

BOSSSES' PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY-WORK CONFLICT AND WOMEN'S PROMOTABILITY: GLASS CEILING EFFECTS

JENNY M. HOOBLER
SANDY J. WAYNE
GRACE LEMMON

University of Illinois at Chicago

We examine one potential reason for the persistence of the glass ceiling: bosses' perceptions of female subordinates' family-work conflict. Person categorization and social role theories are used to examine whether bosses (both male and female) perceive women as having greater family-work conflict and therefore view them as mismatched to their organizations and jobs. The results support our model: bosses' perceptions of family-work conflict mediated the relationships between subordinate sex and perceptions of person-organization fit, person-job fit, and performance. Both types of fit were related to promotability (nomination for promotion and manager-assessed promotability). We discuss implications for practice and future research.

Women have made great strides in gaining entrance to firms and cracking the glass ceiling. Despite these advances, women still largely remain stuck in middle management.

-Mainiero and Sullivan (2005: 118)

Fewer than one in five working women in the United States held a professional or managerial job in the mid 1970s (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1974), but in the 1990s this figure increased to about one in four (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1996). And today women comprise half of professional school graduates, obtaining careers in fields such as accounting, business, and law in numbers about equal to men's (Catalyst, 2007). Although entry into these occupations happens at about the same rate, evidence is mounting that women's and men's workplace experiences and career paths begin to divide soon after (Catalyst, 2004; Davidson & Burke, 2000).

Although working women are accumulating the requisite experience and education, there is concern that they still encounter what has been termed the glass ceiling in today's workplaces. The term was popularized in the 1980s and refers to barriers to women's upward mobility in organizations (Hy-mowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). The "glass" metaphor refers to the invisibility of these barriers. Research on this phenomenon focuses on identifying the organizational practices and interpersonal biases that inhibit women's advancement. Examples of find-

ings and issues in this area include lack of mentoring of women, sex stereotyping, and views that associate masculine traits with leader effectiveness (cf. Fletcher, 1992; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Morrison, 1987; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002; Ragins & Cotton, 1991). No advertisements frankly state that women need not apply or are not eligible for high-level positions (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000), but evidence suggests that women continue to have difficulty advancing into the ranks of senior management. For example, women holding the titles of chairman, CEO, COO (chief operating officer), and executive vice president remain at about 7 percent of the population of executives in the United States (Catalyst, 2007).

Although researchers have long studied female managers from the "think leader, think male" paradigm (e.g., Schein, 1973, 1975), an area that has not been investigated as a linking mechanism between women and their career outcomes is managers' perceptions of subordinates' work and family demands (when demands from one domain spill over to affect the other). According to social role theory, women are typically viewed from a non-work, caregiving vantage point, so their nonwork demands should be quite salient to workplace colleagues (Hoobler, 2007). Therefore, we feel that an area deserving of research attention, and one that may hold a key to understanding the persistence of the glass ceiling, are bosses' perceptions of their subordinates' family and work intersections.

To this end, we designed a study that began by testing whether managers view women as having more family-work conflict than men—that is,

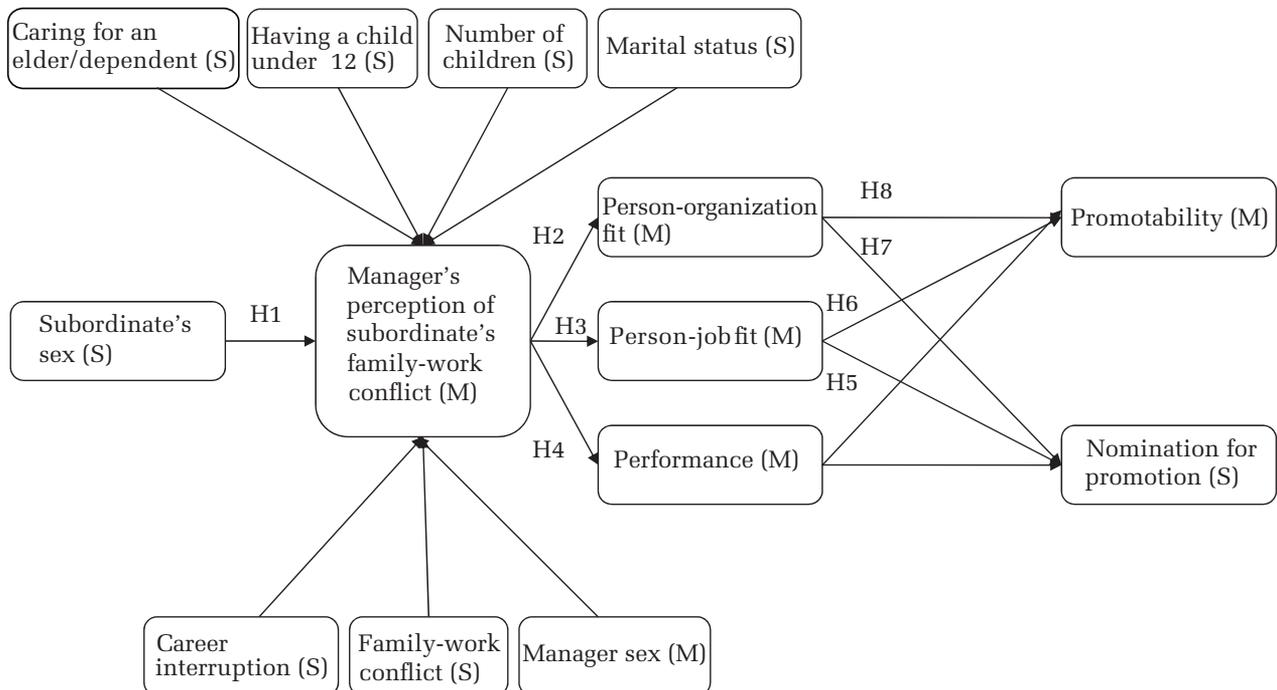
The authors wish to sincerely thank Belle Rose Ragins for her astute and helpful comments on a draft of this article.

whether women are viewed as having more difficulty effectively executing their work roles because of their family roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), even with actual child- and other dependent-care responsibilities and their own perceived family-work conflict controlled for. Then, we examined the extent to which bosses' perceptions of their subordinates' family-work conflict impacted their perceptions of subordinates' fit with their jobs and organization, their performance, and ultimately subordinates' promotability. In other words, our study suggests that rather than actual family-work conflict, bosses' biased perceptions of their female employees' family-work conflict may explain why women experience fewer promotions. Bosses' perceptions are hypothesized to significantly affect promotability assessments and thus contribute to explaining the gap in promotions between men and women. We see this perception-promotability relationship as one potential reason for the perseverance of the glass ceiling. While the glass ceiling metaphor has often referred to barriers to the corporate suite, as in Morrison, White, Van Velsor, and the Center for Creative Leadership (1987), our study consisted of a sample of middle managers just below the general manager level. Existing social role (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002) and person categorization theories (Feldman, 1981,

1986; Shore, Barksdale, & Shore, 1995) guide our study.

Our research addresses several gaps in the extant literature. Kirchmeyer (2002) found that promotions to higher organizational levels were associated with greater masculinity and that having children meant less career success for women but more career success for men (2006). In the present study, we have answered Kirchmeyer's call for research on how family (in this case, perceptions of family-work conflict) colors not only objective but also subjective assessments of upward mobility. To this end, we examined two aspects of promotability: (1) managers' perceptions of their employees' promotability and (2) employees' reports of whether they had been nominated for a promotion. Second, we believe this study has answered a call from Martins, Eddleston, and Veiga (2002) for work and family research that examines how factors that are under an organization's control—such as norms regarding supervisor behavior toward employees who balance work and family roles (e.g., Stephens & Sommer, 1995)—influence the relationship between this type of conflict and career outcomes. Accordingly, we designed our study to explore how manager cognitions relate to women's promotability. We present a model of the proposed relationships in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
Hypothesized Model: Bosses' Perceptions of Family-Work Conflict and Women's Promotability^a



^a "M" = variable reported by managers. "S" = variable reported by subordinates.

HYPOTHESES

Many reasons have been offered to explain the differences between men and women's upward progress in organizations, but we focus on subconscious stereotyping that has been labeled "think leader, think male" (Schein, 1973, 1975). Berthoin Antal and Izraeli (1993) have asserted that the highest hurdle for women in management in all industrialized countries is the unrelenting stereotype that "manager equals male." In this vein, social role theory (Eagly, 1987) prescribes that gender-typical roles (e.g., breadwinner versus homemaker) ascribed to men and women shape both expectations about the appropriate behavior of men versus women and the beliefs men and women have about their own talents and skills. Research has consistently illustrated that men are generally seen as more agentic and competent, whereas women are seen as more expressive, communal, nurturing, and supportive (cf. Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). And one sphere in which social role stereotypes have manifested is in management abilities, resulting in the think leader–think male stereotype (Heilman, 2001).

