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Students' Ratings of Professors: The Teaching Style Contingency for Latino/a Professors

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This article examines the influence of gender, ethnicity (Latino/a or Anglo), and teaching style (lenient or strict) on students' perceptions of professors teaching a social science course. Undergraduates read and responded to a syllabus and rated the course and the instructor on dimensions such as warmth, knowledge, and political bias. Contrary to previous research, there were no significant effects associated with professor gender. However, there were several ethnicity by teaching style interactions. Latino/a professors received either the least or most favorable marks depending on whether they presented the course with a strict or lenient teaching style, respectively. Results are discussed in terms of aversive racism and the contingent nature of evaluation for Latino/a professors.

Keywords: Latinos/as, student evaluation of teaching, higher education, racism, sexism, stereotypes

The perceptions, evaluations, and experiences of women and people of color in academe have been a subject of increased research in the past two or three decades (Hall, 1982). However, much of this research has focused on student life and curriculum rather than on faculty experiences (Altbach & Lomotey, 1991). Some

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work has been done on students' judgments of women faculty members, but very few research studies have examined students' perceptions and judgments of ethnic minority faculty. Even fewer studies have addressed the interaction of such perceptions with course content and the impact of these perceptions on student evaluation of instruction. This study examined the interactions of gender, ethnicity, and teaching style on students' perceptions of professors teaching a politically charged social science course.

BACKGROUND

This project emerges from an interest in evaluating the invisible obstacles that impede the full and equal integration of women and people of color into the ranks of the professoriate. Although women and people of color have made significant gains in recent years in terms of their visibility in the professoriate, their presence and visibility in higher education continues to be conscribed to the margins of the profession. They remain overrepresented at the adjunct and untenured level and underrepresented at the assistant, associate, and full professor ranks (Benjamin, 1999; Nettles, Perna, & Bradburn, 2001). A significant salary difference in academia continues as well, whereby faculty who are White men earn more than White women, and women and men of color (Benjamin, 2002; Nettles et al., 2001).

A variety of institutional, social, and individual factors contribute to these rank and salary inequities. In terms of the specific effects of ethnicity and gender, and their impact on faculty professional integration and stability, these discrepancies could be due, in part, to the differing course evaluations earned from students. In terms of whether or not there is a gender difference in how women and men are judged, findings from research on students' evaluations of women and men professors are mixed. Some studies have found that men receive higher ratings than women (e.g., Basow & Silberg, 1987; Kierstead, D'Agostino, & Dill, 1988; Sidanius & Crane, 1989), whereas others found the reverse pattern (e.g., Ikegulu & Burham, 2001). One pattern that seems consistent across several studies is that students' expectations of instructors, particularly expectations based on gender-role beliefs, play a significant role in student evaluations, and, by extension, overall faculty success (see Andersen & Miller, 1997, for a review).

Women professors who behave counter to stereotypes and exhibit un-"lady-like" behavior have received lower evaluations than men (Basow, 1998). In a review of the relevant literature, Basow found that women professors were held to narrower gender-role expectations than men professors. Kierstead et al. (1988) found that women professors were rated higher if they were friendly (than if they were unfriendly), whereas this characteristic did not affect student ratings of men professors. Men, irrespective of personal qualities, were rated as more effective than women. Bennett's findings revealed the nature of the double bind for

women faculty members: To receive favorable evaluations from students, women professors have been expected to act more experienced and professional, have a highly structured instructional approach, demonstrate more effort preparing for class, spend more time with students, provide a reduced workload for students, and give higher grades than men professors (Bennet, 1982a, 1982b). Thus, women professors seem to be trapped in a student-expectation bind. Women may be expected to manifest stereotypically feminine characteristics, such as warmth and compassion, but, at the same time, they are expected to display characteristics regarded as stereotypically masculine, such as competence, rigor, and authority (Kierstead et al., 1988). When confronted with women faculty members, students may expect more nurturing behavior, but then judge that behavior to be less professorial. On the other hand, if a woman is more assertive, she may violate students' schemas about women, and students may perceive her as "too masculine" (Andersen & Miller, 1997; Valian, 1998).

Perceptions of women in academia are consistent with perceptions of women in other workplace settings. Women in leadership positions, both inside and outside academe, are expected to embody both stereotypically feminine qualities and the stereotypically masculine qualities associated with competence and leadership (Valian, 1998). In a meta-analysis, Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) found that women in leadership positions were evaluated least favorably when they deviated from prescribed gender roles by leading in a male-dominated context or by leading in a "masculine" (or strict) manner (Eagly et al., 1992). Thus, one of the goals of this study was to consider the role of teaching style, strict and lenient approaches, in the examination of students' perceptions of professors.

One would predict that students' preconceptions would have substantial effects on their appraisal of their academic experiences, from their own personal comfort level (Noel & Smith, 1996) to their evaluation of the competence of professors (Widmeyer & Loy, 1988). Professors who are White men tend to be regarded as the norm for the image of college professor, whereas women and people of color are viewed as an unexpected exception or as the "other" (Messner, 2000). Their presence and functioning in the classroom are marked, and therefore, less taken-for-granted than the presence of White men. Thus, women and people of color may be judged differently based on whether or not the respondent believes their presence in academe is expected and "normal."

