

SELF-PROMOTION VS. BACKLASH PREVENTION: REGULATORY FOCUS AND
GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SELF-ADVOCACY

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Self-Promotion vs. Backlash Prevention: Regulatory Focus and Gender Differences in

Self-Advocacy

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Considerable evidence has shown that, relative to men, women are less effective at self-advocacy, despite its importance for closing the gender gap in professional success. Women fear backlash for counterstereotypical behavior (such as self-promotion, which violates prescriptions for female communality), and engage in defensive strategies designed to avoid it (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). No research has tested the effects of fear of backlash on performance (e.g., self-advocacy). To address this gap, I propose that backlash threat leads to an inhibitory prevention focused self-regulatory style (Crowe & Higgins, 1997) that subsequently interferes with women's self-advocacy ability. In contrast, because self-advocacy behavior does not violate masculine prescriptive stereotypes, I expect that men will not experience fear of backlash; as a result, they will employ a successful promotion focused regulatory style, and demonstrate greater self-advocacy ability. Experiment 1 validated the usage of a lexical decision task to implicitly assess acute regulatory focus. Experiment 2 tested my focal hypotheses by comparing male and female participants on a self or peer-advocacy task. Results did not support the hypothesized gender differences or the predictive utility of the proposed model.

However, for self-advocating women, the model performed as expected, such that threat of backlash lead to lowered ability to employ a useful promotion focused regulatory style, resulting in diminished advocacy ability. Implications for future research and women's self-advocacy abilities, as well as limitations of the research, are discussed.

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I. Introduction

Despite the passage of the Equal Pay Act over forty years ago, female professionals still earn only 76 cents on the dollar relative to their male counterparts (National Committee on Pay Equity, 2004) resulting in a \$523,000 lifetime average loss (Burk, 2005). Moreover, women account for only 2% of CEOs, and 6% of the highest earning workers in Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2005). Given these gender inequities, it is critical to investigate factors that contribute to the relative dearth of high-status professional women.

As described below, the ability to self-advocate is an important variable that likely contributes to the glass ceiling, in large part because self-advocacy is more normative and thus, more accepted for men than for women. Because women are penalized for self-promotion more so than men (e.g., Rudman, 1998), they may well be aware of backlash effects (i.e., social and economic sanctions for counterstereotypical behavior; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). The current research tested a mediational model designed to help account for persistent gender-differences in critical workplace self-advocacy behavior (Amanatullah, 2007) that may underscore the gender gap in professional achievement. Specifically, I investigated the role of women's fear of backlash for self-advocacy and its subsequent provocation of an inhibitory self-regulatory focus (Crowe & Higgins, 1997) in order to identify processes that contribute to women's self-advocacy detriments relative to men.

Gender Differences in Self-Advocacy

The ability to self-advocate is a critical component of professional success (Rudman, 1998). From salary negotiations to interviews, hiring, and advancement

processes, employees must often demonstrate the ability to highlight their strengths and aggressively pursue their goals in order to move up the ranks (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). Indeed, without proper self-advocacy skills, individuals may be viewed as less competent and motivated, and are likely to fall behind relative to their self-advocating colleagues (Amanatullah, 2007; Wade, 2001).

Importantly, although it is critical to be able to “sell yourself” in this way, women are often less successful at self-advocating than their male counterparts (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). For example, women are less likely than men to self-advocate during job interviews, negotiate for higher salaries, and to ask for promotions (Janoff-Bulman & Wade, 1996). Even when controlling for outside factors impacting salary negotiations, female MBAs consistently fail to negotiate for starting salaries that match those obtained by their male counterparts (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005; Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; Stevens, Bavetta, & Gist, 1993), particularly when the job context is stereotypically masculine and the appropriate salary range is ambiguous (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005). In fact, Babcock and Laschever (2003) found that only 7% of female professional school graduates made attempts to negotiate increases in their first salary offer, in contrast to 57% of their male classmates. Further, results of meta-analyses indicate that women consistently arrive at less favorable negotiation outcomes than men (Stulmacher & Walters, 1999; Walters et al., 1998), particularly when strong self-advocacy demands are present. Thus, an inability to effectively self-advocate has important economic consequences for career women.

Gender researchers have routinely demonstrated that women often show a consistent pattern of downplaying their achievements and abilities that may make it

particularly difficult to succeed under self-advocacy demand. This “female modesty” effect has been documented across a wide variety of domains. For example, Heatherington and colleagues have investigated students’ predictions regarding their future academic success (Daubman, Heatherington, & Ahn, 1992; Heatherington, Burns, & Gustafson, 1998; Heatherington, Daubman, Bates, Ahn, Brown, & Preston, 1993). They found that female college students either consistently underestimated their subsequently obtained GPAs or were fairly accurate, while men tended to significantly overestimate their performance (Daubman et al., 1992). The argument that this effect was due at least in part to external demands for feminine modesty was supported by the finding that women were particularly prone to underestimation when they knew that their guesses would be given publicly (Daubman et al., 1992; Heatherington et al., 1993).

Additionally, women tend to be concerned with the self-esteem of interactions partners, and the ways in which their partners’ confidence could be undermined (Daubman et al., 1992; Heatherington et al., 1993) by their success. For example, Heatherington et al. (1993) found that women were more likely to predict lower GPAs than men (and than those the women actually obtained) when they believed they would give their predictions to an experimenter with a low GPA (see also Daubman et al., 1992), even when they remained anonymous. Similarly, Heatherington et al. (1998) demonstrated that in addition to predicting lower GPAs for themselves than men in general, women were particularly modest when their interaction partner was described as feeling “vulnerable” about their GPA (especially if the vulnerable other was male). In contrast, men did not downgrade their confident GPA predictions when interacting with a vulnerable other of either gender.

These findings are consistent with a large body of literature indicating that women are likely to underrate their abilities relative to men, especially in male sex-typed domains (Beyer, 1990, Carr, Thomas, & Mednick, 1985; Crandall, 1969; Lenney, 1977). For example, women are less likely to take credit for their successes, and more likely to accept blame for their failures than men (Berg, Stephan, & Dodson, 1981; Feather & Simon, 1973; Levine, Gillman, & Reis, 1982). Additionally, women estimate their general intelligence lower than men do (e.g., Beloff, 1992; Bennett, 1996, 1997; Furnham, Hosoe, & Tang, 2001). In sum, men often display a self-enhancing bias, while women are more likely to be self-effacing (Bar-Tal & Frieze, 1977; Berg et al., 1981; Heilman & Kram, 1978). Taken together, these results indicate that relative to men, women are likely to be more modest about their successes and are more prone to underestimating their skills and abilities (particularly in male sex-typed domains such as many of those mentioned above), qualities that could clearly interfere with the ability to self-advocate.

Backlash for Women's Self-Advocacy

A possible explanation for gender differences in self-advocacy behaviors may be found in research suggesting that women who self-advocate are viewed unfavorably. Past research has found that when women engage in self-advocating behavior, they risk *backlash effects* from evaluators (i.e., social and economic sanctions for behaving counterstereotypically; Rudman, 1998; see also Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Heilman et al., 2004).

In a series of studies, Rudman (1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999; 2001) demonstrated that self-promotion is particularly important for women vying for

managerial roles, because they must overcome lowered expectations for leadership skills relative to male competitors. However, women who engage in self-promoting behavior are often strongly disliked. Further, this dislike accounts for hiring discrimination, underscoring the negative effect that backlash has on women's careers (Rudman & Glick 1999; 2001). Thus, when women engage in self-advocacy, they are perceived as highly competent, but risk incurring backlash for their (necessarily) assertive behavior (Rudman, 1998). In contrast, men in these situations do not experience negative reactions for self-advocating, indicating that women experience a unique handicap that could greatly impact their chances of being hired for leadership positions.

More generally, the double standard for self-promotion is a critical barrier to women's equitable professional treatment, in that self-advocacy is necessary for career advancement and yet women are harshly punished for this behavior. For example, women who communicate in an opinionated, assertive manner in a professional setting are perceived as competent, but are often judged to be less likeable—and in turn, less influential and persuasive—than men who communicated in this manner and than women who speak in a more passive, stereotypically feminine way (Carli, LaFleur & Loeber, 1996). Additionally, and similar to Rudman's hiring paradigm research, women who used an assertive strategy on a job interview were less likely to be hired than identically aggressive men (Buttner and McEnally, 1996).

Taken together, these results support the idea that women suffer interpersonally when they communicate assertively, and particularly when they self-advocate. Research on negotiation has also documented this pattern. For example, using a hiring paradigm, Bowles, Babcock and Lai (2007) found that male evaluators were more inclined to work

with “nice” women who accepted their initial compensation offers, compared with women who attempted to negotiate for more money; by contrast, negotiating for a higher salary had no effect on men’s willingness to work with male candidates. These findings suggest that women “do not ask” (e.g., for higher pay, more responsibility, or greater recognition; Babcock & Laschever, 2003) because they (accurately) fear negative reactions from others.

Prescriptive Stereotypes and Backlash

Backlash for women’s self-advocacy may stem from the fact that this behavior violates prescriptive gender stereotypes about how men and women *should* behave (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Broadly speaking, men are expected to demonstrate stereotypic traits that are *agentic* (e.g., aggressiveness, competitiveness, and independence), while women are expected to be more *communal* (e.g., emotional, caring, and other-oriented). In light of these prescriptive stereotypes for female communality, women are often socialized to be nurturing and other-oriented rather than aggressive and self-oriented; for men, the reverse is true (Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

When an individual behaves in a manner that violates these stereotypic expectations, backlash often ensues (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs & Tamkins, 2004; Rudman, 1998). For example, Moss-Racusin and Heilman (2006) found that women who failed at a female sex-typed job (i.e., a family lawyer) were more interpersonally disliked than women who failed at a male sex-typed job (i.e., a corporate lawyer). Because women are expected to possess the communal characteristics required for success at female-typed tasks, when they fail they are seen as insufficiently feminine and therefore risk strong

negative reactions. Similarly, if women demonstrate traditionally male sex-typed self-advocacy behavior, they are likely to encounter backlash.

To date, there is some evidence that prescriptions for female communality play a significant role in penalties for female agency. First, evaluators' prescriptive gender stereotypes have moderated backlash toward female job candidates (Gill, 2004). For example, people who associate men with individualism and women with communality also tend to dislike self-promoting women (Rudman & Glick, 2001). Second, when women present themselves as both self-promoting and cooperative ("team players"), they do not suffer backlash, ostensibly because they have communicated information in keeping with prescriptive stereotypes for female communality (Rudman & Glick, 2001). Third, a female supervisor whose competence is unambiguous does not suffer backlash when she is described as a wife and a mother, suggesting that traditional roles can make up for the perceived communality deficit (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007).