Social role theory suggests a double bind for female managers. That is, they are (1) unassociated with management effectiveness and (2) associated with nurturing, communal social roles. As the following quotation illustrates, stereotypes prevail that associate women with, specifically, caregiving roles: "Because of child-rearing responsibilities, women are less committed to their careers" (Mattis [2002: 321], quoting from a document created by the Bank of Montreal's Advancement of Women Initiative). Caregiving roles are underrewarded in the labor market and in organizations and are seen as incongruent with leadership roles (Lewis, 2001; Liff & Ward, 2001; Littleton, 1997). The implication is that women's careers may suffer because of the caregiving stereotypes ascribed to them.

According to Lewis (2001), the most fundamental assumptions made in the traditional male model of work are the separation of work and home and the division of labor, which have resulted in greater value placed on male workers and those without active family commitments. One problematic assumption underlying the traditional model is that all women have caregiving responsibilities. In fact, women who are highly focused on their careers are less likely to marry and less likely to have children, and when they do, they are likely to have fewer children (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). A second problematic assumption of the traditional model is that work and family domains are incompatible and in conflict (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Con-

trary to this assumption, recent studies have shown that many workers take pride in having struck a balance between the two domains that is satisfactory to them and allows for commitment to both roles; that is, work and family can be allies (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). Thus, it is troublesome to project the caregiving role onto all female workers and, further, to assume that all experience a higher degree of conflict between the two roles than do males. A main finding of Byron's (2005) meta-analysis on work-family conflict was that, across many studies, sex has a near-zero relationship to work interference with family, and a weakly positive relationship to family interference with work (with women experiencing slightly higher family interference with work), despite the fact that strong relationships between these two constructs and sex have been frequently proposed in the management literature. A conclusion of Byron's analysis of multiple studies was that men and women seem to have quite similar levels of work interference with family and family interference with work. Despite these empirical findings, bosses may *perceive* differences in family-work conflict between their female and male subordinates. Admittedly, these perceptions may stem from many causes. For example, managers may have read reports indicating that women actually spend more time each day on family/home responsibilities than do men, or that women are more easily distracted by family while at work (e.g., Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992). But in this study, we employ social role theory to explain managers' elevated perceptions of females' family-work conflict.

The extant research is lacking in testing *managers' perceptions* of the conflict their subordinates experience in regard to work and family. However, managers' *influence* on subordinates' work-family conflict has been examined in a small number of studies. Specifically, Thomas and Ganster (1995) found that supportive supervision reduces subordinates' perceptions of work-family conflict. And Thompson, Brough, and Schmidt (2006) found that when managers and subordinates reported similar views of work-family issues, subordinates reported less work-family conflict.

Relatedly, Shore and colleagues (1995) found that managers make attributions about their employees' organizational commitment. According to Feldman's (1981, 1986) work on person categorization, managers base assumptions about employees on external cues that then influence the information that is salient, attended to, and recalled in relation to that employee (Shore et al., 1995). We propose that the sex of their employees affects how bosses categorize them in relation to family-work

conflict. Sex has been shown to be the most instantaneous and primary way of categorizing others, even in comparison to race, age, and occupation (Fiske, Haslam, & Fiske, 1991; Stangor, Lynch, Duan, & Glass, 1992; van Knippenberg, van Twuyver, & Pepels, 1994). And stereotypes about women and men have been found to be quite easily and automatically activated (Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Banaji, Hardin, & Rothman, 1993; Blair & Banaji, 1996). Because managers are more likely to notice and recall information that confirms prior assumptions rather than information that contradicts them (Krieger, 1995), cognitive biases are reinforced over time. Rhode (2003) illustrated this concept: given their assumption that working mothers are not fully committed to their careers, fellow lawyers more easily remembered the times when female lawyers with children left work early than the times they worked late. In other words, because managers categorized women into gender-typical caregiving roles, they linked women with increased family-work conflict. Thus:

Hypothesis 1. Managers associate female subordinates with greater family-work conflict than male subordinates.

Although the vast increase in the number of professional women in recent years seemingly means that equality has been achieved in the workplace, the reality for women is depressed wages and lower advancement (Hesse-Biber & Carter, 2000). One explanation for this may be enduring stereotypes of women's lack of fit. Previous studies have found a link between sex and both (1) person-organization fit (the match between an individual's values and his or her organization's values) and (2) person-job fit (the match between an individual's skills and abilities and those of his or her job requirements).

Turning first to person-organization fit, we suggest that individuals should be perceived as successful in organizations that share their personal characteristics, values, needs, and goals (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). However, organizations are not gender-neutral. That is, in organizations, the contrast between stereotypes of women (e.g., as kind, caring) and stereotypes ascribed to men (e.g., as tough, achievement-oriented) fosters the assumption that women will perform poorly (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Research supports that 15 years after Schein (1973) coined the phrase "think leader, think male," Heilman, Block, Martell, and Simon (1989) found that little had changed in workplace perceptions of male and female managers. Being a woman signals femininity, which has been associated with perceptions of decreased managerial ability (Powell et al., 2002),

less effective leadership (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003), and fewer attributions for organizational successes (Heilman & Haynes, 2005)—in essence, incompatibility with what organizations are assumed to desire in employees. And hundreds of studies over the past decades have demonstrated that people develop gender stereotypes and gender role expectations early on, well before the age of five, and that many of these stereotypes are quite inflexible (Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit, & Cossette, 1990). Returning to the double bind of the woman manager, we note that on the one hand, stereotypes about women are incongruent with stereotypes of successful managers, and on the other hand, they are congruent with caregiving roles. As evidence, a full 82.1 percent of adult men and women believe women are biologically better suited to care for children (National Opinion Research Center, 1994–1996). People believe that the sexes have typical, and different, traits and behaviors (e.g., Diekmann & Eagly, 2000), and that women and men should differ, especially in behaviors such as caregiving, which are believed to be foundational sex differences (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Returning to our earlier cognitive biases argument, these lack-of-fit expectations about women in business organizations are likely confirmed over time (Feldman, 1981, 1986), as managers attend to women's behaviors that perpetuate this line of thinking. Managers then act in ways (e.g., in performance evaluations, allocation of desirable assignments) that affect how women are regarded and rewarded in organizations (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). So though managers may not consciously see women as ill-suited to their organizations, managers' enduring stereotypes about women's caregiving roles may affect their perceptions. Thus:

Hypothesis 2. Managers' perceptions of subordinates' family-work conflict mediate the relationship between subordinates' sex and managers' perceptions of subordinates' person-organization fit.

As far as person-job fit, when bosses (of either sex) categorize employees on the basis of sex, we suggest that they expect female employees, even subconsciously, to be less attendant to their jobs as a result of competition from caregiving responsibilities. As with person-organization fit, think leader—think male stereotyping likely plays a role. In fact, in large, comprehensive studies of executive women, the most frequently cited obstacle to women's advancement is male stereotyping and related preconceptions (Catalyst, 1996). Managerial jobs have traditionally been imbued with male charac-

teristics, in that they are synonymous with organizational authority, responsibility, and status (Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989).

We seek to explain women's lack of job fit via a related stereotype—women's link to caregiving responsibilities. Despite Byron's (2005) meta-analytic findings that sex has a near-zero relationship to work interference with family, and that being female has only a slightly positive relationship to family interference with work, 70 percent of U.S. adults agree that women's family responsibilities prevent them from putting as much time and effort into their jobs as do men (National Opinion Research Center, 1994–1996).

We predict that this expectation affects managers' appraisals and judgments regarding female employees. Drawing on person categorization theory, Feldman (1981, 1986) called attention to the self-fulfilling prophecy of managers' expectations influencing the quality of the exchange relationship with their employees. Research has shown that managerial expectations of an employee in areas such as career success (Liden, Wayne, & Stillwell, 1993) predict the quality of the exchange relationship better than actual job performance or demographic similarity, eventually coloring employee resource allocation, resource attainment, and the like. So, when managers expect women to be mismatched to their jobs, managers' interactions with them may actually serve to bolster this belief. Even if managers do not see women in general as ill-suited to their jobs, these perceptions may be translated through managers' stereotypes about women's caregiving roles and concerns about how these roles may manifest as family-work conflict. Thus, we predict:

Hypothesis 3. Managers' perceptions of subordinates' family-work conflict mediate the relationship between subordinates' sex and managers' perceptions of subordinates' person-job fit.

Not only do we anticipate that managers' perceptions of their female subordinates' family-work conflict will be associated with decreased fit with their organizations and jobs; we also expect a negative relationship with managers' perceptions of their subordinates' work performance. The theoretical argument is based on social role theory: the feminine caregiving role stands at odds with the successful performance of the masculine managerial role. Specifically, when family conflicts with work, such conflict is seen as incompatible with managers' vision of the successful worker as someone who is unfettered by outside demands and puts his or her job first (Ridgeway & Correll, 2005). Ac-

ording to this belief, the ideal worker is perceived to have the ability to "drop everything" for work demands. "Face time" and long hours are not necessarily associated with actual productivity (e.g., Epstein, Seron, Oglensky, & Saute, 1999), yet these often function as shortcuts to assessing subordinates' performance (Williams, 2001). Although a handful of earlier studies have shown that family-work conflict was negatively related to self-reported job performance, Witt and Carlson (2006) recently provided evidence for a negative relationship between family-work conflict and supervisor-assessed job performance as well. In our model, we predicted that bosses' perceptions of family-work conflict would mediate the relationship between sex and work performance. Thus:

Hypothesis 4. Managers' perceptions of subordinates' family-work conflict mediate the relationship between subordinates' sex and managers' perceptions of subordinates' performance.