Student Ratings of Professors

Investigating student evaluations produced during the course of an actual academic term in an actual college class is difficult using experimental methods. Chief among these difficulties is the inability to randomly assign students to specific courses that would serve as experimental conditions. One strategy to measure students' attitudes about professors is to ask students to evaluate a syllabus for a pro-

posed course (Moore & Trahan, 1997). This method does not assess students' attitudes toward a professor during or after a real class taught by a specific professor. However, the syllabus method allows for the measurement of students' initial attitudes about the content of a course and their judgments about a professor prior to taking it without the pitfalls of nonexperimental approaches. Students' appraisal of a course syllabus serves as their first exposure to the course content and professor and might have bearing on whether or not that student enrolls in the course.

Moore and Trahan (1997) found that, in addition to the gender-stereotyped expectations and beliefs held by students about college professors, the nature and content of a course can create a powerful set of preconceptions that affect students' evaluations of courses and professors. They asked students to rate a syllabus for a proposed *Sociology of Gender* course. College students rated the hypothetical women professor as more biased and more likely to have a political agenda than the hypothetical men professor, despite the fact that the course content was identical in both cases and varied only by the gendered name of the professor in each condition. Moore and Trahan surmised that women who teach courses on gender are sometimes met with resistance and skepticism because students are predisposed to see them as promoting a self-serving political agenda.

Ludwig and Meacham (1997) conducted a similar study in which ethnicity (African American and White) was added as a factor hypothesized to affect students' rating of a syllabus for a course entitled, *Racism and Sexism in American Society.* Consistent with Moore and Trahan's (1997) findings, students rated the course as more controversial when taught by an African American professor than a White professor and when taught by a woman than a man. Interestingly, students expected White men to be less effective than African American men, while there were no differences in effectiveness ratings for African American and White women instructors (Ludwig & Meacham, 1997). In some cases then, gender and ethnicity interact with each other, and interact with course content. This study utilized a course syllabus paradigm to simultaneously look at the interaction of gender and ethnicity, as well as teaching style, in a social science course on gender and ethnicity.

There are very few studies on student ratings of ethnic minority faculty, and we know of no experiments on students' ratings of Latino/a professors in particular. A study examining U.S. Latino/a and Chicana/o professors would make a significant contribution to both the literature on the experiences of people of color in academe, and the literature on ethnic minorities and leadership. The Latino/a population in the United States has grown dramatically over the last several years. Between 1990 and 2000, the U.S. Latino/a population grew by 57.9% and now represents 12.5% of the U.S. population (Guzmán, 2001). Despite the significant growth of the population of Latinos/as, much of the social science research on stereotyping and discrimination of people of color has focused on African Americans as the ethnic minority group to be compared to Whites (Wilson, 2002). This study, adds to the relatively small but growing body of research on stereotypes of Latinos/as. Also, a range of stereotypes of Latinos/as, such as laziness, aggressiveness (Marin, 1984),

and ignorance (Fairchild & Cozens, 1981) have circulated in contemporary American society. Such stereotypes could contribute to students' expectations and ratings of Latino/a professors' performance and competence.

Students' preconceptions of faculty of color, then, might be understood as operating in two significant ways: First, ethnically marked faculty might be prejudged by students in accordance with prevailing stereotypes about the group with which they are identified, and such judgments might supercede students' evaluation of individual faculty performance. Second, minority faculty who teach courses with charged social or political content might be perceived by students as having politically based agendas, as being biased, or as having a personal stake in the course.

THIS STUDY

This study examined the influence of professor gender, ethnicity, and teaching style on students' ratings of a course syllabus. A syllabus was constructed for a social science course called *Race, Gender and Inequality*, and versions of the syllabus varied by gender (woman or man), ethnicity (Latino/a or Anglo), and teaching style (lenient or strict). We asked undergraduate respondents to read the syllabus and rate the course and the instructor on dimensions such as warmth, availability, knowledge of the topic, appropriateness of assignments, and political bias.

This study is distinguished from previous empirical studies in several respects. Much of the research that has examined student expectations and student evaluations of instruction has relied on first-person accounts or nonexperimental methods examining actual courses with actual student evaluations (for a review, see Basow, 1998). This proposed study uses an experimental paradigm in which respondents are invited to react to subtle but specific cues for gender through the use of gender-marked first names. Additionally, the variable of professor ethnicity is established in the proposed study through the use of common Latino/a and Anglo first and last names. Finally, this study allows the investigators to control the teaching style of the hypothetical course. The course syllabus was written in either a strict (or "autocratic") or lenient (or "nonautocratic") style expressed through specific statements and language. Each of these three dimensions—gender, ethnicity, and teaching style—is combined with every other variant, yielding eight versions of the course syllabus.