Beyond the perceived communality deficit, female agency can also lead to perceptions that a woman is "too masculine" (as well as insufficiently "feminine"). For example, successful female managers were rated as highly competent, but also manipulative, cold, and harsh (Heilman, 2001; Heilman, Block & Martell, 1995). Similarly, self-promoting female job candidates scored high on leadership qualities, but also high on negative masculine traits (dominating, arrogant, cold and selfish; Phelan, Moss-Racusin, & Rudman, 2008). Thus, counterstereotypical behaviors such as self-promotion can cost women the positive traits of their gender while charging them with the negative traits of men – backlash effects that undermine their ability to successfully self-advocate.

The Impact of Representational Role

Thus far, I have described the social barriers that women face when they self-advocate, even when doing so is mandated (e.g., during job interviews). It is likely that fear of backlash is at least partly responsible for the “feminine modesty effect” leading to gender differences in self-advocacy. However, in advocacy situations that do not necessitate violations of prescriptive stereotypes for female modesty and communality, women may be freer to advocate as effectively as men. Specifically, shifting the representational role by asking women to advocate on behalf of another instead of themselves may reduce gender differences in overall advocacy success, because working on behalf of someone else is consistent with stereotypic expectations that women are helpful, supportive, and interpersonally-oriented (Amanatullah, 2007; Wade, 2001).

Although such a shift may not eliminate *all* agentic task components and perceived stereotype violations for women (since advocacy is still involved), I propose that shifting the advocacy target from the self to a peer will drastically enhance the perceived communal task elements such that fear of backlash will likely no longer ensue, improving advocacy behavior as a result. Thus, I propose that women may not have difficulties with advocacy *per se*, but specifically with *self* advocacy which violates prescriptive gender stereotypes.

Previous research supports the idea that gender differences in advocacy behavior may be ameliorated by shifting the representational role. For example, women asked to negotiate starting salaries made significantly smaller requests for themselves than for others, while men showed the reverse pattern (Wade, 1995). Using simulated salary negotiations, Amanatullah (2007) documented the same pattern of women accepting

lower salaries for themselves than when they negotiated on behalf of a peer, even when negotiations took place over email or instant messenger. This resulted in self-advocating men earning more than self-advocating women, whereas no gender differences emerged in salaries when negotiations were done on behalf of peers. Additional research found that women claimed more responsibility for work that brought rewards to others than to themselves (Crittendon, 1991). Finally, women report being more comfortable with power when it is wielded for the benefit of others, rather than the self (Miller, 1991). These findings cohere with a more general pattern by which women are more influential when behaving in ways that are gender-linked and socially acceptable, such as appearing to have a group-oriented, as opposed to a self-oriented approach (Ridgeway, 1982; Ridgeway & Diekema, 1992).¹ In other words, prescriptions for female communality handicap women so that they can be powerful negotiators and advocates for other people, but not for themselves.

In sum, while *self*-advocacy violates expectations for female communality, *other*-advocacy falls in line with women's gendered roles and behavior. As a consequence, women may be more successful and effective when faced with a peer-advocacy demand, as opposed to when they are obliged to self-advocate. The present research assumes that women are aware of social penalties for self-promotion, and that the threat of backlash will inhibit their ability to self-advocate as successfully as men. In particular, I predicted that fear of backlash would create conditions that foster risk aversion in women, which in turn prevent them from successful self-advocacy. Thus, I examined the specific mechanisms underscoring the gender gap in self-advocacy success (Amanatullah, 2007;

¹ For these studies, men were not included as a basis of comparison.

Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Wade, 1995). While considerable past research has examined the conditions that foster backlash, and has uncovered defensive reactions designed to avoid it, it has not investigated women's fear of backlash for self-advocacy under naturalistic conditions, or the causal processes responsible for the link between backlash threat and impaired self-advocacy.

The Role of Regulatory Focus

To address this gap, I proposed that the concept of regulatory focus plays an important role in limiting women's ability to perform well under self-advocacy demand. Past research has defined self-regulation as the ability to maintain motivation and focus throughout a task, and has noted that this process plays a critical role in persistence and goal attainment (Crowe & Higgins, 1997). Regulatory Focus Theory (Crowe & Higgins, 1997) distinguishes two major types of self-regulatory styles. A *promotion* focus involves an emphasis on advancement, growth and accomplishment (e.g., striving to make a good impression, get a promotion, or land a better job), while a *prevention* focus involves a more conservative approach centered on risk-aversion (e.g., attempting to avoid making a mistake or getting fired; Crowe & Higgins, 1997). In essence, promotion-focused individuals seek to attain desired outcomes, whereas those in a prevention focus attempt to avoid undesired outcomes. Consequently, prevention-focused individuals perform worse on tasks, are less creative, and quit more readily than those employing a promotion focus (Appelt & Higgins, 2007; Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Higgins, Shah & Friedman, 1997).

Further, individuals who report a history of success with promotion focus are more likely to approach novel tasks with eagerness and anticipation of success, compared

with people who report a history of successful prevention focus, who become more cautious and vigilant over time (Higgins, Friedman, Harlow, Idson, Ayduk, & Taylor, 2001). Thus, the use of a promotion focus is associated with enhanced performance and higher levels of achievement across a variety of domains, whereas a prevention focus has been shown to lead to performance detriments.

When considering the role of regulatory focus in self-advocacy conditions, it seems likely that people with a prevention focus may be less likely to “sell themselves” effectively than individuals employing a more successful promotion focus. For this reason, self-regulatory style was employed in this research as opposed to other frameworks assessing the broader approach/avoidance paradigm, such as behavioral activation vs. inhibition systems (Gray, 1970, 1972; Carver & White, 1994). Similar to regulatory focus theory, this framework posits two distinct systems, one responsible for behavioral activation (similar to promotion), and the other behavioral inhibition (similar to prevention). However, this theory is concerned more specifically with the physiological mechanisms underlying *chronic* patterns of approach and avoidance behavior, and the resulting affect (particularly, inhibitory anxiety). For my purposes, regulatory focus theory was a more appropriate theoretical perspective in that its emphasis is primarily cognitive, and because prevention focus is conceptualized as a mechanism for avoiding negative outcomes in line with fear of backlash. Also, since the current research hinges on shifts in motivational state as a result of an acute backlash cue, it was critical to employ a theoretical system which was sensitive to shifts in state (rather than only long-term trait) approaches. Additionally, regulatory focus is not known to be associated with shifts in mood (Appelt & Higgins, 2007), suggesting that these

motivational states are distinct from contextual shifts in affect. Thus, regulatory focus was judged to be an appropriate framework for the current research. Below, I outline the role of backlash in determining the type of regulatory focus that women may experience under pressure to self-advocate.

Backlash and Regulatory Focus

As noted above, women who fear backlash for counterstereotypical behavior may behave defensively to avoid it (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). Specifically, women who feared backlash for high scores on a masculine knowledge test closeted their success, lied about it to the experimenter, and increased their conformity to gender norms by showing greater interest in feminine occupations and activities, compared with counterparts who did not fear backlash (and with women who scored high on a feminine knowledge test; Rudman & Fairchild, 2004). However, because women were always provided with successful feedback, this research did not investigate the effects of threat of backlash on actual performance, much less regulatory focus and its subsequent impact. Because the goal of prevention-focus is to avoid negative outcomes, it seemed likely that it could explain defensive behaviors in women who fear backlash. That is, awareness of a situational backlash threat could lead to protective changes in regulatory focus, to the detriment of self-advocacy skills.

As outlined in the mediational model shown in Figure 1, I proposed that for women faced with a self-advocacy demand, fear of impending backlash results in the use of a prevention-focused regulatory style that negatively affects self-advocacy ability. By contrast, an other-advocacy demand should reduce fear of backlash, encourage a promotion-focused style, and thereby lead to successful advocacy for others. Consistent

with Figure 1, the effect of advocacy demand on regulatory focus should be accounted for by fear of backlash (high for women instructed to self-advocate, but low for women instructed to peer-advocate). Further, the effect of fear of backlash on advocacy success should be accounted for women's acute regulatory focus. Finally, results for men are not shown in Figure 1. Because self-advocacy is not proscribed for men, they should not fear backlash in either condition and their acute regulatory focus should be promotion-based irrespective of experimentally manipulated advocacy demands.²

Measuring Regulatory Focus

Previous research has measured regulatory focus using self-report (explicit) measures (see, for example, Crowe & Higgins, 1997; Higgins, Shah & Friedman, 1997; and Higgins et al., 2001). Below, I will describe these individual difference measures and argue that regulatory focus must be assessed both explicitly and implicitly. Due to the fact that women may experience a social desirability effect that would bias them towards reporting a promotion focus, it is critical to develop an implicit measurement of self-regulatory focus (SRF). Additionally, because I am interested in measuring the type of SRF used for the specific advocacy task as a result of fear of backlash, it is necessary to employ a measurement strategy that assesses acute rather than chronic SRF.

² There is certain evidence to suggested that peer advocacy may violate prescriptions for male agency and independence (Koenig & Eagly, 2005), potentially resulting in lessened peer advocacy (relative to self-advocacy) success for men—essentially, the complementary pattern to that which I propose for women. Although this remains a possibility, the scarcity of such research leads to my prediction that men's peer-advocacy abilities will be similar to women's. However, results to the contrary would be an interesting research direction to explore.

Trait Measures of SRF

Two surveys have primarily been used to assess individual differences in chronic self-regulatory focus (SRF). Although the earlier survey employs reaction time data, they are both explicit in nature and assess regulatory style as a stable trait rather than a fluctuating state.

Regulatory strength measure. The RSM (Higgins, Shah, & Friedman, 1997) is a reaction time measure that prompts participants to list four attributes they would *ideally like to possess* (assumed to be associated with promotion focus) and four attributes that they *feel they ought to possess* (assumed to be associated with a prevention focus) in a random order. They then indicate how much they would ideally like/feel they ought to possess each trait, and how much they feel that they actually do. Reaction times for generating attributes, indicating ideal/ought ratings, and arriving at actual ratings are recorded. Promotion focus (ideal strength) and prevention focus (ought strength) are then calculated by log-transforming reaction times, summing them separately for ideals and oughts, and multiplying these totals by -1 so that higher numbers (and thus, shorter response times) indicate greater chronic strength/accessibility of each type of SRF.

While this measure does employ reaction time data, participants are explicitly asked to self-report attributes and subsequent attitudes. Thus, it is not an implicit (or even an indirect) measure, which would not directly ask for people's opinions in order to avoid social desirability demands. Moreover, this measure provides an assessment of *chronic* regulatory focus, rather than an *acute* assessment of SRF.