As shown in Figure 1, we propose that managers' perceptions of fit are associated with both subordinates' reports of having been nominated for a promotion and managers' assessments of subordinates' promotability. First, we propose that promotions and promotability are associated with the degree to which subordinates are seen as fitting their organizations. Evidence from person-organization fit research suggests that decision makers are more likely to evaluate favorably those who are judged to fit (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Bretz, Rynes, & Gerhart, 1993). Bretz and Judge (1994) found indirect relationships between person-organization fit and both salary and hierarchical level attained. Person categorization theory bolsters our arguments: when managers form impressions of subordinates (e.g., as a good fit with their organization), one way in which they confirm this assessment is through resource allocation (Liden et al., 1993). Individuals who mirror organizationally sanctioned behaviors and values—that is, those who fit—should be bestowed with appropriate indicators of career success (Bretz & Judge, 1994). One way in which we suggest subordinates' fit should be rewarded is through promotions. Furthermore, we felt it was important to include managers' perceptions of subordinates' promotability, as these may be important signals of continued upward mobility for subordinates in the future. Hence, we hypothesize person-organization fit to be associated with subordinates' reports of nomination for a promotion and managers' perceptions of subordinates' promotability. Thus:

Hypothesis 5. Managers' perceptions of subordinates' person-organization fit are positively associated with subordinates' reports of having been nominated for a promotion.

Hypothesis 6. Managers' perceptions of subordinates' person-organization fit are positively associated with managers' perceptions of subordinates' promotability.

Not only do we hypothesize person-organization fit to affect promotions and promotability, we also propose, though perhaps less strongly, that promotions and promotability are associated with the degree to which subordinates fit their jobs. Perceptions of person-job fit may be related to promotions because of presumptions that individuals who fit have higher performance (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005) and possess greater job-related skills (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997) as compared to those who do not fit. According to Lyness and Heilman (2006), lack of job fit results in negative perceptions and, consequently, lower performance evaluations. And for both sexes, but especially for women, lack of job fit is related to fewer promotions (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Person categorization theory also implies that, when managers have cognitively categorized an employee as a good or bad fit with his or her job, they are prone to act in ways that confirm this perception when choosing whether or not to allocate organizational rewards such as promotions.

Lyness and Heilman (2006) looked at the influence of fit on promotions, measuring promotions by comparing respondents' positions in a management hierarchy over a two-year period. We complemented their "objective" test of job fit's relationship with promotions by similarly asking subordinates whether they had been and/or thought they would be nominated for promotions by their current managers. We hypothesize that person-job fit is related to both actual promotions received and managers' perceptions of promotability. Thus,

Hypothesis 7. Managers' perceptions of subordinates' person-job fit are positively associated with subordinates' reports of having been nominated for a promotion.

Hypothesis 8. Managers' perceptions of subordinates' person-job fit are positively associated with managers' perceptions of subordinates' promotability.

As can be seen in Figure 1, we did not generate hypotheses related to subordinate performance and promotability outcomes, as these relationships

have been documented elsewhere (e.g., DeVaro, 2006; Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

METHODS

Sample

We drew our sample from one midwestern-U.S. division of a global *Fortune* 100 transportation firm. The company is a high-volume goods-handling organization. The company's organizational hierarchy has clearly defined job levels and responsibilities for each level. The managers in this sample had broad managerial responsibilities, including overseeing the operations of one major functional area of the division and guiding, mentoring, and evaluating the performance of their subordinates. The subordinates were supervisors who handled more day-to-day work activities, including scheduling and forecasting. The subordinates were active in directing the efforts of part-time supervisors who in turn had direct contact with frontline, hourly workers. The subordinates in our sample were all at the same hierarchical level in the organization.

The total sample size was 178 participants, including 52 managers and 126 subordinates. The response rate for subordinates was 83 percent and that for managers was 100 percent, because respondents were given time during work hours to complete the survey. Managers and subordinates completed different surveys, answering questions about themselves and their workplace. Manager data were matched to subordinate data, which allowed for examination of the manager-subordinate dyadic relationship. In sum, 126 dyads were matched and used in our analyses. Managers rated a maximum of four subordinates, with the majority rating three.

We collected demographic information from both managers and subordinates. Among the managers, 84.1 percent were male, and the average age was 40.2 years. For the subordinate sample, 65.9 percent were male, and the average age was 35.6 years. With respect to children, 23.8 percent of the managers and 27 percent of the subordinates had none. On average, managers had more children (2.4) than their subordinates (1.4). The survey provided precoded race categories, including white/Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and other. The manager sample was 71.4 percent Caucasian, 19.8 percent African-American, 7.1 percent Hispanic, and 1.6 percent Asian. The subordinate sample was 60.3 percent Caucasian, 19.8 percent African-American, 9.5 percent Hispanic, 4.8 percent Asian, and 4.0 percent other; 1.6 percent did not provide their race. Managers' mean tenure

at the organization was 19.3 years; subordinates' mean tenure was 11.3 years. As for education level, 47.7 percent of the subordinates, had completed high school, 39.2 percent had a bachelor's degree, and 7.8 percent had a master's degree; 5.2 percent did not provide this information. The organization provided subordinates' salary information; the average yearly salary was \$59,825. Neither salary nor education data were collected from the managers.

Procedures

The authors and trained doctoral students administered the surveys on site. Each participant received a packet containing a cover letter, which outlined the purpose of the study and its voluntary nature, and a survey. Participants were told that their responses would be kept confidential and that they could withdraw participation without penalty at any time.

Measures

Subordinates responded to questions about their own family-work conflict, nomination for promotions, family status, and other demographic information. Managers provided information on their perceptions of their subordinates' family-work conflict, person-organization fit, person-job fit, promotability, and in-role performance. Managers also responded to various demographic questions. For all measures, except those about family status/demographic characteristics, the response scale ranged from 1, "strongly disagree," to 7, "strongly agree."

Family-work conflict. Managers rated each subordinate's family-work conflict with a six-item scale ($\alpha = .88$) from Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000). We altered the wording of the original scale slightly to reflect that managers were reporting on subordinates' family-work conflict. Two dimensions of family-work conflict were assessed. Strain-based family-work conflict measured how stress stemming from a subordinate's family life negatively affected the subordinate at work. Time-based family-work conflict measured how the subordinate's family responsibilities affected the amount of time spent on work responsibilities and work activities. A sample item for time-based family-work conflict was, "The time he/she spends on family responsibilities often interferes with his/her work responsibilities." We used the same six items (except with the self as the referent) to measure subordinates' perceptions of their own family-work conflict, a control variable in our model ($\alpha = .83$).

Person-organization fit. A three-item scale ($\alpha = .91$) from Cable and DeRue (2002) measured the extent to which a manager perceived a subordinate as having values similar to the employing organization, or having a personality well matched to that of the employing organization. A sample item was, "I feel this employee's values and [the organization's] values match."

Person-job fit. A six-item scale ($\alpha = .81$) from Cable and DeRue (2002) assessed the extent to which a manager perceived a subordinate as possessing abilities or talents that fit the skills required by his or her current position. A sample item was, "The match is very good between the demands of his/her job and this employee's personal skills."

Promotability. A three-item scale ($\alpha = .91$) from Thacker and Wayne (1995) measured the extent to which a manager perceived a subordinate as having the potential to move up within the organization and have a successful career. The items were, "I believe that this employee will have a successful career," "If I had to select a successor for my position, it would be this subordinate," and "I believe that this subordinate has high potential."

Nomination for promotion. Two items ($\alpha = .85$) were developed specifically for this study and were intended to capture perceptions of whether a subordinate's superior had nominated or would nominate the employee for promotion. This measure was reported by the subordinates. The items were, "My manager would encourage me to apply for a promotion" and "My manager has encouraged me to apply for a promotion."

In-role performance. The managers used a seven-item scale ($\alpha = .84$) from Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) to rate the in-role performance of their subordinates. An example item asked the extent to which a manager agreed that a subordinate "fulfills responsibilities specified in the job description."