Inferring from previous work on gender and leadership style and the role of gender and gender stereotypes in evaluating professors, we predicted that women professors would be seen as less prepared and less capable than would men professors. It was also hypothesized that women professors with lenient teaching styles, a relatively "feminine" style, would be viewed as more warm toward and available to students than would men with the same teaching style. In contrast, women professors with strict or "masculine" teaching styles were expected to be considered less warm and available than were men professors with the same teaching style. With-

out specific hypotheses, we explored whether or not Latino/a professors would be judged differently on the dimension of teaching style, relative to White professors. Work on *aversive racism* (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) suggests that if students could find a way to justify the negative evaluation of ethnic minority faculty with reasons other than ethnicity, they will rate them less favorably than White professors. Therefore, Latino/a professors with strict approaches might be rated lower than Anglos with the same approach. Also, drawing on the findings from Moore and Trahan's (1997) study comparing women and men, and Ludwig and Meacham's (1997) study comparing African Americans and Whites, it was predicted that White women professors or Latino/a professors who teach a course on gender and ethnicity would be viewed as having a political agenda and being biased relative to professors who are White men. Finally, stereotypes of Latinos/as as being ignorant (Fairchild & Cozens, 1981), lazy, and aggressive (Marin, 1984) suggest that Latino/a professors might be viewed as less knowledgeable and credible than White professors.

METHOD

Participants

Four hundred and four undergraduate student respondents were recruited from introductory-level social science courses from three undergraduate institutions. Two institutions were small, liberal arts colleges in the Midwestern United States (n = 184; 65% women). The respondents from the two liberal arts colleges were over 90% White (according to the professors whose classes were selected for participation). To avoid compromising the anonymity of the few students of color at the two liberal arts colleges, information about respondent ethnic background was not solicited. The third location was a midsize public university in a large city in the southwestern United States (n = 220; 62% women). Because the students are ethnically diverse at this institution, ethnic background information was gathered. Out of the 215 who identified their ethnic background 46% were Latino/a, 31% were African American, 15% were White, and 8% were Asian American.

Materials

A syllabus for a course called *Race, Gender and Inequality* was created for this study. Each syllabus included a cover page and a rating form. The cover page asked students to read the enclosed syllabus for the recently designed course to be taught by (professor name) and answer the attached questionnaire regarding the class and the professor. Eight versions of the course syllabus were created. They varied according to the three independent variables: gender, ethnicity, and teaching style.

Gender and ethnicity were implied by the course professor's name. The four names used to connote gender and ethnicity were Antonia Ruíz, Antonio Ruíz, Michelle Saunders, and Michael Saunders.[1] Additionally, gender pronouns and the professors' names were used on the cover page and throughout the stimulus packet to increase the salience of professor gender and ethnicity for the assessment and evaluation of the professor.

The third independent variable, teaching style, varied according to the language each professor used on the syllabus. Although course readings, assignments, and schedules were standardized across all versions, the syllabi were designed to convey two styles: lenient and strict. (See the Appendix for examples of the first page of the lenient and strict versions of the syllabus, respectively.) The styles were modeled after the coding scheme used by Eagly et al. (1992) in their meta-analysis of gender bias and leadership studies. They coded leadership style as "feminine" if the leader's style was highly interpersonal, but low in task orientation and authority. Professors whose teaching style was modeled after Eagly et al.'s "feminine" style are referred to here as *lenient.* The lenient professor makes requests rather than commands and appears willing to make concessions. Conversely, a leadership style that was less interpersonal, yet high in task orientation was coded by Eagly et al. as "masculine," and is referred to here as *strict*. The strict professor makes commands and seems unwilling to make concessions or exceptions to rules.

Measurement

Participants were asked on the evaluation form to rate their agreement with various statements made about the professor and her or his class. Participants indicated their agreement on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Statements asked about course goals, course topics, course assignments, the instructor, and the course overall. In addition to including statements that would likely be asked on a standard course evaluation, the evaluation form contained variables that have been shown to be important measures of gender bias, including questions of political self interest and bias (Moore & Trahan,

[1]There were two goals when choosing stimulus names: (a) we wanted to use names that were not the same as any of the professors at the institutions from which we gathered data, and (b) we wanted to use fairly typical Anglo and Latino names but not the most common or stereotypical. We used 2000 census records to generate relatively—but not the most—common names. Also, we surveyed 43 students in two social science classes at the institution from which we collected most of the data. We gave respondents a list of names we thought would be associated with either African Americans, Anglos/Whites, or Latinos/as. In terms of the four names we used in this study, 88% of the respondents imagined Michelle Saunders as White/Anglo, and 95% imagined Michael Saunders as White/Anglo. Ninety-five percent of the respondents imagined Antonia Ruíz to be either "Hispanic" or "Latino," 2% identified her as "Italian" and 2% identified her as "Spanish." Antonio Ruíz was imagined to be "Hispanic" or "Latino" by 98% of the respondents, and "Italian" by 2%.

1997), as well as questions of knowledge and warmth, about which students have been shown to evaluate professors according to gender stereotypes (Bachen, McLoughlin, & Garcia, 1999; Basow, 1995; Bennet, 1982a, 1982b; Feldman, 1993). Demographic information was solicited at the end of the evaluation form.

Procedure

Each student received a small stimulus packet containing a cover page, a syllabus for the course, and an evaluation form. Only students attending class the day of administration were asked to complete the anonymous survey. Students were asked by their professors to give their impressions of a recently designed course. Completed forms were returned from over 95% of the students who were asked to participate.

RESULTS

Data Reduction

A factor analysis using the principal axis extraction method with a varimax rotation was performed on respondents' answers to the 25 questions about the instructor and the course. After factor loadings of less than .45 were suppressed, 25 questions loaded cleanly onto five factors, reflecting these dimensions of professorial competence: professor preparedness and course goals; professor warmth; professor capability; course requirements; and political bias. These factors were tested for reliability, and means of each component were averaged to create five composite indexes. The specific questions that loaded onto each factor, factor loadings, and reliability scores are shown in Table 1.