Regulatory mode questionnaire. The RMQ (Kruglanski et al., 2000) is a self-report questionnaire that assesses individual differences in employing the specific

processes underlying a promotion (pursuing goals through “locomotion”) or prevention (avoiding negative outcomes through “assessment”) focus (see Kruglanski et al., 2000, and Higgins & Kruglanski, 1995, for a discussion of the relationship between regulatory mode and regulatory focus). Questions assessing prevention/assessment center around habits of avoiding negative outcomes (e.g., “I often think other people’s choices and decisions are wrong”) while promotion/locomotion items assess eager pursuit of goals (e.g., “I am a go-getter.” However, the RMQ has low face validity, especially for assessing the risk aversion aspect of promotion that is central to my hypotheses. I therefore modified it for use in Experiment 1. Appendix A provides the full modified and RMQ measures.

As noted above, this scale also measures chronic rather than acute regulatory focus. In addition, it includes a lie scale because the measure may evoke self-presentation concerns, in that participants may be unwilling to report being cautious and risk averse (and thus, having a prevention focus).

State Measure of SRF

Because no state measure of SRF has been developed, I chose to employ a novel lexical decision task (LDT) to measure acute self-regulatory focus. The LDT is an implicit measure that uses response latencies for recognizing words related to different concepts (here, promotion vs. prevention) as a measure of sensitivity to stimuli. More specifically, the LDT asks participants to decide if a presented stimulus is a word or non-word as quickly as possible. The stimulus pool for this LDT included non-words (i.e., *glyxw*, *blgtip*, *nuvtpl*), and words that are consistent with either a promotion-focused regulatory style (i.e. *go*, *approach*, *obtain*) or a prevention-focused regulatory style (i.e.

stop, avoid, secure). Non-words are included to be consistent with the cover story. In reality, researchers are interested in how fast participants recognize some words compared with others.

Past research has used the LDT as a state measure to assess acute constructs (Ferraro, King, Ronning, Pekarski, & Risan, 2003; Olafson & Ferraro, 2001; Niedenthal, Halberstadt, & Setterlund, 1997). For example, Ferraro et al. induced mood states by playing either a happy or sad music, and then administered a LDT. Participants primed to feel happy were subsequently faster at recognizing happy than sad words (with the reverse pattern for the sad mood group), indicating that the LDT was sensitive to state fluctuations in mood. In addition, the LDT was demonstrated to be sensitive to a priming manipulation, such that men primed to view women as sex objects (by watching television ads that portrayed women as scantily clad, decorative objects) recognized sexist words (e.g., babe, bimbo, Playboy) faster than control participants (who did not view women in otherwise comparable ads; Rudman & Borgida, 1995). Finally, LDT-assessed racial stereotypes converged with explicit prejudice measures (Wittenbrik, Judd & Park, 1997), and LDT measurements of implicit attitudes have shown superior predictive validity compared to explicit attitudes measurements (Lambert et al., 2005). In light of these findings, I propose that LDT may be useful as an implicit measurement of acute SRF.

For my purposes, participants were asked to make word vs. non-word judgments to stimuli following a manipulation designed to evoke a promotion or prevention regulatory focus. The critical variable was the speed with which the words consistent with a promotion focus were recognized, relative to words consistent with a prevention

focus. As described in Experiment 1, I expected that people primed with a promotion focus would recognize promotion words faster than prevention words. A prevention focus manipulation should yield the converse pattern. These results would support using LDT as an implicit measure of acute SRF.

Assessing Self-Advocacy Success

To test Figure 1, participants in Experiment 2 were asked to write either a personal statement for graduate school (the self-advocacy condition) or a letter of recommendation for a peer (the peer-advocacy condition). To maximize the validity of my measure of self-advocacy success, I used a multi-method approach. First, I asked participants to what extent they felt they have effectively advocated in their written essay. Second, independent judges coded the essays for statements conceptually linked to self-advocacy (e.g., number of agentic and communal statements, references to personal versus collective achievements, and statements reflecting ambition and drive).

Finally, I proposed to use a text-analysis program to analyze the essays for linguistic components of advocacy success. Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC2001; Pennebaker, 1993) is a computer program that calculates the frequency of different types of words and linguistic constructs, and allows for the implementation of custom dictionaries designed for specific research purposes. LIWC2001 has been used extensively to analyze textual data (e.g., Jones & Pennebaker, 2006; Slatcher & Pennebaker, 2006; Burke & Dollinger, 2005; Francis, 1993; Pennebaker, 1993). However, after submitting the first 100 essays to this program, analyzing frequency of words that suggest promotion (consisting of the 12 promotion words used in the LDT) and prevention (composed of 12 prevention words), as well as self-advocacy (e.g., first

person pronouns, and active and passive verbs), I found no differences related to gender, advocacy condition, or their interaction. I therefore refrained from analyzing the remaining essays using this program.

Overview of the Current Research

In sum, the current research directly tested the impact of fear of backlash and self-regulatory style on women's self-advocacy behavior. Specifically, I proposed that for women, fear of backlash resulting from a self-advocacy demand will lead to usage of a detrimental prevention-focused regulatory style, and subsequent weakened self-advocacy abilities. However, because peer-advocacy demand does not violate prescriptive stereotypes for female communality, women who are asked to advocate on behalf of someone else will not fear backlash, will employ a useful promotion focus and will demonstrate heightened advocacy behaviors as a result (see Figure 1). Experiment 1 served as a pilot experiment to test the usefulness of the lexical decision task as an implicit measure of acute regulatory focus. Experiment 2 tested the proposed mediational model for women's self-advocacy detriments. To test this idea, men and women were asked to advocate for either themselves or someone else, and subsequent levels of fear of backlash, self-regulatory style, and advocacy abilities were assessed.

II. Experiment 1

Experiment 1 used the lexical decision task (LDT) as an implicit measure of acute self-regulatory focus. Participants were primed with either a promotion or prevention focus by receiving false personality feedback indicating that their “personality style” was in keeping with one of the self-regulatory styles. They also received different instructions before completing the LDT to further bolster the SRF manipulation. The LDT assessing their regulatory focus was then administered. It was expected that participants primed with a promotion focus would recognize promotion-related words faster than participants primed with a prevention focus, who should respond to prevention-related words faster than promotion-primed participants. If so, results would support the LDT as a valid measurement tool for acute regulatory focus. Participants also completed a modified version of the Regulatory Mode Questionnaire (RMQ), a self-report measure of SRF. Because it is conceptualized as a trait (not state) measure, I did not expect it to be influenced by the manipulations. However, it was included for comparison purposes and to evaluate correlations between implicit and explicit measures of SRF. Finally, I asked participants a manipulation check question designed for screening purposes (“How well do you feel the personality test you took today assessed your personality?”). Participants responded on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*extremely*).

Method

Participants

Participants in this experiment were 280 Rutgers University students (157 women) who completed the research in exchange for partial credit towards their General Psychology course requirement. Participants were recruited through the Human Subjects

Pool website, and were brought into the lab individually to complete the experiment.

Participants were 42% White, 35% Asian, 7% Black, 6% Hispanic, 4% multiracial and 4% who indicated another ethnicity. The reported analyses are based on participants who passed a manipulation check indicated that they believed the false feedback on the personality test (135 respondents were excluded on this basis, but there was no significant difference in the number of people who did not believe the feedback by condition, $p = .21$). In addition, we excluded 6 participants whose error rates were greater than 25% or who showed greater than 10% response latencies less than 300 ms, indicating they were not attending to the task (original $N = 421$).

Materials

Self-regulatory focus prime. SRF (promotion or prevention) was primed using a bogus personality test generated to give feedback in keeping with one of the two self-regulatory styles. Stimuli for the personality test prime consisted of 8 Chinese ideograms, 8 dot estimation slides, 8 slides of artwork by Wassily Kandinsky and 8 slides of artwork by Paul Klee. After receiving either promotion or prevention feedback, participants were given instructions for the LDT that reinforced the same regulatory focus (either promotion or prevention; see procedure).

Lexical decision task. The LDT was designed to serve as an implicit measure of acute self-regulatory style. The stimuli pool for the LDT was author-designed, using a thesaurus and in consultation with fellow lab members. It consisted of 12 words relating to prevention focus (e.g., *prevent*, *protect*, *secure*), 12 words related to promotion (e.g., *promote*, *quick*, *move*), 10 neutral words for practice (e.g., *desk*, *paper*, *chair*), and 39

non-word letter strings (see Table 1)³. Participants first practiced the LDT by distinguishing non-words from neutral words for 20 trials. They then performed 90 trials that asked them to distinguish non-words from prevention and promotion words.

Regulatory mode questionnaire. A modified version of the RMQ (see Appendix A) was included for comparison purposes with the novel implementation of the LDT as an implicit regulatory focus measurement. As described above, the RMQ (Kruglanski et al., 2000) is a self-report measure designed to document individuals' stable use of either a prevention focus ("assessment") or a promotion focus ("locomotion"). Sample items for prevention and promotion focus, respectively, were *I often think other people act too rashly*, and *Generally, I go after what I want without worrying about consequences*. Scores on the promotion/locomotion subscale were averaged, as were scores on the prevention/assessment subscale. Both scales showed somewhat low internal reliability coefficients ($\alpha = .64$ for promotion and $.62$ for prevention). Past research has found the subscales of the full measure to be adequately consistent (e.g., α of $.86$ for promotion and $.79$ for prevention; Kruglanski et al., 2000). It is likely that Experiment 1 produced low reliability coefficients for my scales because they were abbreviated and modified versions of the full scales. But it is also possible that the scales are poor indicators of prevention focus and promotion focus, given that they are thought to tap the indicators of SRF (assessment and locomotion), as opposed to SRF. Again, this possibility underscores the necessity of developing and utilizing a state measure of SRF.

³ These words were pre-tested on a group of 100 undergraduate students to ensure proper perceived valence.

Procedure

Participants completed the experiment in individual booths. The experimenter explained that the experiment was concerned with the ways in which “individual differences may affect performance on a visual task.” All measures were administered by the computer program, *Inquisit* (Millisecond Software); items within each measure were randomly presented. The bogus personality test asked participants to indicate their preferences between two different Chinese ideograms ($n = 8$ trials), and then between 8 sets of Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee abstract paintings. Next, they estimated the number of dots presented on 8 slides. Participants were told that these tasks assessed their personality type based on their visual skill and preferences for different stimuli.

Upon completion of the bogus personality test, participants received either *promotion feedback*, or *prevention feedback*. In the promotion feedback condition, participants were told that:

Your score suggests you are an *intrinsically* motivated person. Intrinsic motivators tend to strive *for success*, focus on *performing well*, and make *achieving their goals* a top priority. *Intrinsic* motivators can be characterized as “*go-getters*” who *take risks to get what they want*. They are known to be *creative* thinkers and are often highly respected as *adventurous group leaders*.

In contrast, participants in the prevention feedback condition were told that:

Your score suggests you are an *extrinsically* motivated person. Extrinsic motivators tend to strive *to avoid failure*, focus on *making sure they don't perform poorly*, and make *avoiding bad outcomes* a top priority. *Extrinsic* motivators can be characterized as *people who “play it safe” and can be counted on to control the foolhardiness of others*. They are known to be *careful* thinkers and are often highly respected as *wise group members*.