Control variables. Our model included several control variables that we expected might influence managers' perceptions of their subordinates' family-work conflict. A number of family status variables, including responsibility for elder or dependent care, having a child under age 12, number of children, and marital status, were selected as controls because they have been associated with self-reported family-work conflict, so we expected that they might influence managers' perceptions of subordinates' family-work conflict. Subordinates' responses indicated if they cared for a spouse/partner, elderly parent, or other dependent (0 = "no," 1 = "yes"). Like Kirchmeyer (2006), we controlled for having a child under the age of 12 (0 = "no children under 12," 1 = "one or more children under 12"). Number of children was included as a

control variable because we expected an increase in this number to impact how others would perceive a subordinate's family-work conflict. We included the raw score for number of children in our model. Additionally, we controlled for marital status because, for example, others may perceive someone as having less family-work conflict if there is additional support in the home (e.g., Kirchmeyer, 2006). We asked subordinates if they had spouses or partners (0 = "no spouse/partner," 1 = "spouse/partner").

We also included additional controls. The first asked whether or not a subordinate had experienced a career interruption (defined as "time taken off to care for children, elderly parents, other dependents, your own health issue, or to obtain education"), as a career interruption may implicitly signal to a manager that the subordinate has increased family-work conflict. Subordinates indicated how many career interruptions they had had (0 = "no career interruption," 1 = "career interruption"). Second, we included subordinates' own reports of their family-work conflict as a control variable (see the family-work conflict measure above) to test whether managers' perceptions were congruent with subordinates' self-reports. Last, we included manager sex because of its potential impact on ratings of subordinate family-work conflict; for example, we thought female managers might be less likely to report female subordinates as having family-work conflict because female managers may have experienced what it is like to have others misinterpret or overattend to their own family-work conflict (1 = "male," 2 = "female").

RESULTS

Overview of the Analyses

Because many of our model's variables were manager-rated, we had two concerns to address prior to hypothesis testing: common method variance and discriminant validity. To address the first concern, we conducted Harman's single-factor test

(Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). This test involves a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) wherein all variables are allowed to load onto a single factor. The model demonstrated very poor fit ($\chi^2[252] = 1936.78$, incremental fit index [IFI] = .73, comparative fit index [CFI] = .72, standardized root-mean-square residual [SRMR] = .15). In addition, we conducted an alternative test suggested by Podsakoff and colleagues (2003) that allowed us to examine the potential increase in model fit by directly modeling a common methods factor. The common methods factor was not allowed to correlate with the other latent variables. This alternative model resulted in significantly worse fit than our hypothesized five-factor model of manager-rated variables ($\Delta df = 22$; $\Delta\chi^2 = 67.74$, $p < .001$). Further, the common methods factor only accounted for 6.4 percent of the total variance explained by the model. Williams, Cote, and Buckley (1989) have suggested that this is a relatively insignificant amount of variance explained by a common methods factor.

Our second concern, shared variance generated by managers responding to questions about their subordinates on five separate measures, was also addressed via CFA. A five-factor model provided adequate fit for the manager-reported measures ($\chi^2[242, n = 126] = 664.67$, IFI = .91, CFI = .91, SRMR = .10). Hu and Bentler (1999) and Kline (2004) recommend a cutoff of .08 for SRMR and a minimum CFI and IFI of .90 for good model fit. We then compared a series of alternative models to assess whether the measures represented five distinct constructs. Results are provided in Table 1. A four-factor model with person-organization fit and person-job fit collapsed as one scale had significantly poorer fit than the five-factor model. Similarly, a four-factor model with promotability and in-role performance collapsed into one scale (because both can be considered managers' summary evaluative judgments of subordinates) had significantly poorer fit than the five-factor model.

Finally, we conducted an additional test of the

TABLE 1
Confirmatory Factor Analysis Comparisons, Manager Measures^a

Models	χ^2 (df)	SRMR	CFI	IFI	Comparisons
1: Five factors	664.67 (242)	0.10	0.91	0.91	
2: Four factors ^b	754.04 (246)**	0.11	0.89	0.89	Model 2 compared to model 1
3: Four factors ^c	974.36 (246)**	0.10	0.87	0.87	Model 3 compared to model 1

^a $n = 126$.

^b Person-organization fit items and person-job fit items as one scale.

^c Promotability items and in-role performance items as one scale.

** $p < .01$

manager-rated scales' discriminant validity. Following Fornell and Larcker (1981), we first calculated the average variance explained by the items composing each manager-rated scale. According to Fornell and Larcker, should the value of a scale's average variance exceed its correlation with other variables in the study, evidence of discriminant validity is present. Our data suggest this condition was met (as in Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko, & Roberts, 2008). The manager-rated scales were distinct from one another. These values are presented along the diagonal of Table 2, which provides correlations and descriptive statistics for the variables in the model.

Because managers rated up to four subordinates, we also conducted within and between analysis (WABA) to ensure rater independence for managers' reports of their subordinates' family-work conflict, person-organization fit, person-job fit, promotability, and in-role performance. The 15° *E*-test indicated that managers' assessments of subordinates' promotability should be treated as wholes ($E = 1.89$); that is, nonindependence of responses required us to model the rater effect (Dansereau, Alutto, & Yammarino, 1984). Therefore, we tested Hypotheses 6 and 8 using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to account for the nesting effect of managers' promotability ratings of multiple subordinates. The *E*-test for manager-rated family-work conflict was significant for parts ($E = .77$), which indicates that the variable can be considered at the individual level. The results for nonindependence of manager-rated person-organization fit ($E = 0.95$), manager-rated person-job fit ($E = 0.93$), and manager-rated in-role performance ($E = 1.10$) were nonsignificant, indicating equivocal results. With the exception of in-role performance, the *F*-tests for statistical significance were nonsignificant. As Avolio and Yammarino (1990) suggested, when results are equivocal or mixed, analysis at the individual level is acceptable.

Test of Hypotheses

The zero-order correlations (Table 2) indicated two significant correlations between control variables and manager perceptions of subordinate family-work conflict. Specifically, these perceptions were positively correlated with number of children ($r = .35, p < .01$) and caring for an elder/dependent ($r = .20, p < .05$). The bivariate correlations for the other control variables (child under 12, marital status, career interruption, subordinate-reported family-work conflict, and manager sex) were not significantly related to manager perceptions of subordinate family-work conflict.

Beyond relationships with family-work conflict, a handful of other zero-order correlational findings were worthy of note (see Table 2). Interestingly, when a subordinate reported having a child under 12, his or her manager rated both person-job fit ($r = .19, p < .05$) and promotability ($r = .18, p < .05$) higher. These findings were surprising, and we speculate that they reflect the idea that when workers have children they become better organized and better at multitasking, out of necessity; moreover, managers view these skills as valuable, which may be reflected in their assessments of subordinates' promotability and job fit. Another plausible explanation for these findings is that, as we have argued, it is not just having children that leads to lower managerial evaluations, but rather the *conflict* between the two domains of work and family. As in our first explanation, we suggest that parenthood may bring with it many valuable skills (e.g., organizational and time-management skills), and that it is only when the time and resource demands of the family and work domains conflict that negative effects on managers' career-related perceptions are likely. Future research would be needed to bear this explanation out. More in line with our proposed model, we found a negative correlation between the number of children a subordinate had and manager-rated person-organization fit ($r = -.22, p < .05$). Hence, having more children probably connoted more distractions from work and was associated with a manager questioning the degree to which a subordinate is aligned with the organization.

Examination of two additional relationships was important for understanding the relevance of our hypothesized model. First, we did *not* find a significant relationship between subordinate (self-reported) family-work conflict and manager perceptions of subordinate family-work conflict ($r = .05, n.s.$). Second, in supplemental testing, we found that female subordinates' reports of their own family-work conflict (mean = 2.40) were not significantly different from male subordinates' (mean = 2.51), and were, in fact, slightly lower.

Structural equation modeling. We chose to use structural equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate our model (see Figure 1). The covariance matrix was analyzed via the maximum likelihood method with LISREL 8.71 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). SEM enables researchers to examine the relationships among a large number of variables simultaneously, extracting the relative impact of each variable on the proposed model. It also allowed us to account for the error associated with the measurement of the variables.