Analyses

Five three-way between-subjects analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. Teaching style (lenient vs. strict), professor gender (woman vs. man), and professor ethnicity (Latino/a vs. Anglo) were the three independent variables, and each of the five composite scales was the dependent variable for each ANOVA. The following presentation of the five ANOVAs includes a report of significant main effects, significant interactions, effect sizes, and, where appropriate, results from Tukey's test of honestly significant difference (HSD). Refer to Table 2 for the means and standard deviations from these analyses.

Professor preparedness and course goals. The 2 (teaching style) × 2 (professor gender) × 2 (professor ethnicity) ANOVA on professor preparedness and course goals yielded a significant Teaching Style × Professor Ethnicity interaction, $F(1, 396) = 5.00$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$, small effect size. Tukey tests indicated

TABLE 1
Factor Loadings and Composite Scores

Factor and Items	*Factor Loading*	α
Factor 1: Professor preparedness and course goals		.903
The goals of this course are clearly stated.	.733	
The goals of this course are appropriate for this course title.	.687	
The topics for this course seem appropriate for this course title.	.715	
The topics for this course seem appropriate for this course level.	.461	
The instructor seems like she [or he] is credible.	.555	
The instructor seems like she [or he] is well organized.	.687	
The instructor seems like she [or he] is knowledgeable.	.526	
Overall, this course looks like it is challenging.	.575	
Overall, this course looks like it is comprehensive.	.547	
Overall, this course looks like it includes important material.	.581	
Factor 2: Professor warmth		.864
The instructor seems like she [or he] is available to her [or his] students.	.737	
The instructor seems like she [or he] is a professor I would want to take a class with.	.582	
The instructor seems like she [or he] is interested in her [or his] students.	.781	
The instructor seems like she [or he] is approachable/warm.	.727	
Factor 3: Professor capability		.866
The instructor seems like she [or he] is capable of leading intriguing class discussions.	.692	
The instructor seems like she [or he] would be an able lecturer.	.695	
The instructor seems like she [or he] is experienced.	.626	
Factor 4: Course requirements	.694	
The exams and papers for this course appear to be a reasonable amount of work.	.641	
The exams and papers for this course appear to be a good measure of performance.	.489	
The exams and papers for this course appear to be too difficult.	–.586[a]	
Factor 5: Political bias		.694
The topics for this course seem to reflect the professor's biases.	.663	
The topics for this course seem subjective—dependent on the professor's opinions.	.744	
The instructor seems like she [or he] has a political agenda.	.533	

[a]The responses for this question were reversed coded before constructing the composites.

no significant differences in the specific means at the $p < .05$ level. Inspection of the means, however, showed that respondents rated Latinos/as with lenient teaching styles as more prepared and with more appropriate course goals than Anglo women and men professors with lenient styles ($p < .10$).

Professor warmth and availability. The next analysis was a 2 (teaching style) × 2 (professor gender) × 2 (professor ethnicity) ANOVA on respondents' perceptions of professor warmth and availability. There was a significant main effect for

TABLE 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Student Responses to Course Syllabus by Teaching Style, Instructor Ethnicity, and Instructor Gender

	Lenient Style		*Strict Style*	
Composite Response	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Professor preparedness and course goals				
Latina/o professors	4.21_{a}	.51	4.03_{b}	.66
Latina women	4.21	.53	4.08	.61
Latino men	4.20	.48	3.97	.71
Anglo professors	3.99_{b}	.71	$4.09_{a,b}$	.61
Anglo women	4.01	.77	4.14	.61
Anglo men	3.96	.64	4.04	.61
Teaching style overall	4.09	.63	4.06	.63
Professor warmth and availability				
Latina/o professors	4.11_{a}	.74	3.11_{c}	.79
Latina women	4.17	.73	3.13	.65
Latino men	4.03	.76	3.08	.92
Anglo professors	3.77_{b}	.87	3.25_{c}	.88
Anglo women	3.78	.92	3.24	.90
Anglo men	3.77	.82	3.25	.87
Teaching style overall	3.93**	.83	3.17	.84
Professor capability				
Latina/o professors	3.92	.72	3.72	.79
Latina women	3.92	.74	3.67	.78
Latino men	3.92	.70	3.78	.80
Anglo professors	3.83	.75	3.85	.74
Anglo women	3.86	.75	3.81	.79
Anglo men	3.80	.75	3.89	.69
Teaching style overall	3.87	.73	3.78	.77
Course requirements				
Latina/o professors	3.71_{a}	.74	3.37_{b}	.82
Latina women	3.73	.71	3.45	.75
Latino men	3.69	.78	3.28	.89
Anglo professors	3.48_{b}	.84	3.49_{b}	.82
Anglo women	3.48	.83	3.49	.87
Anglo men	3.48	.87	3.49	.77
Teaching style overall	3.58*	.80	3.43	.82
Political bias				
Latina/o professors	3.21	.93	3.13	.85
Latina women	3.23	.99	3.23	.86
Latino men	3.19	.85	3.02	.84
Anglo professors	3.00	.88	3.18	.87
Anglo women	3.01	.93	3.18	.83
Anglo men	3.00	.84	3.18	.92
Teaching style overall	3.09	.91	3.15	.86

Note. Means with different subscripts were significantly different ($p < .05$ or lower).
*$p < .05$. **$p < .001$.