These results were designed to be as parallel as possible, apart from information communicating information regarding self-regulatory style.

Participants were then introduced to the LDT. After viewing general instructions, participants were then given SRF condition-specific instructions. To heighten risk aversion, participants in the prevention condition were told that:

This is a timed task, and the computer will keep track of your score based on how quickly and accurately you perform. You will begin with *100* points, and if you perform *poorly*, you will *lose* points as you go along. *Be careful! You have points at stake, so take care not to lose them!*

To heighten goal pursuit, participants in the promotion condition were told that:

This is a timed task, and the computer will keep track of your score based on how quickly and accurately you perform. You will begin with *zero* points, and if you perform *well*, you will *gain up to 100* points as you go along. *Go for it! You have nothing to lose and everything to gain, so give it your all!*

In this way, the self-regulatory style manipulation was further reinforced.

Finally, after participants completed the LDT, they responded to the regulatory mode questionnaire and the manipulation checks. They also reported their gender and race. They were then fully debriefed and thanked for their time.

Results and Discussion

Lexical Decision Test Analyses

To test my focal hypotheses, I submitted LDT response latencies for promotion and prevention words to a 2 (word type) x 2 (SRF prime) x 2 (participant gender) mixed-model ANOVA.⁴ Results showed a main effect for word type, $F(1, 276) = 19.15, p < .001$. On average, participants responded to prevention words ($M = 587\text{ms}$, $SD = 79$) faster than promotion words ($M = 597\text{ms}$, $SD = 86$), likely because the nature of the task (requiring both speed and accuracy) created more caution than zeal.

⁴ In keeping with common practices, log transformed latencies were used in statistical tests because they normalize the distribution. The raw latencies are reported for ease of interpretability.

However, this effect was qualified by the expected Word Type x SRF Prime interaction, $F(1, 276) = 4.75, p < .05$. No other effects were reliable, all $F_s(1, 276) < 1.93, p_s > .17$. To interpret the two-way interaction, I conducted tests of simple effects (see figure 2). First, as predicted, participants in the promotion focus condition recognized promotion-related words marginally faster than did participants in the prevention focus condition, $t(276) = 1.79, p = .08$ ($M_s = 587$ vs. 606 ; $SD_s = 74$ and 95). There were no priming differences for prevention-related words, $t(276) < 1.00, ns$. Second, and also as expected, for the prevention-focus group, prevention-related words were recognized faster than promotion-related words, $t(276) = 4.74, p < .001$ ($M_s = 590$ vs. 606 ; $SD_s = 86$ and 95). There were no differences for the promotion-focus group, $t(276) = 1.64, ns$.

In sum, there were two indicators that the LDT might serve as an effective acute measure of SRF. First, the promotion focus priming yielded faster recognition for promotion words than did the prevention focus condition, although this effect was marginally reliable. Second, prevention focus priming resulted in reliably faster recognition of prevention words, relative to promotion words. While these results are not perfect, they show promising support for the LDT as a state measure of SRF.

Regulatory Mode Questionnaire

To assess the sensitivity of the self-report measure of SRF, I submitted the promotion/locomotion and prevention/assessment subscales to a 2 (SRF) x 2 (SRF prime) x 2 (participant gender) mixed-model ANOVA. Results showed a large main effect for SRF, $F(1, 276) > 100, p < .001$. On average, participants reported more promotion/locomotion ($M = 5.03, SD = .84$) than prevention/assessment ($M = 4.21, SD =$

.85), likely because the promotion items are more socially desirable than the prevention items.

However, there was also an unexpected SRF x SRF Prime interaction, $F(1, 276) = 39.54, p < .001$. No other effects were reliable, all $F_s(1, 276) < 1.00, ns$. To interpret the two-way interaction, I again conducted simple effects. Unexpectedly, participants in the prevention focus condition reported greater promotion/locomotion, compared with participants in the promotion focus condition, $t(276) = 4.74, p < .001$ ($M_s = 5.25$ vs. 4.79 ; $SD_s = .77$ and $.86$). They also scored lower on prevention/assessment, compared with participants in the promotion focus condition, $t(276) = 4.75, p < .001$ ($M_s = 3.99$ vs. 4.46 ; $SD_s = .78$ and $.84$). These results suggest that prevention focus feedback resulted in reactivity on the part of participants, who sought to reclaim the more socially desirable qualities of a promotion focus after being told their personality style was rather cautious and risk averse. In any event, they stand in stark contrast to the findings for the LDT, which showed priming effects that were consistent with the manipulations. As a consequence, Experiment 1 reinforced my suspicion that an implicit measure of acute regulatory focus would be necessary for testing the predictions derived from Figure 1.

Implicit and Explicit Measure Correlations

In order to assess the relationship between the LDT and self-report measures, I ran a series of correlations between the response latencies for each words type (and non-words) and promotion/locomotion and prevention/assessment scales from the RMQ for participants in both the promotion and prevention focus condition separately and then collapsed across conditions. No results were significant, all $r_s(1, 276) < 1.00, ns$, indicating that chronic regulatory focus (as measured explicitly by the modified RMQ)

was unrelated to the acute regulatory focus measure (the LDT). Further, these findings reinforced the necessity of employing an implicit, acute measurement of SRF, because results were not correlated with those obtained from the previously-used explicit measure.

In sum, results from Experiment 1 suggested that the novel LDT was promising for use as an implicit measure of acute self-regulatory focus in Experiment 2, the main focus of my investigation.

Experiment 2

Experiment 2 examined the proposed links shown in Figure 1 for women, and also tested the hypothesized gender difference for self-advocacy success (i.e., that men would be more successful self-advocators than women) – a difference that I predicted would be eliminated for the peer-advocacy condition. The experimental design was a 2 (participant gender: female, male) X 2 (advocacy type: self, other) X 4 (order of measures: there were four conditions, described in the procedure) between-subjects factorial. Men and women were asked to write either a personal statement for graduate school (self-advocacy) or a letter of recommendation for a peer (other-advocacy). After a brainstorming session, ostensibly to help them generate ideas but in fact, designed to heighten imagined reactions to self-advocacy, they completed the two primary dependent measures. These were the Fear of Backlash index (FOB; modified from Rudman & Fairchild, 2004) and the LDT employed in Experiment 1 to assess their acute regulatory focus. Additionally, participants completed measures of competing predictor variables (entitlement and gender prescriptions; see below). Self-ratings and coding by blind judges

and a linguistic program served as three measures of advocacy success. The specific hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Women in the self-advocacy condition will experience greater levels of fear of backlash than men in both conditions and than women in the peer-advocacy condition.

Hypothesis 2: Women in the self-advocacy condition will be more likely to show evidence of a prevention focus than men in both conditions and than women in the peer-advocacy condition, who will show more evidence of a promotion focus.

Hypothesis 3: Prevention focus will result in lowered advocacy abilities for women in the self-advocacy condition, compared to men and women in the peer-advocacy condition, who will maintain a more successful promotion focus.

Mediational hypothesis 4: As shown in Figure 1, the effect of advocacy demand on regulatory focus should be accounted for by fear of backlash (high for women instructed to self-advocate, but low for women instructed to peer-advocate).

Mediational hypothesis 5: Further, as shown in Figure 1, the effect of fear of backlash on advocacy success should be accounted for women's acute regulatory focus (prevention for women instructed to self-advocate, but promotion for women instructed to peer-advocate).

Competing Models

Finally, Experiment 2 also included measures of potential competing predictor variables in order to test alternate explanations for the effect of fear of backlash on advocacy success. I reasoned that beyond acute SRF, it would be useful to examine additional factors that could contribute to women's difficulty with self-advocacy. In

particular, Experiment 2 investigated the role of prescriptive gender stereotypes and sense of entitlement. Previous work has suggested that women worry more than men that they will be viewed as overly demanding when they self-advocate (e.g., when requesting compensation for their efforts), and that they do not feel “entitled” to self-advocate strongly (Major, 1983). Thus, Experiment 2 also examined women’s sense of entitlement as an alternative mediator to prevention focus in Figure 1. Additionally, it is possible that women who ascribe to a more rigid view of traditional gender roles and female communality (Prentice & Carranza, 2002) will view self-advocacy as “masculine” behavior and thus, show more self-advocacy deficits than women who have a more flexible, egalitarian perspective. Thus, participants’ endorsement of traditional gender stereotypes was also measured.

Method

Participants

386 (216 female) Rutgers University students were recruited from the Human Subjects Pool to participate in exchange for partial credit towards their Introduction to Psychology research participation requirement. Participants’ mean age was 18.61 years, and they were 43% White, 27% Asian, 5% Black, 6% Hispanic, 4% multiracial. 4% indicated another ethnicity, and 11% did not indicate an ethnicity.

Materials

Fear of backlash index. Adapted from a measure used in previous research (Rudman & Fairchild, 2004), the FOB measure asks participants to “imagine that people in a group reading your essay recognized YOU as the author of your essay” and respond to 6 items using a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much so*). Sample items

from the 6-item index include “Would you be concerned that you might be disliked?”; “Do you think you would be embarrassed?”; and “Would you be concerned you might be disliked?” Scores from these questions were averaged to form the fear of backlash index, with higher scores indicating a greater level of perceived threat ($\alpha = .84$; see Appendix B).

Acute regulatory focus. The LDT described in Experiment 1 was used to assess acute regulatory focus. However, because Experiment 1 showed a main effect favoring recognition of prevention words, several promotion-related words were changed to be more strongly promotion-related, in order to obtain great levels of similarity to the prevention-related stimuli (see Table 1).

Regulatory mode questionnaire. The full version of the modified RMQ used in Experiment 1 was employed to measure explicit self-regulatory style (see Appendix A). This decision was made because the modified measure performed poorly in Experiment 1. Additionally, I reasoned that including the lengthier full version of the scale was likely to enhance its reliability.

As shown in Appendix A, the RMQ consists of three distinct subscales, which were computed by averaging the items. The locomotion subscale includes 11 items assessing usage of a promotion focus ($\alpha = .76$), the assessment subscale included 11 items tapping usage of a prevention focus ($\alpha = .71$), and the lie scale consisted of 5 items designed to identify distortion of responses ($\alpha = .47$). Due to its low reliability and minor theoretical relevance, the lie subscale was dropped from further analysis.

Advocacy success questionnaire. This questionnaire included 6 items designed to assess participant’s perceptions of their advocacy success on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 6

(*extremely*; see *Appendix B*). Sample items include, “Overall, how well do you think you advocated for yourself [your peer] in your essay?”; and “When others read your essay, how competent do you think they would rate you [your peer]?”