We tested the hypothesized model employing a

TABLE 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables^a

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Caring for an elder/dependent	0.54	1.00													
2. Child under 12	0.29	0.46	.05												
3. Number of children	1.39	1.61	.09	.32**											
4. Career interruptions	0.16	0.37	.11	.15	.27**										
5. Spouse/partner	0.57	0.50	.13	.28**	.27**	.11									
6. Subordinate-reported family-work conflict	2.47	0.98	.28**	-.02	.08	.13	.04								
7. Manager sex	84.1%		-.02	-.19*	.06	-.01	-.02	-.01							
8. Subordinate sex	65.9%		.03	-.17	.09	.33**	-.15	-.05	.05						
9. Manager-reported family-work conflict	2.19	1.01	.20*	.16	.35**	.09	-.05	.05	-.10	.22*	.64				
10. Manager-reported person-organization fit	5.52	0.96	-.13	.15	-.22*	-.02	.15	-.02	.12	-.23*	-.36**	.72			
11. Manager-reported person-job fit	5.31	0.91	-.14	.19*	-.08	.05	.13	-.03	.04	-.19*	-.25**	.58**	.65		
12. Manager-reported in-role performance	5.69	0.83	-.25**	.08	-.10	.10	-.02	.07	.02	-.11	-.28**	.53**	.62**	.69	
13. Manager-reported promotability	4.96	1.45	-.14	.18*	-.09	-.04	.15	-.04	-.17	-.30**	-.30**	.59**	.52**	.56**	.62
14. Subordinate-reported nomination for promotion	4.54	1.47	-.18*	.02	-.15	.09	.08	-.03	-.08	-.06	-.33**	.38**	.44**	.48**	.47**

^a $n = 126$. The values on the diagonal in italic are square roots of the average variance explained. This value must be larger than a focal variable's zero-order correlations in the same row and column to pass Fornell and Larcker's (1981) discriminant validity test.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

single-indicator approach, which is preferred when the sample size precludes testing a full structural equation model (Rindova, Williamson, Petkova, & Sever, 2005; Sass & Smith, 2006; Tekleab, Takeuchi, & Taylor, 2005). First, single indicators of the latent constructs were used. For each latent construct, we set the path between the manifest variable and the latent construct to the square root of the reliability. Second, we set the error of the manifest variable to 1 minus the reliability times the variance. We assumed measurement without error for the single-item variables (elder/dependent care, having a child under 12, number of children, marital status, sex, and career interruption). Additionally, the residuals for person-organization and person-job fit were allowed to correlate because of their empirical and conceptual overlap (Kristof-Brown et al. [2005] found a moderate correlation between the two and explained it on the basis of the definition of each as the fit between a person and some aspect of current employment, be it skills or values). In addition, we allowed the residuals for promotability and nomination for promotion to correlate because both scales measured aspects of promotions. Finally, we allowed subordinate performance residuals to correlate with manager-rated person-organization and person-job fit, nomination for promotion, and promotability, because factors affecting evaluation of subordinate performance may similarly affect managers' view of employees as good matches with the organization and their jobs, in terms of fit and upward mobility. Overall, the model fit the data well ($\chi^2[40, n = 126] = 58.5$, IFI = .96, CFI = .96, SRMR = .07).

We conducted a series of nested model comparisons to assess the extent to which an alternative model would result in a significant improvement in fit compared to the hypothesized model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Table 3 provides the results of these comparisons. In model 2, the correlated residuals for the measures of fit and for promotability and nomination for promotion were constrained to zero, resulting in a significant change in chi-square and indicating support for retaining the correlated residuals. Next, to test our hypothesis that subordinate sex indirectly impacts manager perceptions of subordinate fit, performance, and promotability through manager perceptions of subordinate family-work conflict, we added a direct path from subordinate sex to each of the endogenous variables models 3–6. Specifically, alternative model 3 was used to examine whether subordinate sex had an impact on person-organization fit independent of manager-rated family-work conflict. It may be that personal characteristics such as femininity push managers to perceive women as having poorer fit with their organization, irrespective of their perceived family-work conflict (Cable & Judge, 1997; Chatman, 1989). We found no support for this alternative model. We used alternative model 4 to examine whether subordinate sex had direct effects on person-job fit, with females perceived as less appropriately skilled or trained for a job than their male counterparts, irrespective of manager ratings of family-work conflict. Again, this alternative model was not supported, indicating that this path should not be retained. Next, alternative model 5 consisted of adding a path from subordinate sex to

TABLE 3
Structural Equation Model Comparisons^a

Models	χ^2 (df)	IFI	CFI	SRMR	Comparisons
Hypothesized: Model 1	58.50 (40)	0.96	0.96	0.07	
Alternative model 2 ^b	101.83 (41)**	0.89	0.88	0.09	Model 2 compared to model 1
Alternative model 3 ^c	56.76 (39)	0.96	0.96	0.06	Model 3 compared to model 1
Alternative model 4 ^d	56.41 (39)	0.96	0.96	0.06	Model 4 compared to model 1
Alternative model 5 ^e	54.51 (39)*	0.97	0.96	0.07	Model 5 compared to model 1
Alternative model 6 ^f	52.15 (39)*	0.97	0.97	0.06	Model 6 compared to model 1
Alternative model 7 ^g	56.56 (39)	0.96	0.96	0.07	Model 7 compared to model 1
Final: Model 8 ^h	51.52 (38)**	0.97	0.97	0.06	Model 8 compared to model 1

^a $n = 126$.

^b Error terms of person-organization fit and person-job fit not correlated; error terms of promotability and nomination for promotion not correlated.

^c Direct path from subordinate sex to person-organization fit.

^d Direct path from subordinate sex to person-job fit.

^e Direct path from subordinate sex to performance.

^f Direct path from subordinate sex to promotability.

^g Direct path from subordinate sex to nomination for promotion.

^h Direct paths from subordinate sex to performance and promotability.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

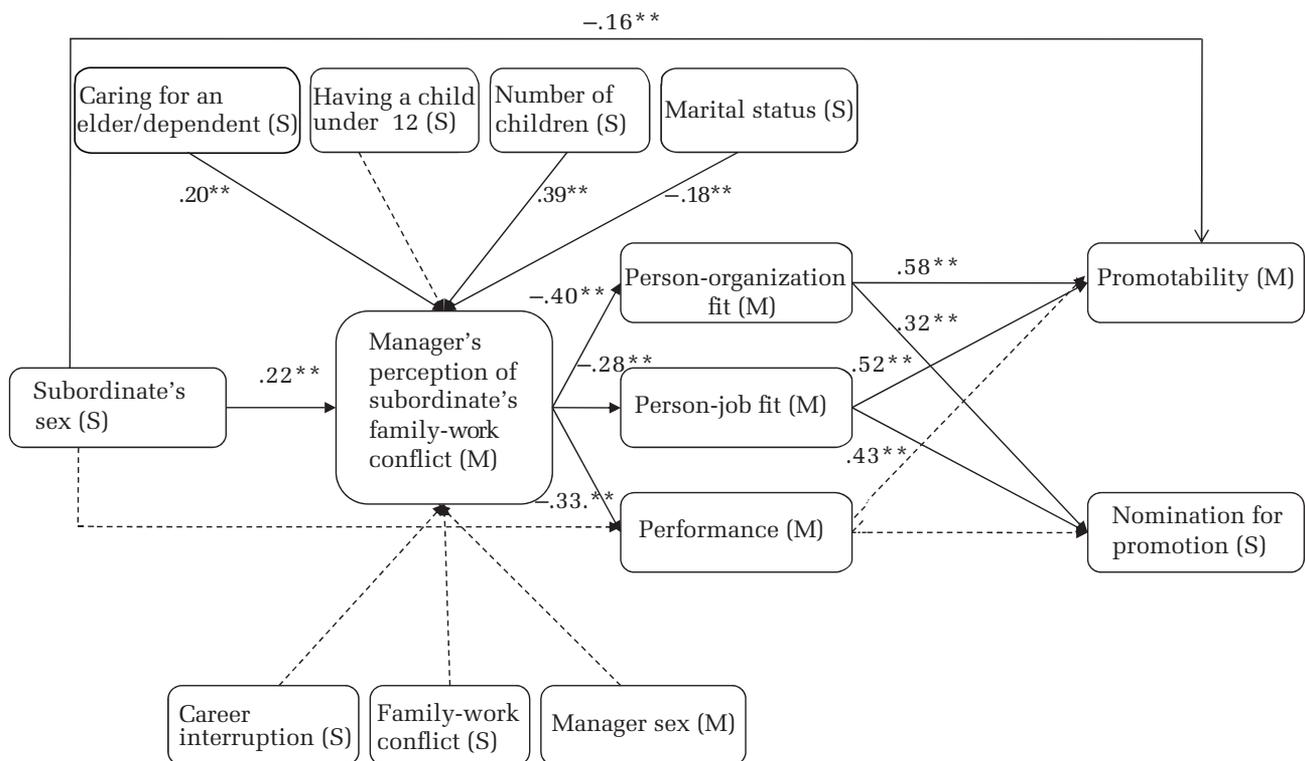
performance. Although prior research results have been inconsistent, there have been studies indicating that, in general, managers are less likely to rate females as highly as males on measures of performance (e.g., Davison & Burke, 2000; Heilman & Haynes, 2005). The addition of this path resulted in a significant reduction in chi-square, indicating that this path should be retained.

We then compared the hypothesized model with alternative models 6 and 7, in which a path was added from subordinate sex to manager perceptions of promotability and to nomination for promotion, respectively. Research has indicated that women in general may be perceived as less competent on the job (e.g., Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997), a bias that could make a female subordinate's manager view her as less worthy of promotion (model 6) and stymie her ability to earn one (model 7). Indeed, adding the direct path from subordinate sex to manager reports of promotability (model 6) resulted in a significant change in chi-square, indicating that this path should be retained. In sum, the nested model comparison results indicated that the hypothesized model should be modified by adding direct paths from subordinate sex to performance

and from subordinate sex to manager reports of promotability, which we did in model 8, shown in Figure 2 ($\chi^2[38, n = 126] = 51.52, IFI = .97, CFI = .97, SRMR = .06$).