Teaching Style, $F(1, 392) = 83.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$, medium effect size. As expected, professors with strict styles were viewed as less warm and available than were those with lenient teaching styles. In addition, there was a significant Teaching Style × Professor Ethnicity interaction, $F(1, 392) = 7.88$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, small effect size. The Tukey HSD post-hoc test revealed that lenient Latino/a professors were viewed as significantly more warm and available than were the other three types of professors: lenient Anglo professors, $HSD = 4.11$, $p < .05$; strict Anglo professors, $HSD = 10.16$, $p < .001$; and strict Latino/a professors, $HSD = 11.76$, $p < .001$. Additionally, Anglo professors with lenient teaching styles were seen as more warm and available than were both Anglo professors with strict styles, $HSD = 6.43$, $p < .001$, and Latino/a professors with strict styles, $HSD = 8.11$, $p < .001$.

Professor capability. The third 2 × 2 × 2 ANOVA on Professor Capability produced no significant main effects or interactions. The Teaching Style × Professor Ethnicity interaction was a nonsignificant trend, $F(1, 384) = 2.09$, $p = .15$, $\eta^2 = .01$, small effect size. Inspection of the means suggests a pattern similar to the previous two ANOVAs, that lenient Latinos/as were viewed as the most capable, whereas strict Latinos/as were viewed as the least capable.

Course requirements. The fourth analysis, a 2 × 2 × 2 ANOVA on Course Requirements, produced a significant main effect for style $F(1, 396) = 4.29$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$, small effect size. Lenient professors were believed to have more appropriate course requirements than strict professors. A Teaching Style × Professor Ethnicity interaction was significant as well, $F(1, 396) = 4.69$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$, small effect size. Follow-up Tukey HSD tests found that lenient Latino/a professors were thought to have more appropriate course requirements than did strict Latinos/as, $HSD = 4.09$, $p < .05$.

Political bias. Finally, a 2 (teaching style) × 2 (professor gender) × 2 (professor ethnicity) ANOVA on Political Bias was conducted. There were no significant effects associated with this factor, however there was a nonsignificant trend $F(1, 394) = 2.21$, $p = .14$, $\eta^2 = .01$, small effect size, suggesting that respondents tended to view Latinos/as with lenient teaching styles to be more politically biased than lenient Anglos.

DISCUSSION

This study was motivated, in part, by a desire to understand why women and people of color serve in lower levels of the professoriate, with lower salaries than men and White professors (Benjamin, 2002; Nettles et al., 2001). Drawing from the literature on gender and leadership, we wanted to see whether students rated college professors differently based on teaching style, as well as the gender and ethnicity

of the professor. Studies have documented an evaluative cost for women who act out of their prescribed gender role and lead in a strict or "unlady-like" fashion (Basow, 1998; Eagly et al., 1992; Valian, 1998). Few studies have examined the influence of professor ethnicity on students' expectations, and therefore, whether similar patterns would be obtained for Latino/a professors was examined.

Using a syllabus for a course called *Race, Gender and Inequality,* as the stimulus, we predicted that, consistent with findings from the relevant literature (Basow, 1998), women professors would be viewed as less prepared and less capable than would men professors. It was also hypothesized that women with lenient teaching styles, a relatively "feminine" style, would be viewed as more warm toward and available to students than would men with the same teaching style. In contrast, women professors with a strict, or "masculine," teaching style were expected to be considered less warm and available than men professors with the same teaching style. We also explored whether or not Latino/a professors would be judged differently on the dimension of teaching style, relative to Anglo professors. Latinos/as, regardless of teaching style were predicted to be viewed as less knowledgeable and credible than would Anglo professors. Finally, given the political nature of the course we developed, it was predicted that professors who are White women and Latinos/as would be viewed as having a biased political agenda relative to professors who are Anglo men.

The most surprising findings were associated with gender. The student respondents did not perceive women and men professors differently. This was true for both main effects and interactions, and across all five dimensions of professorial competence we examined: professor preparedness/course goals, professor warmth, professor capability, course requirements, and political bias. Thus, our hypothesis that women would be rated more favorably on certain "feminine" dimensions, such as warmth and availability, and less favorably on "masculine" dimensions, such as knowledge and competence, was not supported by the study. Additionally, and contrasting with Moore and Trahan's (1997) study, we found no support for our hypothesis that women professors would be judged to be more politically biased than would men for teaching a course on gender (and ethnicity).

We predicted that students' expectations of women would contrast with their expectations of "professors." This prediction was based on the assumption that men would be seen as the norm for a professor given the history of the professoriate. This assumption may not have been true given the relative advances women have made in the academy in the recent decades (Glover & Parsad, 2002). Women professors have increased their visibility in social science fields, in particular (Glover & Parsad, 2002). Given this advancement, women professors in our study may not have been seen as out of context, at least not to the extent that students would express significantly different expectations of them in their evaluations for the study. The context of the course may have, furthermore, moderated the stu-

dents' teaching style expectations of women. Because more women have taken positions in the social sciences in recent years, students may have experienced a wider variety of leadership and teaching styles from female professors, and, thus, may not have as exacting expectations of women leaders in this context. Having said all this, men continue to out-number, out-rank, and out-earn women in social science fields (Glover & Parsad, 2002), and women themselves have reported their dissatisfaction with the differential treatment they receive by students because of their gender (Owen Blakemore, Switzer, DiLorio, & Fairchild, 1997). Therefore, we are not fully satisfied with this explanation. We cannot rule out the possibility that women and men are treated differently based on their leadership approaches or teaching style—this study simply may not have detected differing expectations.