In order to obtain a relatively “hard” measure of advocacy success, items assessing economic advocacy success were also included. Participants were again asked to “imagine that people in a group reading your essay recognized YOU as the author of your essay.” They then responded to the questions, “Given a range between \$15,000 - \$30,000, what dollar amount would they recommend as a yearly academic stipend/scholarship?” and “Given a range between 1-5 years, how many years would they recommend an academic stipend/scholarship be received?” Responses to these questions were standardized, and then averaged with the self-reported variables above to create the advocacy success index ($\alpha = .70$), which was used as the primary dependent variable.

Judges’ ratings of advocacy success. An independent measure of advocacy success was derived from blind coders’ ratings of the essays. To arrive at these ratings, I designed a coding scheme to assess various aspects of advocacy success in both the self and peer-advocacy condition. Items include the number of positive attributes mentioned (both agentic and communal), number of accomplishments discussed (both agentic and communal), and the extent to which the participant used uncertain or non-specific language (reverse-coded) on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 3 (*very much*). Raters’ subjective perceptions of the writers’ overall advocacy success and predictions of the author’s sex were also included for exploratory purposes (see *Appendix C*).

Perceived entitlement to success (competing predictor variable #1). Also included were three items to assess perceived entitlement to advocacy success, the first

competing predictor variable. Responses to these 3 items (“In general, do you feel comfortable talking about yourself in positive terms?”, “In general, do you feel you have the right to praise yourself publicly?”, and “Do you usually feel justified when you speak about yourself positively?”) were averaged to form the entitlement index ($\alpha=.76$).

Prescriptive stereotyping indices (competing predictor variable #2). The second competing predictor variable, prescriptive gender stereotyping, was assessed by two subscales tapping both communal (female) and agentic (male) prescriptive stereotyping (i.e., the extent to which participants believed that women should behave more communally than men, and men more agentic than women). Six items asked how important it is for both the ideal man and then the ideal woman to evidence four masculine types of behaviors (“confidence,” “self-promotion,” “independence,” and “competitiveness”) and two feminine behaviors (“nurturing,” “supporting others”) for a total of 12 ratings. These items were averaged to form four preliminary subscales assessing the extent to which men should be agentic ($\alpha=.74$), men should be communal ($\alpha=.63$), women should be agentic ($\alpha=.80$), and women should be communal ($\alpha=.69$). These subscales were used to form two difference scores such that high scores indicated that men are prescribed to be more agentic than women, and women are prescribed to be more communal than men. To do this, I subtracted the female agency scale from the male agency scale to arrive at the agentic stereotyping index. Similarly, I subtracted the male communal scale from the female communal scale to generate the communal stereotyping index.

Self-reported experiences of backlash. Finally, subjects also completed a 5-item scale measuring the amount of backlash for self-promotion participants had previously

experienced. This was included as a potential moderator, because participants who have not experienced backlash for deviant behavior may not fear backlash. Items included were “In the past, have you ever felt you were being punished for being too confident?” and “Have you ever felt that others reacted to you in a negative way when you behaved assertively?” Items were averaged to form the self-reported backlash (SRB) scale ($\alpha = .71$). Although this variable predicted fear of backlash for both women and men (both $r_s > .18$, $p_s < .01$), it was unrelated to other variables in Figure 1 (and did not moderate the model shown in Figure 1), so it will be dropped from further discussion.

Procedure

After informed consent was obtained, participants were escorted to individual booths and randomly assigned to either the self or peer advocacy condition. They were told that they would be writing either a personal statement (self-advocacy) or letter of recommendation for a peer (peer-advocacy), ostensibly for graduate school in order to be used as a model for workshops for undergraduate peers. Participants were instructed not to be modest or to hold back, but rather to focus on presenting themselves or their peer in the strongest light possible. All participants then completed a short guided brainstorming session to generate ideas and help structure the essay writing. Participants were told that “Before writing your essay, we will ask you to do a bit of brainstorming. First, type in your (your peer’s) best qualities and why you think you (your peer) possess(es) them.” Next, participants were told to “type in some of your (your peer’s) personal accomplishments and why you think they are important.”

Following this, participants were randomly assigned to one of four counterbalancing conditions. In condition 1, they completed the FOB, the LDT, and then

wrote their essay. This condition follows the causal sequence in Figure 1 exactly. The remaining conditions were used to ensure that completion of any of these tasks does not serve as an unintentional prime that would enhance participants' awareness of their subsequent behavior and reactions and thus, skew the results. In condition 2, they wrote their essay, took the LDT, and completed the fear of backlash index. In condition 3, they took the LDT, completed the FOB, and wrote their essay. In condition 4, they wrote their essay, completed the FOB, and took the LDT. Counterbalancing the order of presentation allowed me to assess and control for any unintentional order effects.

After completing these three measures in one of the above order conditions, participants completed the regulatory mode questionnaire as an explicit measure of self-regulatory style, the advocacy success questionnaire and economic advocacy success measures to report their perceived advocacy abilities, and brief demographic measures. They were then fully debriefed, thanked for their time, and awarded credit.

Subsequently, coders blind to participant gender rated the essays for advocacy success using the coding scheme described above. Four undergraduate research assistants were trained to serve as blind coders by using the coding sheets to make individual assessments of participants' advocacy success. Judges were blind to the participant's gender, but due to the nature of the essays (personal statement vs. letter of recommendation for a peer) could not be blind to experimental condition. However, the judges were minimally informed as to the hypotheses of the experiment in order to limit any potential bias. Intraclass correlation coefficients assessing their levels of interrater reliability on included variables were all above .70, indicating satisfactory interrater reliability.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses showed that the LDT and the assessment index (used as a measure of prevention focus) were not affected by the manipulations, or useful as predictor variables. Although men were faster than women at recognizing promotion (relative to prevention) words on the LDT, $r(386) = -.10, p < .05$, the effect was small and the LDT was not related to advocacy condition, fear of backlash, advocacy success, or any other variables (all r s $< .06$, *ns*). Similarly, the assessment index was unrelated to all variables in Figure 1, with the exception of fear of backlash, $r(386) = .20, p < .01$. Because of their lack of significance for Figure 1, the LDT and the assessment index will not be discussed further. By contrast, there were reliable findings when the locomotion index was used as the measure of promotion regulatory focus. Therefore, the analyses below are reported using this index as the measure of promotion focus.

In addition, all of the analyses reported below were first tested as a function of treatment condition (8 different orders), and also tested using treatment as a covariate. Because this procedural variable yielded non-significant findings, it will be dropped from further discussion. That is, the findings were virtually identical whether participants wrote their essay first or later on, and whether they reported their fear of backlash before or after performing the LDT.

Advocacy Success Questionnaire—Analysis of Variance

The critical dependent variable was self-reported advocacy success, a combined index of participants' reported advocacy success, the stipend that they judged appropriate

for graduate study, and how many years it should be received for. The hypothesized predictor variables were fear of backlash and promotion focus. Competing predictor variables were the entitlement index, and the agentic and communal prescriptive stereotype indexes. Each variable was submitted to a 2 (Advocacy: Self, Peer) x 2 (Participant Sex) ANOVA. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations as a function of advocacy condition and gender. I also included Cohen's d as a measure of effect sizes.

As can be seen, both genders reported less advocacy for themselves, compared with peers, $F(1, 386) = 59.93, p < .001$. No other main effects for advocacy condition appeared.⁵ With respect to gender differences, there was only one. Women scored lower on the agentic prescriptive stereotype index than men $F(1, 386) = 33.17, p < .001$. That is, women were less likely than men to agree that ideally, men should exhibit agentic traits more so than women. There were no gender differences on the communal stereotype index, suggesting that both genders agreed that women should ideally exhibit more communal traits than men $F(1, 386) = .52, ns$. Finally, the last column in Table 2 shows the results of the Advocacy x Participant Gender interactions for each variable. As can be seen, there were no reliable interactions.

In sum, these findings were not supportive of my prediction that women would show more fear of backlash and less promotion focus in the self-advocacy condition, compared with the peer advocacy condition. They also did not support my hypothesis that women would, as a result, show more fear of backlash and less promotion focus than men

⁵ There were no significant effects for the gender of the peer on advocacy success (as assessed by both participants and independent judges). This was true when the sex of the peer was entered as an independent variable or a covariate of the relationship between gender and advocacy success (all $ps > .15$). This indicates that participants' overall advocacy success was not affected by the gender of the peer they selected to write about.

in the self-advocacy condition. On the other hand, results showed that women were, as expected, less likely to advocate well for themselves compared with a peer. However, and unexpectedly, this pattern extended to men. That is, both genders reported less advocacy success when they recommended themselves for a position in graduate school, compared with recommending a peer.

Testing the Advocacy Success Model for Women

Although Table 2 reveals no interactions between participant gender and advocacy condition, I nonetheless tested whether the spirit of the model shown for women in Figure 1 might be supported. I first examined correlations between advocacy condition, fear of backlash, promotion focus and advocacy success for women only. The effect shown in Table 2 of advocacy condition on advocacy success remained reliable, $r(211) = -.41, p = .001$, such that women were more successful advocating on behalf of a peer than themselves. However, advocacy condition was not linked to fear of backlash, $r(211) = -.004, ns$. Thus, Path A shown in Figure 1's model was not supported.

Nonetheless, advocacy condition was linked to promotion focus, suggesting that it could be treated as a contextual (i.e., state) variable for women. Specifically, women reported more promotion focus in the self, compared to the peer condition, $r(211) = .14, p < .05$.

For men, there was no correlation between promotion focus and advocacy condition, $r(173) = -.004, ns$.

Other indicators suggested there was support for the model for women within the self-advocacy, but not the peer-advocacy, condition. As Table 3 shows, for women in the self-advocacy condition there were bivariate links between fear of backlash, promotion focus, and advocacy success. By contrast, in the peer-advocacy condition, there is a

missing link between promotion focus and advocacy success. Thus, although fear of backlash was negatively linked to promotion focus and advocacy success in each condition, promotion focus was only predictive of advocacy success in the self-advocacy, not the peer-advocacy, condition. By contrast, men did not show these links (see Table 3, right half). That is, although men's promotion focus predicted their advocacy success (in both conditions), the correlations between men's fear of backlash and promotion focus were unreliable, as was the link between fear of backlash and advocacy success.

Table 3 suggested testing the hypothesized links between fear of backlash, promotion focus, and advocacy success for women in the self-advocacy condition. That is, in the modified model, Path A is eliminated and, for self-advocating women, prevention focus is replaced with (reduced) promotion focus as a result of fear of backlash. In other words, fear of backlash \rightarrow promotion focus \rightarrow advocacy success is the modified model for self-advocating (but not peer-advocating) women.