Standardized path estimates are provided in Figure 2. The parameter estimates indicate support for Hypotheses 1–8. First, subordinate sex was significantly related to manager perceptions of subordinate family-work conflict, with females perceived to have greater family-work conflict. Next, manager perceptions of family-work conflict fully mediated the relationships between subordinate sex and person-organization fit, person-job fit, and performance. Evidence of full mediation exists because (1) alternative models 3 and 4—representing the partial mediation of manager perceptions of family-work conflict between subordinate sex and the fit measures—decreased the fit of our model, and (2) in our final model, the direct path between subordinate sex and performance became nonsignificant. Finally, both person-organization and person-job fit were related to manager-reported promotability and subordinate-reported nomination for promotion. The control variables for number of children, marital status, and caring for an elder/dependent

FIGURE 2
Path Estimates: Bosses' Perceptions of Family-Work Conflict and Women's Promotability^a



^a $n = 126$. "M" = variable reported by managers; "S" = variable reported by subordinates. Dashed lines represent nonsignificant paths.
 ** $p < .01$
 One-tailed tests.

were significantly related to manager perceptions of subordinate family-work conflict. The amount of variance explained in manager-reported promotability perceptions was 73 percent, and the amount of variance explained in nomination for promotion was 56 percent.

Hierarchical linear modeling. To test Hypotheses 6 and 8, we used HLM which let us model the nonindependence of the multiple promotability ratings of subordinates as provided by the same manager. (HLM partials out the variance in a dependent variable attributable to same-source rating, thus providing a more accurate estimate of a proposed relationship.) Because we were limited to groups with two or more members, and because we did not include control variables that previously limited our sample size, the sample size for this analysis was 45 managers and 131 subordinates. Both Hypotheses 6 and 8 were supported: person-organization fit positively predicted managers' assessments of promotability ($\gamma_{01} = .49, t = 2.20, p < .01$), and person-job fit positively predicted managers' assessments of promotability ($\gamma_{01} = .54, t = 2.95, p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether women's promotability is hampered by their bosses' perceptions that they experience greater family-work conflict than men and have poorer fit with their organizations and jobs. Thus, this study explored one potential explanation for the glass ceiling. However, it is important to note that the idea that women's attention to family demands contributes to their lack of advancement is not new. The key contribution of this study is to show that, although women's family-work conflict may play a role in their career progress, *managers' perceptions* of their family-work conflict may also do so. Our model, based on person categorization and social role theories, portrays gender as impacting upward mobility through managers' perceptions of family-work conflict and perceived fit. Specifically, we found that managers tended to categorize women as experiencing greater family-work conflict, even after controlling for family responsibilities and women's own perceptions of family-work conflict. In turn, managers' perceptions of family-work conflict seem to influence their perceptions of fit and performance, with managers appearing to view female employees as having poorer fit with their organization and job. Finally, perceptions of fit were directly related to promotions and promotability.

Results indicated strong support for the overall

hypothesized model. Even though female employees actually reported slightly less family-work conflict than their male counterparts, their managers still perceived them as having greater family-work conflict, a perception that had significant implications for women's organizational advancement. Moreover, these perceptual biases held for both male and female managers. Even when controlling for manager sex, various types of subordinate family responsibilities, and, as stated, subordinates' own reports of their family-work conflict, we found the same results. Person categorization and social role theories provide the theoretical basis for this important finding. Our results support the contention that women are often categorized as nurturing and others *assume* they experience competing demands from incompatible work and family roles. Combined, our findings provide strong support for a stereotype-based explanation of the link between subordinates' sex and bosses' perceptions of subordinates' family-work conflict.

The next set of linkages in the model concerned whether managers' perceptions of family-work conflict mediate the relation between sex and perceptions of job and organizational fit and performance. We found support for these relationships, in that manager perceptions of family-work conflict fully mediated the relation between sex and perceptions of fit and performance. Specifically, women were rated lower on job and organizational fit and performance through the linking mechanism of their managers' perceptions of their family-work conflict. In keeping with research on stereotypical attributes ascribed to women, it seems that women are less likely than men to be perceived as good "fits" and high performers because they are viewed as responsible for family, which may be seen as incompatible with holding leadership/managerial positions. It may be that managers feel that higher levels of family-work conflict make women less focused on their jobs and careers; consequently, managers presume that they are less committed (as in the Bank of Montreal stereotype mentioned earlier), especially in environments where long hours and no outside distractions are expected.

As in prior research on fit (e.g., Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), our study showed that managers' perceptions of organizational fit and job fit were related to subordinates' promotability, both past nominations for promotion and managers' assessments of subordinates' future promotability. Importantly, we found that sex impacted these two aspects of promotability through managers' perceptions of family-work conflict and fit. These results suggest that managers' biases based on the traditional male model of work may be affecting their cognition and,

consequently, women's upward mobility. Women, irrespective of their actual caregiving responsibilities, seem to be viewed as having greater caregiving responsibilities and greater family-work conflict than do men. These findings imply stereotyping, given that empirical research shows that men and women report similar levels of work interfering with family and family interfering with work (Byron, 2005); indeed, we found that female subordinates actually reported slightly less family-work conflict than did their male counterparts. Researchers have long argued that women face stereotypes that impede their career progress, but the type and nature of these stereotypes are seldom investigated. We feel a major contribution of this study is that we have uncovered a critical dimension of the social role expectations that play a key role in the upward progress of female workers. Furthermore, we feel that such stereotyping is quite significant, with strong ramifications for people and organizations, given that these perceptions affect important managerial decisions.

Interestingly, although we assumed a positive relationship between subordinate performance and both promotability and nomination for promotion, in our full model test these paths were not significant. An examination of the correlation matrix in Table 2 illustrates quite large, significant, zero-order relationships between these variables. Yet in our structural equation model these paths became nonsignificant. We suggest that, in the context of gender and organizations, fit is fundamental (see Lyness & Heilman, 2006). That is, women's fit (or lack thereof)—not their job performance—is what is most evidential of their career potential in the eyes of their managers. Further exploration of our performance and promotability variables in the context of family-work conflict and career outcomes is needed to substantiate these ideas.

The results of our study have a number of practical implications for organizations. As with many stereotypes that affect workplace decisions, managers may not be aware of their own biases. Thus, the most important practical recommendation is also the most obvious: to reduce or eliminate the impact of sex on managers' perceptions of family-work conflict, perceptions of fit, work performance, and promotion decisions, managers must be made aware of their potential to stereotype. As Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) stated in their "modest manifesto for shattering the glass ceiling," simply naming these types of subtle, entrenched discrimination has a remarkable effect on rooting them out and improving opportunities for women. Just ensuring that conversations happen between managers regarding company norms and taboos can

change dynamics. Small wins such as these, Meyerson and Fletcher offered, can often snowball, eventually squelching discrimination and mending whole organizations. In addition to managerial accountability, companies must also bear responsibility for ensuring that biased perceptions of caregiving roles do not affect promotion decisions. Research has shown that sound, structured hiring and promotion procedures that hold individual managers accountable for their actions can decrease decision-making biases (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Vigilance in fairly managing promotion processes stands to benefit not only women, but also men, and the efficiency of an entire organization.

Further, our results raise concerns about company-sponsored programs that assist employees with managing family-work conflict. Because this conflict appears to influence managers' perceptions of fit, performance, and promotability, employees who participate in these programs may signal to their managers that they have family demands and need assistance in balancing home and work domains. Participation in these company-sponsored programs may reduce the likelihood that their managers view them as fitting with job and organization, consequently reducing their promotion opportunities. We were unable to directly address the effect of participating in such company-sponsored programs because these programs were unavailable to the supervisors and managers in our study. Future research should test the relationship between subordinate participation in company-sponsored programs and managers' perceptions of family-work conflict, fit, performance, and promotability.

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) suggested specific changes organizations should embrace to retain and advance women, a number of which focused on reducing employees' conflict between work and family roles. However, organizations would do well to realize that work-family supports (e.g., flex-time, paid time off for parenting) that help employees manage time and resources may actually call attention to women's work-family challenges (Hoobler, 2007) and—if biases remain unaddressed—have negative implications for women's careers. Even short-term adjustments in work schedules such as taking parental leave or working part time for under a year have been shown to result in long-term reductions in earnings and advancement (Crittenden, 2002).

The overall results strongly supported our hypotheses, yet the limitations of the study should be acknowledged. First, our main argument was predicated on the idea that managers fall prey to gender biases when it comes to assessing subordinates'

family-work conflict. We cannot, however, soundly rule out alternative explanations for our findings. Although we controlled for a number of factors that may influence family-work conflict perceptions, other forces may be at play. For example, as one of our anonymous reviewers noted, it may be that what subordinates view as family-work conflict is divided along gender lines. Although male and female subordinates' self-reports described similar, perceptual levels of family-work conflict, if such conflict were assessed in terms of behavior—such as the number of times these subordinates (versus their spouses) stayed home with sick children, or the number of minutes they spent managing the home schedule—it may be that females did experience higher levels of family-work conflict. As such, it could be possible that managers are actually more adept at assessing subordinates' family-work conflict than the subordinates are. Alternatively, it could be that women are more likely to request informal accommodations for family life, or are more likely to talk about family considerations at work than are men, both possibilities having the unintended effect of making family demands more salient to their managers. In any case, our perceptual measure of family-work conflict does not allow us to tease out these unique differences.