Other explanations of the lack of support for students' different expectations of women and men professors may have to do with the demographic of this sample. First, the study's sample consisted of more women respondents (64%) than men, and a few studies have demonstrated a same-gender preference on the part of students toward faculty (Basow, 1995). Considering the sample's greater number of women participants, a same-gender preference may have resulted in higher evaluations for women than they would receive from an even-gender sample and may have diminished our ability to observe any potential bias against women. Second, respondents in this study represent an ethnically diverse sample whereas most of the studies that inspired this one included relatively homogeneous samples in which almost all respondents were White. Although we cannot speculate specifically, it is worth mentioning that perhaps the ethnic make-up of our sample had an effect on the findings related to gender.

The major findings of this study were associated with the more exploratory variable, instructor ethnicity. Although teaching style was associated with significant main effects, including perceptions of warmth and availability and of the reasonableness of the course requirements, significant instructor ethnicity and teaching style interactions more fully explain these effects. In each of the significant interactions, teaching style was shown to moderate students' evaluations of Latino/a professors. Specifically, evaluations of Latinos/as hinged on whether they were strict or lenient in their approach, which resulted in the highest and lowest marks, respectively, for the three significant teaching style and professor ethnicity interactions. Furthermore, Latino/a professors received the highest marks overall, compared to Anglos, but only when they were lenient in their teaching style. In other words, lenient Latinos/as, regardless of gender, were viewed as more prepared, with more appropriate goals for the course, as warmer and more approachable, and as having more appropriate requirements for the course than were the other professors.

Conversely, this study identified a high cost for Latino/a professors who led with a strict teaching style. Latinos/as with strict styles received the lowest marks overall in two of the three significant interactions, warmth and availability and

course requirements, and on professor preparedness and course goals, strict Latino/a professors received the second lowest evaluations, rated only slightly, and statistically indistinguishably, higher than lenient Anglo Professors. Students expressed an aversion to Latino/a professors who led with a strict style, and conversely, exhibited a preference for Latino/a professors who led in a lenient manner, across both professional and interpersonal dimensions. Thus, students' evaluations of Latino/a professors were contingent on their style.

In contrast, teaching style was not shown to be as important a variable for Anglo professors. Only on the index warmth and availability, on which there was a significant main effect, were the Anglo professors' evaluations significantly differentiated according to their teaching style. In this case, Anglo professors who presented themselves and the course with a strict style were judged as less warm and available than were their lenient counterparts. Given the main effect for style and the expected effect of a nonwarm and non-nurturant style on this index, this particular rating pattern was as unsurprising as it was isolated, and, furthermore, was not found to be as dramatically polarized according to style as were Latino/a professors' evaluations.

Explanations for the teaching style and ethnicity findings can be drawn from a few perspectives emerging from the literature on prejudice and discrimination. This study's findings may be explained by the phenomenon *aversive racism*, whereby people seek nonprejudicial or behavioral justifications for their aversion to an ethnic minority group (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). Recall that there were no ethnicity main effects. That is, Latino professors were not rated negatively independent of teaching style. However, participants in this study may have felt justified to express their negative feelings toward a Latino/a professor under the conviction that they disliked her or his strict leadership style. By this line of reasoning, distaste for the strict leadership style permitted participants to express ethnic bias against Latino/a professors with strict styles, while, having no justification, students did not express ethnic aversion to lenient Latino/a professors. In contrast, bias was not expressed against Anglo professors even when they employed the strict style, which could have been a possible justification for such expression. This explanation receives further support given the few differences in style independent of ethnicity; the fact that style itself received relatively little attention, and yet was such an important variable for Latino/a professors, seems to support its role as a justification for ethnic bias against Latinos/as.

A second explanation for the cost incurred by Latino/a professors with strict styles comes from the literature on Latino/a stereotypes. It may have been that the strict style interacted with students' negative expectations of Latino/a professors. In particular, the strict style may have elicited in the students stereotypes that Latinos/as are cruel (Fairchilds & Cozens, 1981) or aggressive (Marin, 1984). The Latino/a professors' strict style may have elicited negative expectations such as these, resulting in more negative evaluations. This may have been especially relevant for

measures of warmth, on which ratings of Latino/a professors were most polarized by the two teaching styles.

However, these explanations for the patterns of Latino/a professors' evaluations only address the cost for Latino/a professors employing a strict teaching approach, and do not address the higher marks for Latino/a professors who led with a lenient style, compared to strict Latinos/as and Anglo professors employing either style. Latino/a professors with a lenient approach may have surprised the students and provided an alternative to stereotypic expectations of cruelty and aggressiveness. This contrast may have influenced students to "overvalue" lenient Latino/a professors and may have resulted in their relatively high evaluations compared to the other professors.