Consistent with the spirit of Figure 1, I predicted that for self-advocating women, promotion focus would mediate the relationship between fear of backlash and advocacy success. All measures were standardized and submitted to a mediational analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Figure 3 shows the results. As predicted, the reliable relationship between fear of backlash and advocacy success ($\beta = -.25, p = .01$) was reduced to nonsignificance after accounting for promotion focus ($\beta = -.17, ns$). By contrast, the relationship between promotion focus and advocacy success remained strong ($\beta = .39, p < .001$). A Sobel's test confirmed reliable mediation, $Z = 1.89, p < .05$. Thus, Figure 3 provides support for the modified model and is consistent with my prediction that women asked to self-advocate would experience fear of backlash that would subsequently lower

their promotion focus; in turn, a reduction in promotion focus results in lowered self-advocacy ability. As seen in Table 3, there was no support for this model in the peer-advocacy condition because promotion focus was unrelated to advocacy success.

Testing Competing Models for Women's Advocacy Success

Several competing models were examined to further investigate the utility of the proposed model. One competing model concerned women's sense of entitlement as a predictor of advocacy success (via fear of backlash), rather than regulatory focus. Table 4 (left half) shows the relevant bivariate correlations for women. These correlations suggested that perceived entitlement (rather than use of a promotion focus) might also mediate the link for self-advocating women between fear of backlash and advocacy success. Figure 4 depicts the mediational analyses that yielded support for this model. After accounting for women's perceived feelings of entitlement, the reliable relationship between fear of backlash and advocacy success ($\beta = -.45, p < .01$) was reduced to marginal significance ($\beta = -.18, p = .08$), whereas the relationship between perceived entitlement and advocacy success remained strong ($\beta = .24, p < .05$). A Sobel's test confirmed significant mediation, $Z = 2.03, p < .05$. This suggests that for self-advocating women, fear of backlash may lead to lessened self-advocacy ability via lowered feelings of entitlement to self-promote.

Table 5 shows the results for all competing regression models. I have already described Models 1 and 2. For Model 3, I compared promotion focus and perceived entitlement as predictors of advocacy success. To do so, I hierarchically regressed advocacy success on fear of backlash in Step 1, adding entitlement in Step 2, and then promotion focus in Step 3. Results suggested that promotion focus was the stronger

predictor. Although both entitlement and promotion focus together reduced the effect of fear of backlash on advocacy success to $\beta = -.12$, *ns*, in Step 3, promotion focus also reduced the effect of entitlement to nonsignificance ($\beta = .18$, $p = .06$), whereas promotion focus remained a strong predictor of advocacy success ($\beta = .39$, $p < .001$).

A second competing model concerned women's prescriptive stereotypes. Potentially, endorsement of traditional gender norms (i.e., the belief that the ideal man should be agentic more so than the ideal woman, and the ideal woman should be communal more so than the ideal man) could impact advocacy performance (a male sex-typed behavior). Specifically, if this hypothesis were true, endorsement of the agentic prescription should enhance fear of backlash for behaviors violating this stereotype, such as women's self-advocacy. This process could weaken self-advocacy for women and enhance it for men, with endorsement of the communal prescription producing the opposite pattern in the peer-advocacy condition.

A correlation analysis indicated that for self-advocating women, endorsement of the male agentic prescription was negatively related to advocacy success, $r(101) = -.23$, $p = .02$. However, there was no significant relationship between endorsement of the communal prescription and advocacy success $r(101) = -.05$, *ns*. By contrast, there were no significant effects for prescriptive stereotyping in the peer-advocacy condition, for either the agentic prescription $r(109) = -.09$, *ns*, or the communal prescription $r(109) = .112$, *ns*.

To further investigate this pattern, endorsement of the agency prescription was tested as a potential alternative mediator of the previously-discussed relationship between fear of backlash and women's self-advocacy success. As seen in Table 5 (Model 4),

endorsement of the agentic stereotype was found to be a significant predictor of self-advocacy success ($\beta = -.24, p < .05$), but fear of backlash remained a stronger predictor ($\beta = -.26, p < .01$). Although this suggests that belief in traditional gender norms prescribing male agency (more so than female agency) may negatively impact women's self-advocacy abilities, it does not generate support for this alternate explanation relative to the proposed model.

Testing the Models for Men

Preliminary analyses examining these models for men yielded no indication of support. Specifically, fear of backlash was not linked to promotion focus (or advocacy condition), and fear of backlash was only marginally related to advocacy success (see Table 3). Similarly, perceived entitlement was not linked to fear of backlash in the self-advocacy condition for men (see Table 4). Finally, men showed no significant relationships between endorsement of prescriptive stereotypes and self-advocacy success in either the self (both $r_s(97) < .08, ns$) or peer advocacy (both $r_s(77) < .19, ns$) conditions. This suggests that, as predicted, the processes of interest are unique to self-advocating women.

Summary

Unexpectedly, advocacy success was not predicted by an interaction between advocacy condition and gender; instead, women and men alike reported less success when advocating for self than others. Moreover, there were gender similarities in the self-advocacy condition, such that fear of backlash was negatively linked to promotion focus and to advocacy success; however, these relationships were only reliable for women (not men; see Table 3). The fact that promotion focus was positively correlated with advocacy

success for both genders in the self-advocacy condition also underscores gender similarities. However, promotion focus was only contextually sensitive for women; men showed similar levels whether they recommended themselves or a peer for a graduate program. Further, promotion focus was not correlated with advocacy success for women in the peer advocacy condition, whereas it was for men.

Despite the absence of support for gender differences in self-advocacy, there was support for a modified model predicting that, within the self-advocacy condition, women would be less successful to the extent that they feared backlash, and therefore, showed reduced promotion focus. For self-advocating (but not peer-advocating) women, the relationship between fear of backlash and advocacy success was mediated by promotion focus, as the model predicted. By contrast, there was no evidence of a similar process in the peer-advocacy condition for women, or for men in either condition. Thus, although the model as a whole did not receive support, the results can be viewed as promising for the hypothesized links between fear of backlash, promotion focus, and advocacy success when women are under demand to self-promote.

Supplemental Results: Judges' Ratings

As discussed, both genders reported more advocacy success when they recommended a peer, as compared to themselves. One possibility is that participants were responding modestly. In order to assess this possibility, I recruited four judges to provide an independent assessment of the essays. Initially, two judges (1 male, 1 female) rated the essays ($N = 376$) on several variables. They assessed the frequency of certain advocacy-related behaviors evidenced in the essays, including the number of positive attributes (both agentic and communal), accomplishments, how driven to succeed the

subject was, and the essay's length. All correlations between coders were larger than .75, p s < .001, with the exception of a variable assessing perceptions of how much participants felt they were deserving of success, $r(280) = .70$, which was dropped from further analysis. Overall, there was high rater agreement, mean $r(280) = .95$ (range = .93 - .97).

I then submitted these variables to Advocacy Condition x Participant Sex ANOVAS. Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations by participant gender and advocacy condition. Each of the judges' variables showed main effects for advocacy condition, including overall positive attributes and accomplishments mentioned. This supports participants' perceptions that they were more successful when advocating for a peer relative to themselves. Further, there was only one main effect for gender, for overall number of positive attributes, such that women were more likely than men to mention positive attributes in their essays, $F(1, 376) = 8.34$, $p < .01$. However, this effect was not qualified by an interaction with advocacy condition. In fact, only one variable, communal attributes, showed an interaction between gender and advocacy condition, $F(1, 376) = 3.88$, $p < .05$. Simple effects revealed that women reported more communal attributes than men when advocating for the self, but not for others, $t(376) = 3.75$, $p < .001$. Because communal attributes are typically viewed as incompatible with the traits necessary for success in male domains (Heilman, 1983), mentioning more communal traits in the self advocacy condition could potentially hurt women's chances for leadership roles.

Finally, and not shown in Table 6, there were no effects for how driven to succeed the subject was or for length of essay, both F s < 2.4, ns . Thus, participants were not

viewed as differentially driven to succeed or as having written more (or less) as a function of their gender or advocacy condition.

Analyses: Four Judges Results

Two additional female judges rated the essays on a subset the original judges' variables. Thus, for this subset of variables, four judge's codings are available for analyses. These included the critical variables of how well the coders thought the participant advocated ($\alpha = .83$) and how much they would recommend the subject of the essay for admission to graduate school ($\alpha = .79$). These variables directly tested whether participants were accurate in their assessment that they were more successful advocates for peers than the self. As seen in Table 7 (top two rows), judges agreed with participants. Participants in the peer advocacy condition were viewed as having advocated better, $F(1,380) = 84.02, p < .01$, and generated higher recommendations for admission to graduate school, $F(1,380) = 90.69, p < .01$, compared with self-advocating counterparts. Table 7 also shows that, unexpectedly, judges were pro-female such that overall, women scored higher on judges' perceptions of advocacy success, $F(1,380) = 7.23, p < .01$, and recommendations for graduate school admissions, $F(1,380) = 7.20, p < .01$, compared with men.

In addition, judges coded variables that should help to illuminate why there was more success in the peer versus self-advocacy condition. These variables were: self-disclosed failures, external attributions for success, the extent to which irrelevant topics were discussed, and the essay's creativity. Finally, judges rated the perceived gender of the participant, and their level of confidence in this perception. Alphas ranged from .70 (external attributes for success) to .82 (irrelevant topics). Overall, judge's perception of

participants' sex was moderately accurate, $r(380) = .46, p < .01$. However, confidence in perceived participant gender was unreliable, $\alpha = .56$, and is dropped from further discussion.

Submitting these findings to Advocacy Condition x Participant Sex interactions revealed several additional findings, which suggest that both women, relative to men, and participants in the self-advocacy, relative to peer-advocacy, condition make certain errors that may weaken the quality of their advocacy. Women made more external attributions for success, $F(1,380) = 8.06, p < .01$, and discussed irrelevant topics more frequently, $F(1,380) = 4.54, p < .05$, than did men. Similarly, participants in the self-advocacy condition made more external attributions, $F(1,380) = 19.31, p < .001$, and discussed irrelevant topics more frequently, $F(1,380) = 74.04, p < .001$, than those in the peer-advocacy condition. However, these effects were not qualified by the expected gender by advocacy condition interactions, $F(1,380) = 1.87, ns$, and $F(1,380) < 1.00$, respectively.

Additional main effects supported the finding that those in the self-advocacy condition demonstrated less advocacy skill than those in the peer-advocacy condition. Self-advocators were less creative, $F(1,380) = 12.65, p < .001$, and disclosed more personal failures than peer advocates, $F(1,380) = 6.36, p < .05$. Again, contrary to predictions, there was no main effect for gender or significant interaction.

Finally, there was a main effect of gender for perceived participant sex, $F(1, 380) = 104.88, p < .01$, suggesting that judges were more likely to guess that the essay-writer was female than male. This was qualified by a significant Gender x Advocacy Condition interaction, $F(1, 380) = 8.04, p < .01$. Simple effects showed that judges were more likely to guess that the participant was female in the peer advocacy condition ($M = 1.74, SD =$

.34) than the self advocacy condition ($M = 1.64$, $SD = .36$, $t(211) = 2.08$, $p < .05$). This occurred despite the fact that in actuality, women were equally distributed between the peer ($N = 110$) and self ($N = 101$) advocacy conditions. In contrast, there were no significant differences in male participants' perceived sex across advocacy conditions, $t(169) = 1.93$, $p > .05$. Although this effect is relatively small, it could indicate that judges more readily perceived peer advocates as female, in keeping with gendered expectations for women's communality.

