male vs. female) \times 3 (emotion: unexplained anger vs. explained anger vs. no emotion) between-subjects design. There was no external-attribution condition for the no-emotion condition because it was not plausible to offer an external attribution for *not* expressing emotion.

Dependent Measures

Participants completed measures of status conferral, salary allocation, and competence.

Stimulus Materials

The videotapes from Study 2 were used, but with two modifications. The information about the target's occupational status was removed, and in the explained-anger condition, the target made an external attribution for his or her anger—that a co-worker lied to the target by telling him or her that he had directions to the client's office. This lie caused the target and coworker to lose the account.

Results and Discussion

Table 3 presents the mean ratings for the targets for all of the dependent measures.

Status Conferral

For status conferral, a 2 (target's gender: male vs. female) \times 3 (emotion: anger without external attribution vs. anger with external attribution vs. no emotion) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between the target's gender and emotion expression, $F(2, 34) = 9.72, p_{\text{rep}} = .999$. Examining each gender separately, we found that the angry male without an external attribution

received significantly higher status than the unemotional male, $t(44) = 2.55$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .95$, and the angry male with an external attribution, $t(45) = 2.11$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .892$. Results for the female targets supported our prediction; the angry female target who provided an external attribution for her anger received significantly higher status than the angry female target who did not provide an external attribution, $t(44) = 3.53$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .986$, but did not receive higher status than the unemotional female target, $t(45) = 0.22$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .251$. Notably, the status conferred on the angry female target with an external attribution was not significantly different from the status conferred on the angry male targets with or without a reason for their anger. This finding further suggests that our intervention attenuated the backlash against the angry female.

Salary

The results for salary paralleled those for status conferral. A 2 (target's gender: male vs. female) \times 3 (emotion: anger without external attribution vs. anger with external attribution vs. no emotion) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between the target's gender and emotion expression, $F(2, 112) = 6.90$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .986$. Looking at each gender separately, we found that the angry male target without an external attribution received a significantly higher salary than the unemotional male target, $t(38) = 1.75$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .84$, and the angry male target with an external attribution, $t(35) = 1.79$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .842$. For female targets, the angry female who provided an external attribution for her anger received a higher salary than the angry female who did not provide a reason for her anger, $t(40) = 3.24$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .979$, but did not receive a higher salary than the unemotional female target, $t(36) = 0.44$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .383$. The salary allocated to the angry female target who provided an external attribution was not significantly different from the salary allocated to the angry male targets with or without a reason for their anger.

Competence

For competence, the interaction between target's gender and emotion expression did not reach statistical significance, $F(2, 134) = 2.24$, $p_{\text{rep}} = .807$. Thus, although having an external attribution for her anger gave the angry female target a boost in status, it apparently did not influence perceptions of her competence.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present studies document new phenomena at the nexus of gender, emotional display rules, perceptions of status, and attributions for behavior. For men, expressing anger may heighten status: Men who expressed anger in a professional context were generally conferred higher status than men who expressed sadness.

For women, however, expressing anger had the opposite effect: Professional women who expressed anger were consistently accorded lower status and lower wages, and were seen as less competent, than angry men and unemotional women. And unlike men's occupational rank, women's occupational rank (i.e., CEO vs. trainee) did not influence status conferral, salary allocation, or judgments of competence. The derogated status of angry women appeared to be due to the degree to which their behavior was seen as internally motivated—in particular, to the perception that they were out of control. But when an angry woman offered an external attribution for her anger, she did not suffer the same loss in perceived status and competence.

These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that anger is a status emotion (Shields, 2002; Tiedens, 2001). Moreover, they converge with prior theories regarding the nature of emotional display rules (Ekman, 1984), as well as with the predictions of Rudman and Fairchild's (2004) model of stereotype-based backlash. Finally, the finding that the nature of behavioral attributions partly underlies status conferral for female targets is consistent with Kelley's (1967, 1973) attribution model, which predicts that behaviors perceived as different from those of one's peers (e.g., for women, expressing anger) are often given personality-based explanations. Participants' attributions of a woman's anger to internal causes (e.g., "she is an angry person," "she is out of control") helped to explain the low status they conferred on her.

The present findings complement, but can be distinguished from, those of previous work examining discrimination against women who violate prescriptions for self-promotion. Women who promote their abilities are perceived as less likeable and less hireable than women who do not promote their abilities—but they are still seen as competent (Rudman, 1998). At the same time, women as a group are seen as warm, but relatively in-

TABLE 3

Results From Study 3: Mean Ratings of Male and Female Targets Expressing Anger With or Without an External Attribution or Expressing No Emotion

Dependent variable	Anger without external attribution		Anger with external attribution		No emotion	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Status conferral	5.42 (1.63)	3.40 (1.44)	4.14 (2.46)	5.02 (1.66)	4.19 (1.67)	4.92 (1.65)
Yearly salary (\$)	46,024 (40,483)	21,130 (13,130)	27,171 (16,708)	34,368 (13,234)	29,100 (15,255)	32,421 (14,037)
Competence	6.35 (2.03)	5.48 (2.17)	5.71 (2.62)	5.78 (2.03)	5.83 (1.68)	6.83 (2.14)

Note. Standard deviations are given in parentheses.

competent (Eagly & Mladinic, 1993; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). The explanation for why self-promoting women are seen as competent, but angry women are seen as relatively incompetent, may be that women who self-promote are explicitly asserting their competence, whereas angry women are not—they are simply emoting.

Although women's anger appears to be sanctioned in a professional context, it may not be sanctioned in a family context (Kring, 2000; Tavris, 1982). Also, it is not clear whether this bias against angry women applies in professional contexts other than job interviews and early impression formation. It is possible that coworkers acquire more individuated information about each other over time, so that this bias becomes less relevant. Additionally, the targets in the present studies were White American men and women, and it remains an empirical question whether our findings hold for individuals of other ethnic groups, such as African American and Hispanic American men and women. Further, the importance of maintaining harmony in collectivistic cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995) suggests that in much of the world, public expressions of anger by *both* women and men may evoke negative reactions. Future research should examine these possibilities.

Turning to real-world situations, such as the remarks about Senator Clinton, one might ask, what can women do to mitigate potential backlashes in response to anger? Professional women face a dilemma: On the one hand, anger may serve as a powerful professional tool—for instance, to compel other people to fulfill their responsibilities, or to castigate them for incompetence (Shields, 2002). On the other hand, to achieve and maintain high social status, professional women may also have to behave “unemotionally” so that they are seen as rational (Albright, 2003). Thus, it is important to identify strategies that professional women can use to express anger without incurring a social penalty.

The present studies take a step in this direction, demonstrating that external, situational explanations for anger ameliorate negative responses to angry women. Specifically, a woman can express anger without incurring a drop in status to the extent that her behavior evokes an external attribution for her anger. These results suggest a strategy that the social target herself can use, in contrast to interventions that focus on social perceivers (e.g., accuracy motivation; Neuberg & Fiske, 1987) or institutional factors (e.g., outcome dependency; Rudman, 1998). Thus, by offering external, situational explanations for anger, professional women may be able to express anger, while simultaneously fulfilling one of the most basic social motivations: gaining status and power.

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