An additional factor that may in part explain the high evaluations received by Latino/a professors who led with a lenient style has been referred to as the "talking platypus effect," whereby evaluators "overvalue" a target person who is a minority in the evaluative context precisely *because* she or he is a minority in that context (Abramson, Goldberg, & Greenberg, 1977). Presumably, this effect occurs because the target (in our case, the Latino/a professor) is perceived by the evaluator to possess exceptional competence to have overcome the obstacles to achieving her or his position. To apply the talking platypus effect to our findings, students may have been surprised at a Latino/a professor's competence and/or her or his position in the academy, and may have thus rewarded her or him with high marks. Furthermore, stereotypes of Latinos/as as not valuing education (Valencia & Black, 2002) might have helped create a talking platypus effect. We should say, however, that if this effect accounts for the high evaluations received by Latino/a professors, it does so only in combination with the previous explanations for evaluative costs for Latinos/as, as it was moderated by the Latino/a professors' teaching style.

Thus, as this study demonstrated, ethnicity may play a complex role in professor evaluations. Although this study found no differences on the basis of ethnicity alone, students responded positively or negatively to Latino/a professors depending on their lenient or strict teaching style. Just as Latino professors' negative evaluations seemed to depend on their (seemingly disagreeable) strict style, students favored and rewarded Latino/a professors for their lenient style. This study, then, suggests that it is here, at the intersection of ethnicity and behavior, that Latino/a ethnicity becomes salient for students and where it may matter most in terms of evaluation. However, it must be noted that just because we found ethnic bias only when it was associated with teaching style, we do not suggest that ethnic bias, regardless of style, does not exist. Rather, it may not have manifested in this design.

There are limitations of this study that should be mentioned. First, this study examined students' reactions to a professor based on a course syllabus, and did not assess students' attitudes toward a professor during or after a real class. Although findings in this study are intriguing, they do not necessarily generalize to the evaluation of professors at the end of a course. The design of this study, however, had

more experimental control than most previous studies on students' evaluations of courses and syllabi (Basow, 1998). Moreover, students' appraisal of a course syllabus serves as their first exposure to the content and professor and might have bearing on whether or not students enroll in the course. Also, in reference to the lack of gender findings here, future studies might examine the type of course as a factor. Some research has shown that gender stereotypes, with women paying the highest penalty, are more likely to occur in gender stereotyped occupations such as those in the male-dominated fields of science and math (Owen Blakemore et al., 1997). A follow-up to this study might compare feminine-stereotyped courses (e.g., humanities courses), with masculine-stereotyped courses (e.g., engineering or science courses).

CONCLUSIONS

The hiring, renewal, and tenuring of faculty in academia, from large research institutions to small liberal arts and community colleges, depend on the interaction of a range of factors, many of which extend beyond the immediate control of the faculty member or the quality of job performance. The significance of ethnicity as a salient factor in the ratings of college faculty remains largely understudied. Results from this project contribute to our knowledge of students' stereotypes of professors and begin to fill the gaps in the literature on ethnic stereotypes of Latino/a professors. Students' perceptions in the earliest days of their encounters with a course can affect their approach to a course and their patterns of interaction with the instructor. The consequences of student biases can be substantial in terms of faculty evaluation and, therefore, on the relative representation of women and faculty of color in the professoriate. In addition, student bias might have a severe limiting effect on students' ability to learn and grow from exposure to course content that explores social inequality or examines critically the assumptions that might underlie such schemas. For example, although many students report that their lives have been positively transformed when exposed to feminist principles, some students may ignore or dismiss the content of a gender-focused course when it is taught by a woman (Moore & Trahan, 1997). Similarly, hooks (1989) argued that men and Whites are often thought to be the best advocates for feminist and antiracist causes because they are viewed as more objective, as having less at stake, and, therefore more legitimate than White women and people of color. Therefore, gender and ethnic preconceptions can impact students' own educational experiences, and, perhaps of greater lasting consequence, on the professional experiences of women faculty members and faculty of color.

As this study shows, there may be a teaching style contingency for Latino/a professors, whereby students evaluate Latinos/as more positively than White profes-

sors when they display lenient styles in the classroom and more negatively than Whites when they display strict styles. More work will need to be done to examine the extent to which these experimental findings translate to actual end-of-course evaluations. Nonetheless, the study points to the role of ethnic bias in students' preliminary assessment of professors. Additionally, it gives us reason to suspect that bias may figure into final evaluations, and that professors may not be playing on a level field and under the same performance expectations.

Results from this study could contribute to campus climates in significant ways. First, this research could contribute to raising students' awareness of their own preconceptions as they have an impact on what students bring to the classroom and their interactions with faculty. For instance, these findings may be incorporated into existing anti-racism initiatives present on many college and university campuses. Second, teaching assistant and faculty training driven by empirical research can increase awareness of the situations that new faculty, particularly faculty of color, are likely to encounter in classrooms. Finally, application of this research should heighten awareness in matters of faculty personnel review, tenure, and promotion. Increased presence and enhanced success of ethnic minority and women faculty members will provide for students a diverse body of faculty that more accurately reflects their own lived experience and, in turn, fosters increased diversity in the professoriate in future generations.