As noted above, judges were pro-female such that overall, they scored women higher on advocacy success than men. Because three of the judges were women, it was possible that they were biased in favor of their gender. Although judges did not know the essay writer's gender, they might be able to guess this information from the content. If so, then controlling for guessing participants' sex should reduce the link between participant gender and judges' advocacy success ratings. A comparison of correlations to partial correlations indicates that this is in fact the case. Controlling for judges' perception of participants' sex lowered the correlation between participant gender and perceived advocacy success, $r(380) = .16$, $p < .01$, to non-significance, $r(380) = .09$, *ns*. A similar pattern emerged for the relationship between perceived participant gender and recommendations for graduate school admittance, $r(380) = .16$, $p < .01$, which also dropped significantly once participants perceived sex was accounted for, $r(377) = .08$, *ns*.

On the whole, the judges' ratings were useful for backing up participants' indication that they were better at advocating for a peer than themselves. They were also useful for demonstrating no differences in the length of the essays as a function of advocacy condition, which could have biased results in favor of longer essays. However,

it may be necessary to view these findings with caution because the possibility that the (mostly) female judges were biased toward women in their ratings remains. Finally, the relationship between participants' and judges' advocacy success ratings was modest, $r(187) = .35, p < .01$. This suggests that participants and judges may have emphasized slightly different components when assessing advocacy success. In tandem with the pro-female bias found on the part of judges, this result somewhat casts doubt on the trustworthiness of the judges' ratings, although they were useful at addressing potential participant modesty effects.

General Discussion

Taken together, results from Experiment 2 provide some initial support for the proposed model of fear of backlash leading to less usage of a promotion focused regulatory style, and subsequent self-advocacy detriments for women. However, my results are seriously qualified by the lack of significant gender and advocacy interactions for the full sample. It was not the case that men self-advocated better than women, or that women advocated for a peer better than for themselves (cf. (Amanatullah, 2007; Wade, 2001)). It was also not the case that women who self-advocated experienced more fear of backlash compared with peer-advocating women (i.e., Path A in Figure 1 was not supported).

Nonetheless, it is important to note that while the advocacy manipulation did not impact fear of backlash as expected, my results supported the remaining predicted paths in Figure 1 for self-advocating women (i.e., the modified model). That is, self-advocating women who feared backlash showed decreased advocacy success, and this relationship was wholly mediated by a decrease in promotion focus. By contrast, the modified model

was not supported by (1) self-advocating men, or (2) peer-advocating women. This suggests that the predicted processes may be correct, but that my research design did not adequately manipulate the relevant constructs. That is, although the modified model was supported for the primary group of interest (self-advocating women), the null findings for Path A and the expected Gender x Advocacy interactions warrant a discussion of the methodology employed in the current research (see the Limitations section below). Some recent research (Hyde, 2005) has discussed the importance of acknowledging plentiful gender similarities (in addition to differences), and it is certainly a possibility that men and women do not differentially self-advocate on a laboratory task such as the one employed here. However, I will argue that support for the modified model suggests that this would be a premature conclusion, and that methodological issues are a more likely source of null findings than genuine gender similarities on this trait.

As noted above, Experiment 2 yielded some promising evidence that supports the general processes that were proposed. The modified model has critical implications for women's professional demands involving self-promotion. Because past research has focused on demonstrating backlash effects toward self-promoting women (on the part of perceivers; Rudman, 1998; Rudman & Glick, 1999, 2001) rather than examining the effect of backlash threat on targets' performance, this research addresses both a gap in the literature and important real-world professional inequities. When women who advocate for themselves fear penalties from others, they may suffer from a reduced ability to focus their energy on the task at hand – to effectively “sell themselves” when necessary, which can inhibit their advocacy success.

Moreover, results supported the prediction that women are relatively successful when advocating for others, potentially due to the fact that advocating on behalf of another can be seen as nurturing and helpful, and thus does not violate prescriptive female stereotypes and in fact confirms and reinforces existing gender roles (Wade, 2001). Because social pressures that encourage women to advocate for others often relegate them to lower status occupations (e.g., teachers, day care providers, and social workers), they contribute to and reinforce gender inequities in occupational representation and pay. As a result, women are likely to “feel at home” in occupations that uphold prescriptive female stereotypes, and may gravitate toward them as a result – in part, to avoid backlash. Thus, the mediational process proposed in Figure 1, which received preliminary support here, could be a significant contributor to the systemic mechanisms that reinforce the gender gap in professional success. Nonetheless, it is important to note that in Experiment 2, men (as well as women) were more likely to successfully advocate for a peer, compared with themselves. This gender similarity was unexpected, and, as discussed next, may be due to the particular manipulations I employed.

Limitations and Future Directions

One potential explanation for the unexpected effect of advocacy condition has to do with the type of the manipulations employed. The goal of this research was to gain a better understanding of women’s difficulties with *self*-advocacy relative to advocacy more generally (here, for a peer). Past empirical findings and theoretical rationale (Amanatullah, 2007, Wade, 2001) suggested that self-advocacy would be viewed as a male sex-typed behavior, and would thus lead to fear of backlash for women. As a result,

I reasoned that the purest test of factors impacting women's self-advocacy abilities would conceptualize self-advocacy behavior itself as male sex-typed, and would not need to vary the sex-typing of the domain in which self-advocacy took place.

As a result, my manipulations simply contrasted self with peer advocacy, and graduate school admission was selected as the relevant domain due to the likelihood of its relevance for a student sample. However, results suggest that self-advocacy in this context may not have been strongly male sex-typed or salient enough to an undergraduate population to generate the predicted results. Most of the participants were in their first two years of college, and as such, had recently experienced a positive outcome relating to a personal statement (i.e., their admission to college). Indeed, as women have entered college in graduate school in record numbers and risen to the majority of many graduating classes (Catalyst, 2005), application to graduate school in many fields may not be a particularly gendered task. Thus, although I reasoned that self-advocacy would result in fear of backlash for women, what may have been most salient for them was the context of the task (a non-threatening academic context) rather than the behavior involved (self-advocacy). As a result, the manipulation did not function as predicted (with self-advocacy leading to fear of backlash for women).

Future research must address this concern by employing a manipulation that is pre-tested to ensure sufficient sex-typing and resulting fear of backlash for stereotype violation. Although a strength of the current design is that it uniquely measured naturalistic backlash threat resulting from stereotype violation rather than manipulating it directly as past research has done (Phelan, 2007), the manipulation did not successfully induce fear of backlash. Thus, it is critical that future research employs a manipulation

that does so successfully. For example, participants could be asked to engage in self or peer advocacy during a taped interview for a high-status job. By raising the stakes and male sex-typed nature of the task in this way, the manipulation may function as expected, allowing for a more accurate evaluation of the proposed model. Moreover, the model might be tested using a negotiation paradigm, which has supported differences for women negotiating for a peer compared with themselves (Amanatullah, 2007, Wade, 1995).

A related concern is that our participants were Rutgers University undergraduates, who may have limited first-hand experience with backlash processes and the professional gender gap. Thus, they may have responded to self-advocacy demands in a less risk-averse manner than individuals with more exposure to professional environments. The fact that, despite these limitations, the modified model was supported by self-advocating undergraduate women suggests that it is promising. However, future research should utilize an older sample of working adults whose professional experience might make them more sensitive to backlash threats.

An additional limitation concerns the tools employed to assess both chronic and acute regulatory focus. Although the LDT has been successfully used to measure acute psychological states (Ferraro et al., 2003; Olafson & Ferraro, 2001; Niedenthal, Halberstadt, & Setterlund, 1997; Rudman & Borgida, 1995), it has not been validated as a test of acute regulatory focus and, despite Experiment 1's promising pilot test, it did not perform well in Experiment 2. The only significant finding associated with the LDT was a gender main effect on speed of identifying promotion related-words (with men scoring higher than women), so it was necessary to drop it from further analysis. In addition, the

self-report measure of prevention focus (the assessment subscale of the RMQ) proved to be unrelated to advocacy success. Instead, the promotion focus (locomotion) subscale from the RMQ was used. This pattern is in keeping with some past research, which has found that prevention focus is not a successful predictor of negative outcomes, but that the presence (or absence) of a promotion focus does have predictive utility (Appelt & Higgins, 2007). However, this is a major drawback to the current research, since the goal was to assess acute (rather than chronic) regulatory focus resulting from the tasks demands of the manipulation. It is possible that my reliance on the RMQ yielded a measure of trait regulatory focus, although the fact that the promotion subscale was sensitive to the advocacy manipulation suggests otherwise. Nonetheless, this subscale is not conceptualized as a measure of acute regulatory focus, and it is also likely subject to social desirability bias. Additionally, participants may have been unable to accurately self-report their usage of a promotion focus, further skewing results. Future research should seek to develop a valid implicit measure of state regulatory focus to bypass these concerns.

Also, the current research did not include a third control condition, or a measure of participants' mood. While representational role was manipulated in order to contrast self and peer advocacy (following past research; Amanatullah, 2007), future research should include a third neutral control condition to determine which condition is driving the effects. Additionally, it would be useful to include a mood measure to examine the impact of anxiety stemming from backlash threats.

Finally, if future research broadens the preliminary support for Figure 1 or the modified model, this research could have important implications for both psychological

theory and workplace social policy. Therefore, expansion of the psychological theory underlying this real-world situation could lead to important policy improvements. To this end, research exploring possible interventions to enhance women's self-advocacy abilities should be conducted to help promote a working environment based on equitable gender representation. For example, intervention studies could investigate the utility of a social modeling technique (Bandura, 1973) for ameliorating gender differences in self-advocacy behavior. To test this idea, female participants could watch a video of a self-advocating woman on an interview who either suffered backlash for her self-advocating behavior (was disliked interpersonally), or did not suffer backlash (was not disliked as a result of her atypical behavior). Perhaps viewing a woman who has self-advocated but successfully avoided backlash will enhance female observers' own self-advocacy abilities. These findings would suggest that viewing an atypical actor who behaves counternormatively and does not suffer backlash repercussions can greatly reduce subsequent conforming behavior on the part of others, and could prompt important subsequent studies on backlash intervention.

Conclusions

In sum, this research investigated processes that contribute to the inequitable representation and reward of professional women. Thus, it addressed issues that are not only of theoretical interest, but are also critical to the success of working women. Although we did not find support for the proposed model, a modified model including the core prediction that self-advocating women who feared backlash would engage in less promotion focus and thus, show less advocacy success, was supported. The findings contradicting Figure 1 suggest that future studies employing a manipulation that is more

strongly male sex-typed and relevant to the participant population are necessary. A better understanding of the challenges women face when encountering self-advocacy demands could lead to improvements in workplace policy initiatives, such as self-advocacy training, modifications in interview procedures, and assignment of successful female mentors.