Second, our sample comprised supervisors and their managers in one large organization in the transportation industry. Given the fairly high representation of men in managerial positions in the participating organization, replication of the results of this study may be most likely in similarly male-dominated industries such as manufacturing, utilities, and construction. Future research is needed that explores whether the percentage of men in management positions is a key contextual variable that increases the likelihood that the managerial bias identified in this study occurs. Although sampling from one organization is a limitation, it is also a strength, in that some extraneous factors that may affect men's and women's promotability (e.g., type of industry and success of the company) are controlled.

A third limitation is that our control variables (caring for an elder or other dependent, having a child under 12, number of children, marital status, career interruptions, subordinates' perceptions of their family-work conflict, and manager sex), although copious, may not have adequately captured all of the predictors of managers' perceptions of family-work conflict. In response to these limitations, future studies in this area should include respondents from multiple companies and consider additional control variables. For example, we failed to test how the working or nonworking status

of subordinates' spouses/partners affected the relationships uncovered here. Further, the femininity (versus masculinity) of women managers may play a role in the stereotypes managers ascribe to them. And measures of gender role stereotypes should be assessed to understand which characteristics of managers are associated with biased perceptions.

Finally, the shortcomings of one specific control variable bear mentioning. In our model, we attempt to acknowledge the effect of subordinate career interruptions on managers' perceptions of family-work conflict. In our survey, we asked subordinates to report how many career interruptions they had experienced and went on to define this variable for them as "time taken off to care for children, elderly parents, other dependents, your own health issue, or to obtain education." Grouping all interruptions together in this way was most likely ill-advised. Particularly, taking time off to pursue education may be quite different from the other career interruptions; that is, education may signal increased competency and fit, whereas the other, family-related interruptions seem likely to function in the opposite manner.

Our study's strengths should also be recognized. A primary strength of this study is that it explores the gap between men's and women's promotability from a unique perspective. Prior studies have failed to examine how managers' biases regarding conflict between work and family domains may explain differences in upward mobility. Furthermore, we examined this promotability gap by developing a model with a strong theoretical foundation. Person categorization and social role theories form the basis of the model and explain why and how sex impacts promotability. Prior research has simply investigated the impact of gender role stereotyping; we went one step further to explore *how* gender stereotypes interface with an area that is becoming increasingly recognized as critical to effective organizational functioning: work and family balance. And although it may be difficult to change managers' general stereotypes (e.g., "think leader, think male"), we feel this study provides practical information to organizations seeking to dilute managers' unfounded beliefs. For example, in the future it may be beneficial to provide managers with evidence that, although some women do the bulk of their work at home (i.e., those who engage in flexible work arrangements), and although women may be more likely to participate in paid leave after the birth of a child, these practices do not necessarily mean women have higher family-work conflict. So, from a practical perspective, organizations may use our findings to educate managers on the cognitive pitfalls of women and family-work conflict percep-

tions. Finally, this study included data from both managers and their subordinates; thus, significant results for many of the key relationships in the model were not inflated by common source bias. Moreover, we performed three tests to rule out the possibility of common method variance.

Future research extending the results of this study is needed. We propose that sex impacts managers' perceptions of family-work conflict, fit, performance, and promotability. Yet sex and perceptions of family-work conflict may impact a broader range of outcomes. For example, Feldman (1981, 1986) suggested that person categorization may influence the quality of manager-subordinate exchanges and job-based resource outcomes. Extending this idea and viewing it in terms of results from the present study, we suggest that managers' categorizations of individuals on the basis of sex may impact leader-member exchange, mentoring, and pay decisions via perceptions of family-work conflict. We encourage future research that includes these outcomes. Additionally, we believe that family-related characteristics are not all "created equal" when it comes to influencing managers' perceptions of family-work conflict. Although our model treated the family status variables as linear covariates, we heed the helpful suggestion of an anonymous reviewer that nonlinear combinations of these variables may play an important role. For example, being a married man with children may signal stability, providence, and balance (low family-work conflict), yet being a married woman with children may signal divided loyalties and limited resources (high family-work conflict). Researchers developing future models would do well to not only combine these family status variables as controls, but also to hypothesize specific ways in which these combinations may affect managers' perceptions of their subordinates.

In sum, this study examined just one of the potential explanations for the contemporary glass ceiling. As Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) stated, the women's movements of the 60s and 70s in the United States brought revolutionary change in terms of women's upward progress in organizations, but the biases supporting the glass ceiling today are much more subtle, multifaceted, and deeply embedded than they were then. Today, women encounter biases so rooted in systems that they may not even be noticed until they are eradicated (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). In this study, we believe we have identified one such bias. Our results indicate that managers tend to view women as less promotable, poorer performers with poorer fit with their jobs and organizations, because the managers perceive women as experiencing greater

family-work conflict than men. Male managers have been said to be gatekeepers of the upper echelons of management (Duehr & Bono, 2006), yet we found that female managers held family-work conflict stereotypes about female subordinates as well. For these reasons, similar research on understanding and reducing the impact of the family-work conflict bias and other forms of subtle disadvantage remain warranted and relevant.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. 1988. Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103: 411–423.
- Avolio, B. J., & Yammarino, F. J. 1990. Operationalizing charismatic leadership using a level of analysis framework. *Leadership Quarterly*, 1: 193–208.
- Banaji, M. R., & Hardin, C. D. 1996. Automatic stereotyping. *Psychological Science*, 7: 136–141.
- Banaji, M. R., Hardin, C. D., & Rothman, A. J. 1993. Implicit stereotyping in person judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65: 272–281.
- Berthoin Antal, A., & Izraeli, D. N. 1993. A global comparison of women in management: Women managers in their homelands and as expatriates. In E. Fagson (Ed.), *Women in management: Trends, issues, and challenges in managerial diversity*: 52–96. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Biernat, M., & Kobrynowicz, D. 1997. Gender-and race-based standards of competence: Lower minimum standards but higher ability standards for devalued groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72: 544–557.
- Blair, I. V., & Banaji, M. R. 1996. Automatic and controlled processes in stereotype priming. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70: 1142–1163.
- Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. J. 1997. Task performance and contextual performance: The meaning for personnel selection research. *Human Performance*, 10(2): 99–109.
- Bretz, R. D., & Judge, T. A. 1994. Person-organization fit and the theory of work adjustment: Implications for satisfaction, tenure, and career success. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 44: 32–54.
- Bretz, R. D., Rynes, S. L., & Gerhart, B. 1993. Recruiter perceptions of applicant fit: Implications for individual career preparation and job search behavior. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 43: 310–327.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. 1974. *Current population survey 1974 annual averages*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. 1996. *Employment and earnings 93: 7 (July)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

- Byron, K. 2005. A meta-analytic review of work-family conflict and its antecedents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 67: 169–198.
- Cable, D. M., & DeRue, S. D. 2002. The convergent and discriminant validity of subjective fit perceptions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87: 875–884.
- Cable, D. M., & Judge, T. A. 1997. Interviewers' perceptions of person-organization fit and organizational selection decisions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82: 546–561.
- Carlson, D., Kacmar, K., & Williams, W. 2000. Construction and initial validation of a multi-dimensional measure of work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 56: 249–276.
- Catalyst. 1996. *Women in corporate leadership: Progress and prospects 37*. New York: Catalyst.
- Catalyst. 2004. *Women and men in U.S. corporate leadership: Same workplace, different realities?* New York: Catalyst.
- Catalyst. 2007. *The 2006 Catalyst census of women corporate officers and top earners*. New York: Catalyst.
- Chatman, J. A. 1989. Improving interactional organizational research: A model of person-organization fit. *Academy of Management Review*, 14: 333–349.
- Crittenden, A. 2002. *The price of motherhood: Why the most important job in the world is still the least valued*. New York, NY: Henry Holt.
- Dansereau, F., Alutto, J. A., & Yammarino, F. J. 1984. *Theory testing in organizational behavior: The variant approach*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Davidson, M. J., & Burke, R. J. 2000. *Women in management: Current research issues* (vol. 2). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Davison, H. K., & Burke, M. J. 2000. Sex discrimination in simulated employment contexts: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 56: 225–248.
- DeVaro, J. 2006. Strategic promotion tournaments and worker performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 27: 721–740.
- Diekmann, 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.
- Duehr, E. E., & Bono, J. E. 2006. Men, women, and managers: Are stereotypes finally changing? *Personnel Psychology*, 59: 815–846.
- Eagly, A. H. 1987. *Sex differences in social behavior: A social role interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Eagly, A. H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & Van Engen, M. L. 2003. Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing men and women. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129: 569–591.
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. 2002. Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109: 573–598.
- Epstein, C., Seron, C., Oglensky, B., & Saute, R. 1999. *The part time paradox: Time norms, professional lives, family and gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Feldman, J. M. 1981. Beyond attribution theory: Cognitive processes in performance appraisal. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 66: 127–148.
- Feldman, J. M. 1986. A note on the statistical correction of halo error. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71: 173–176.
- Fiske, A. P., Haslam, N., & Fiske, S. T. 1991. Confusing one person with another: What errors reveal about the elementary forms of social relations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60: 656–674.
- Fletcher, J. 1992. A poststructuralist perspective on the third dimension of power. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 5(1): 31–38.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. 1981. Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 28: 39–50.
- Friedman, S. D., & Greenhaus, J. H. 2000. *Work and family—Allies or enemies?* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. 1985. Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10: 76–88.
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. 2006. When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, 31: 72–92.
- Heilman, M. E. 2001. Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57: 657–674.
- Heilman, M. E., Block, C. J., Martell, R. F., & Simon, M. C. 1989. Has anything changed? Current characterizations of men, women, and managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 74: 935–942.
- Heilman, M. E., & Haynes, M. C. 2005. No credit where credit is due: Attributional rationalization of women's success in male-female teams. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90: 905–916.
- Hesse-Biber, S., & Carter, G. L. 2000. *Working women in America: Split dreams*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hoobler, J. M. 2007. On-site or out-of-sight? Family-friendly childcare provisions and the status of working mothers. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 16: 372–380.
- Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. 1999. Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional

- criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6: 1–55.
- Hymowitz, C., & Schellhardt, T. D. 1986. The glass ceiling. *The Wall Street Journal: A special report—The corporate woman* (March 24), D1, 4–5.
- Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. 1993. *Lisrel VIII users' reference guide*. Chicago: Scientific Software.
- Kirchmeyer, C. 2002. Change and stability in manager's gender roles. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87: 929–939.
- Kirchmeyer, C. 2006. The different effects of family on objective career success across gender: A test of alternative explanations. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68: 323–346.
- Kline, R. B. 2004. *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York: Guilford.
- Krieger, L. H. 1995. The content of our categories: A cognitive bias approach to discrimination and equal employment opportunity. *45 Stanford Law Review* 1161: 1207–09.
- Kristof-Brown, A. L., Zimmerman, R. D., & Johnson, E. C. 2005. Consequences of individuals' fit at work: A meta-analysis of person-job, person-organization, person-group and person-supervisor fit. *Personnel Psychology*, 58: 281–342.
- Lewis, S. 2001. Restructuring workplace cultures: The ultimate work-family challenge? *Women in Management Review*, 16(1): 21–29.
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., & Stillwell, D. 1993. A longitudinal study on the early development of leader-member exchanges. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78: 662–674.
- Liff, S., & Ward, K. 2001. Distorted views through the glass ceiling: The construction of women's understandings of promotion and senior management positions. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 8(1): 19–36.
- Littleton, C. A. 1997. Reconstructing sexual equality. In D. T. Meyers (Ed.), *Feminist social thought: A reader*: 715–734. New York: Routledge.
- Lyness, K. S., & Heilman, M. E. 2006. When fit is fundamental: Performance evaluations and promotions of upper-level female and male managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91: 777–785.
- Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. 2005. Kaleidoscope careers: An alternate explanation for the “opt-out” revolution. *Academy of Management Executive*, 19(1): 106–120.
- Martins, L. L., Eddleston, K. A., & Veiga, J. F. 2002. Moderators of the relationship between work-family conflict and career satisfaction. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45: 399–409.
- Mattis, M. C. 2002. Best practices for retaining and advancing women professionals and managers. In R. J. Burke & D. L. Nelson (Eds.), *Advancing women's careers: Research and practice*: 309–332. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Meyerson, D. E., & Fletcher, J. K. 2000. A modest manifesto for shattering the glass ceiling. *Harvard Business Review*, January-February: 127–136.
- Morrison, A. M. 1987. *Breaking the glass ceiling*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Morrison, A. M., White, R. P., Van Velsor, E., & the Center for Creative Leadership. 1987. *Breaking the glass ceiling: Can women reach the top of America's largest corporations?* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- National Opinion Research Center. 1994–1996. *General social survey: The national data program for the social sciences*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Neubert, M. J., Kacmar, K. M., Carlson, D. S., Chonko, L., & Roberts, J. 2008. Regulatory focus as a mediator of the influence of initiating structure and servant leadership on employee behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93: 1220–1233.
- Parasuraman, S., Greenhaus, J. H., & Granrose, C. S. 1992. Role stressors, social support, and well-being among two-earner couples. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13: 339–356.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. 2003. Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88: 879–903.
- Pomerleau, A., Bolduc, D., Malcuit, G., & Cossette, L. 1990. Pink or blue: Environmental gender stereotypes in the first two years of life. *Sex Roles*, 22: 359–367.
- Powell, G. N., Butterfield, D. A., & Parent, J. D. 2002. Gender and managerial stereotypes: Have the times changed? *Journal of Management*, 28(2): 177–193.
- Ragins, B. R., & Cotton, J. L. 1991. Easier said than done: Gender differences in perceived barriers to gaining a mentor. *Academy of Management Journal*, 34: 939–951.
- Ragins, B. R., & Sundstrom, E. 1989. Gender and power in organizations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 105: 51–88.
- Rhode, D. 2003. The difference difference makes: Women and leadership. In R. J. Ely, E. G. Foldy, M. A. Scully, and the Center for Gender in Organizations Simmons School of Management (Eds.), *Reader in gender, work, and organization*: 159–180. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Ridgeway, C. L., & Correll, S. J. 2005. Motherhood as a status characteristic. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60: 683–700.
- Rindova, V. P., Williamson, I. O., Petkova, A. P., & Sever, J. M. 2005. Being good or being known: An empirical examination of the dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of organizational reputation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48: 1033–1049.

- Rupp, D. E., & Cropanzano, R. 2002. Multifoci justice and social exchange relationships. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 89: 925–946.
- Sass, D. A., & Smith, P. L. 2006. The effects of parceling unidimensional scales on structural parameter estimates in structural equation modeling. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 13: 566–586.
- Schein, V. A. 1973. The relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57: 95–100.
- Schein, V. A. 1975. The relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics among female managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60: 340–344.
- Shore, L. M., Barksdale, K., & Shore, T. H. 1995. Managerial perceptions of employee commitment to the organization. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38: 1593–1615.
- Stangor, C., Lynch, L., Duan, C., & Glass, B. 1992. Categorization of individuals on the basis of multiple social features. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62: 207–218.
- Stephens, G. K., & Sommer, S. M. 1995. Linking work-family conflict, work-based social support, and work group climate with job involvement and organizational citizenship behavior: Testing a path analytic model. *Journal of Health and Human Resources Administration*, 18(1): 44–67.
- Tekleab, A. G., Takeuchi, R., & Taylor, M. S. 2005. Extending the chain of relationships among organizational justice, social exchange, and employee reactions: The role of contract violations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48: 146–157.
- Thacker, R. A., & Wayne, S. J. 1995. An examination of the relationship between upward influence tactics and assessments of promotability. *Journal of Management*, 21: 739–756.
- Thomas, L. T., & Ganster, D. C. 1995. Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: A control perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80: 6–15.
- Thompson, B. M., Brough, P. A., & Schmidt, H. 2006. Supervisor and subordinate work-family values: Does similarity make a difference? *International Journal of Stress Management*, 13(1): 45–63.
- van Knippenberg, A., van Twuyver, M., & Pepels, J. 1994. Factors affecting social categorization processes in memory. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33: 419–431.
- Williams, J. 2001. *Unbending gender: Why work and family conflict and what to do about it*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, L. J., Cote, J. A., & Buckley, M. R. 1989. Lack of method variance in self-reported affect and perceptions of work: Reality or artifact? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 74: 462–468.
- Witt, L. A., & Carlson, D. S. 2006. The work-family interface and job performance: Moderating effects of conscientiousness and perceived organizational support. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 11: 343–357.



Jenny M. Hoobler (jhoobler@uic.edu) is an assistant professor of management in the College of Business Administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky. Her research interests include workplace injustice, gender and diversity, and work and family intersections.

Sandy J. Wayne (sjwayne@uic.edu) is professor of management and director of the Center for Human Resource Management at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She received her Ph.D. in management from Texas A&M University. Her research focuses on understanding relationships in the workplace, including the antecedents and consequences of employee-supervisor and employee-organization relationships.

Grace Lemmon (glemmo2@uic.edu) is a doctoral student in the College of Business Administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research interests include exploration of identity, exchange, and mutuality in the employer-employee relationship.

Copyright of *Academy of Management Journal* is the property of Academy of Management and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.