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APPENDIX
Teaching Styles

Lenient Teaching Style

SS 133 Race, Gender and Inequality
Spring 2001: T, Th 10:20–12:00, SSB 231
Professor Antonia Ruíz
Office hours: 8:30–10:00 M, W, F in SSB 337
also by appointment, x6972

This interdisciplinary course is designed to expose students to gender and ethnic minority issues in the United States. Topics of study will include the following major themes: discrimination and oppression; White privilege and male privilege; gender and racial marking; acculturation/assimilation; gender socialization; ethnic and gender identity/pride; affirmative action; school achievement; and social activism. SS 133 students will become well-versed in these various racial and gender issues over the course of the term.

Course Requirements

In addition to coming prepared to class and completing the assigned readings, students will complete each of the following:

- 5–6 pop quizzes over the assigned readings and class discussions. These quizzes will not be announced ahead of time, though students with excused absences may be permitted to make up quizzes they miss. The quizzes will be worth 15% of the term grade.

- A mid-term exam in week 7, involving short-answer, true/false, and essay questions. The exam will be a comprehensive evaluation of class work and readings up to that point and will be worth 25% of the term grade. Make-up exams will be permitted for special circumstances, though I ask that you see me ahead of time to arrange make-ups.
- A critical essay in which students will assimilate 3–4 class readings (chapters or articles) to examine intersections of race and gender oppression and/or privilege. Guidelines will be given to students in week 8. Essays will be turned in during week 11. The critical essay will be worth 30% of the term grade.
- A comprehensive final worth 30% of the term grade. The final will be administered on the last day of class. I will permit make-ups under special circumstances and ask that you please see me ahead of time to schedule another exam time.

I ask students to attend as many class sessions as possible, though I understand that things come up and students become ill. Generally, I require students to miss no more than 3 classes. However, I ask that you please contact me if you have to miss multiple classes. It is possible that we can work something out for you to remain in the class.

Course Materials

- *Race, Class and Gender in a Diverse Society*, Kendall (Ed.), 1996.
- *White Privilege*, Rothenberg, 2001.
- *A Different Mirror, A History of Multicultural America*, Takaki, 1994.
- *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, Tatum, 1997.
- SS 133 Course Packet. Packet readings will be designated with "CP" beside the assigned readings.

Course books will be available in the school bookstore under the course number: SS 133. Reading packets can be purchased in class for $10. Two course readers will also be on reserve in the library, though I recommend students purchase their own copies for convenience.

If you have any concerns about the course material or your performance in the course, please come see me during my office hours, or make an appointment with me if my office hours aren't compatible with your schedule. Also, if you have any special needs that you feel I should know about, please let me know. In some cases, I am willing to be somewhat flexible with due dates granted valid excuses and early notice, or serious illness.

Strict Teaching Style

SS 133 Race, Gender and Inequality
Spring 2001: T, Th 10:20–12:00, SSB 231
Professor Antonia Ruíz
Office hours: 8:30–10:00 M, W, F in SSB 337
also by appointment, x6972

This interdisciplinary course is designed to expose students to gender and ethnic minority issues in the United States. Topics of study will include the following major themes: discrimination and oppression; White privilege and male privilege; gender and racial marking; acculturation/assimilation; gender socialization; ethnic and gender identity/pride; affirmative action; school achievement; and social activism. SS 133 students must become well-versed in these various racial and gender issues over the course of the term.

Course Requirements

Students are to come prepared to every class and complete all assigned readings. Additionally, students must complete each of the following assignments:

- 5–6 pop quizzes over the assigned readings and class discussions. These quizzes will be assigned at my discretion throughout the term. The quizzes will be worth 15% of the term grade. Students *must* be present to take quizzes, as they can not be made up.
- A mid-term exam in week 7, involving short-answer, true/false, and essay questions. The exam will be a comprehensive evaluation of class work and readings up to that point and will be worth 25% of the term grade. Students *must* attend class the day of exams. Make-up exams will not be allowed. Failure to take the exam will result in a zero.
- A critical essay in which students must assimilate 3–4 class readings (chapters or articles) to examine intersections of race and gender oppression and/or privilege. Guidelines will be distributed to students in week 8. Essays will be turned in during week 11. The critical essay will be worth 30% of the term grade. Late essays will *not* be accepted.
- A comprehensive final worth 30% of the term grade. The final will be administered on the last day of class. Students are required to be present the day of the exam. Make-ups will *not* be allowed. Failure to take the exam will result in a zero.

Students are expected to attend *every* class. No more than three absences (excused or unexcused) will be allowed. Considering the amount of material and lecture/discussion missed in three classes, no exceptions will be made to this rule.

Course Materials

- *Race, Class and Gender in a Diverse Society*, Kendall (Ed.), 1996.
- *White Privilege*, Rothenberg, 2001.
- *A Different Mirror, A History of Multicultural America*, Takaki, 1994.
- *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, Tatum, 1997.
- SS 133 Course Packet. Packet readings will be designated with "CP" beside the assigned readings.

Course books will be available in the school bookstore under the course number: SS 133. Reading packets must be purchased in class on the first and second days only. Packets will cost $10. Two course readers will also be on reserve in the library, though I *strongly* recommend students purchase their own copies for convenience. Students who do not buy packets must plan ahead to do the readings, as packets may be checked out by other students (especially immediately prior to class!).