Appendix A

Modified RMQ used in Experiment 1⁶

1. I usually like to think things through before I act.
2. I take my time when I have to make an important decision.
3. I often think other people act too rashly.
4. Generally, I play things safe rather than go out on a limb.
5. I prefer not to deliberate for a long time before I act.
6. I am a natural leader.
7. Generally, I go after what I want without worrying about consequences.
8. Compared to others, I am a high-energy person.

Note. Items 1-4 tap the prevention/assessment construct, and items 5-8 measure promotion/locomotion.

Full Regulatory Mode Questionnaire (Used in Experiment 2)

Read each of the following statements and decide how much you agree with each according to your beliefs and experiences. Please respond according to the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree	4 = slightly agree
2 = moderately disagree	5 = moderately agree
3 = slightly disagree	6 = strongly agree

⁶ Each subscale consisted of one item that was poorly correlated with the others, and was thus eliminated from the scale. For the prevention/assessment subscale, this item was *I tend to mull over my conversations and interactions with others*. The promotion/locomotion item was *When I finish a project, I can't wait to get started on a new one*.

- _____ 1. I don't mind doing things even if they involve extra effort.
- _____ 2. I never evaluate my social interactions with others after they occur.
- _____ 3. I am a "workaholic."
- _____ 4. I feel excited just before I am about to reach a goal.
- _____ 5. I enjoy actively doing things, more than just watching and observing.
- _____ 6. I spend a great deal of time taking inventory of my positive and negative characteristics.
- _____ 7. I like evaluating other people's plans.
- _____ 8. I am a "doer."
- _____ 9. I often compare myself with other people.
- _____ 10. I don't spend much time thinking about ways others could improve themselves.
- _____ 11. I often critique work done by myself and others.
- _____ 12. I believe one should never engage in leisure activities.
- _____ 13. When I finish one project, I often wait awhile before getting started on a new one.
- _____ 14. I have never been late for work or for an appointment.
- _____ 15. I often feel that I am being evaluated by others.
- _____ 16. When I decide to do something, I can't wait to get started.
- _____ 17. I always make the right decision.
- _____ 18. I never find faults with someone I like.
- _____ 19. I am a critical person.
- _____ 20. I am very self-critical and self-conscious about what I am saying.
- _____ 21. By the time I accomplish a task, I already have the next one in mind.
- _____ 22. I often think that other people's choices and decisions are wrong.
- _____ 23. I have never hurt another person's feelings.
- _____ 24. I am a "low energy" person.
- _____ 25. Most of the time my thoughts are occupied with the task that I wish to accomplish.
- _____ 26. I feel that there is no such thing as an honest mistake.
- _____ 27. I rarely analyze the conversations I have had with others after they occur.

- _____ 28. When I get started on something, I usually persevere until I finish.
- _____ 29. I am a “go-getter.”
- _____ 30. When I meet a new person I usually evaluate how well he or she is doing on various dimensions (e.g., looks, achievements, social status, clothes).

Note. Items 2, 13, 24 and 27 were reverse-coded. Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 13, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29 tap promotion focus, items 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 15, 19, 22, 27 and 30 tap prevention focus, and items 12, 14, 17, 23 and 26 comprise the lie scale.

Appendix B

Scales Assessing Variables in Figure 1

Fear of Backlash Scale

1. Do you think you would feel embarrassed?
2. Would you worry that people would think you had been too assertive?
3. Would you be concerned you might be disliked?
4. Would you worry about being called vain?
5. Would you be concerned that people might think you are odd?
6. Would you worry that people might think you were too confident?

Advocacy Success Questionnaire

1. Overall, how well do you think you performed today?
2. Overall, how hard did you try today?
3. Overall, how well do you think you advocated for yourself/your peer?
4. When others read your essay, how competent to you think they would rate you/your peer?
5. When others read your essay, how much do you think they would like you/your peer?
6. When others read your essay, how qualified to you think they would rate you/your peer?

Note. All responses were indicated on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*extremely*).

Appendix C – Judge’s Essay Coding Sheet

Self-Advocacy Essay Code sheet Subject #: Coder: Cond:

A. ATTRIBUTES

1. Number of good personal qualities mentioned, **total (Sum of A1a, A1b and neutrals):**

Neutrals: _____

A. Number of “**Agentic**” traits and abilities (intelligent, competent, capable, conscientious, hard-working, ambitious, determined, goal-oriented, competitive, plus specific skills such as public speaking, leadership ability, doing well in school, or being the “best” at something) _____

B. Number of “**Communal**” traits listed (friendly, helpful, good listener, getting along well with others, “team player,” or skills such as supporting others, being outgoing, listening well, etc) _____

2. Self-disclosure of **personal failures** or character flaws (things they need to work on) _____

B. ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ROLES

1. Number of overall specific accomplishments/roles mentioned, **total (sum of B1a, B1b and neutrals):** **Neutrals:** _____

A. Number of **agentic** accomplishments/roles (e.g., won track meet, high GPA or SAT score, took a leadership role, “I was responsible for...”; “It was up to me to...” “I was in charge of...” I had control over...” _____

B. Number of **communal** accomplishments/roles (e.g., debate team won competition, made a lot of friends, supportive roles such as coaching, teaching, mentoring or counseling”; “We cooperated and worked well together”) _____

2. Number of **specific awards** listed as having received (scholarships, memberships in honors societies, dean’s list, “rotary youth leadership award”) _____

3. Number of **group memberships** listed (clubs, teams, groups) _____

C. ADVOCACY SKILLS

1. Number of times the person attributes their success to factors outside themselves, such as good fortune or luck, or because other people helped them a great deal, rather than attributing their success to their own talent, skill, or hard work. (“I was lucky to have a talent for...” “Fortunately, I was good at, “I did well in school because X was very helpful,” “I couldn’t have succeeded without the help of my parents” _____

2. Mentions being **driven** or **determined** to succeed (absent=0, present=1) _____

3. Extent to which the person seems to feel **deserving** their success (“I deserve to be admitted to grad school because...” “I believe my accomplishments make me a strong applicant,” “Because of my hard work, I am well-prepared for grad school”)

1

2

3

*Not at all**A moderate amount**Very much*

4. Extent to which the person focuses on **irrelevant/unconvincing** topics (unimportant achievements or extracurriculars are mentioned, or the essay focuses on broader unconvincing topics such as personal philosophies on art, the importance of education overall, the reason they chose their undergraduate college, etc.)

1

2

3

*Not at all**A moderate amount**Very much*

5. Extent to which the person uses **uncertain** or **non-specific** language (e.g., “I think I am a good candidate,” “I have done well [without details]”)

1

2

3

*Not at all**A moderate amount**Very much*

6. The amount of information provided (length of the essay)

1

2

3

*Very little**A moderate amount**Very much*

7. The amount of thoughtfulness, creativity, and strong writing put into the essay

1

2

3

*Very little**A moderate amount**Very much*

D. RATER JUDGMENTS OF TARGET

1. How well do you think the essay writer **advocated** for themselves/the other in their essay?

1

2

3

4

5

*Not at all**Very much*

2. How much would you **recommend** the subject of the essay for admission to graduate school?

1

2

3

4

5

*Not at all**Very much*

3. Guess the essay writer’s **sex**: male (1) female (2)

4. How **confident** are you about your guess?

1

2

3

4

5

*Not at all confident**Very Confident*

NOTES:

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Table 1

Lexical Decision Task Stimuli

Neutral Words	Prevention Words— Experiment 1	Promotion Words— Experiment 1	Promotion Words— Experiment 2
Desk	Prevent	Promote	Promote
Paper	Protect	Gambler	Quick
Chair	Secure	Move	Move
Table	Danger	Succeed	Succeed
Bench	Avoid	Approach	Approach
Window	Stay	Seek	Seek
Floor	Stop	Obtain	Obtain
Wall	Alert	Go	Go
Door	Cautious	Advance	Advance
Ceiling	Careful	Bold	Fast
	Wary	Daring	Speedy
	Wait	Brave	Push

Note. Words in bold in the last column indicate modifications from Experiment 1.

Table 2

Advocacy Condition x Gender Analysis of Variance Results

	Advocacy Condition					Participant Sex					Interaction
Measure	Self		Other		Effect size	Women		Men		Effect size	Advocacy Condition x Sex
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>F</i>
Advocacy Success	-.27	.76	.32	.72	-.73	-.01	.80	.04	.81	.06	.62
Fear of Backlash	2.51	1.06	2.39	.99	.12	2.48	1.04	2.42	1.02	-.06	1.93
Promotion Focus	4.49	.64	4.19	.68	.45	4.28	.68	4.20	.63	-.12	2.15
Entitlement	3.80	.97	3.67	.99	.13	3.73	.98	3.75	.98	.01	.83
<u>Prescriptive Stereotypes</u>											
Agentic	-.17	.74	-.10	.73	-.09	-.32	.63	.08	.79	.54	.13
Communal	.27	.65	.17	.70	.15	.24	.57	.20	.78	-.03	.06

Note. Advocacy condition was coded 1=self-advocacy, 2=other-advocacy. Gender was coded 1=male, 2=female. Advocacy success is a standardized, composite variable. Prescriptive stereotypes are difference scores. Positive effect sizes indicate higher scores for self relative to peer advocacy, and men relative to women. Small, medium, and large effect sizes correspond to .20, .50, and .80, respectively (Cohen, 1988). All *ds* greater than .54 reflect a significant main effect at the $p < .01$ level.

Table 3

Correlations Among Main Predictor Variables as a Function of Advocacy Condition and Gender.

	<u>Women</u>		<u>Men</u>	
	<u>Fear of Backlash</u>	<u>Promotion Focus</u>	<u>Fear of Backlash</u>	<u>Promotion Focus</u>
<u>Self-Advocacy</u>				
Promotion Focus	-.22*		-.17	
Advocacy Success	-.25**	.43**	-.19	.37**
<i>N</i>	102	102	97	97
<u>Peer Advocacy</u>				
Promotion Focus	-.23*		-.06	
Advocacy Success	-.23*	.14	-.12	.30**
<i>N</i>	110	110	77	77

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4

Correlations Among Competing Predictor Variables as a Function of Advocacy Condition and Gender.

	<u>Women</u>			<u>Men</u>		
<u>Self-Advocacy</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Agentic Prescription</u>	<u>Communal Prescription</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Agentic Prescription</u>	<u>Communal Prescription</u>
Fear of Backlash	-.32**	-.02	.13	-.10	-.02	-.26**
Promotion Focus	.23*	-.12	-.15	.38**	.15	-.01
Advocacy Success	.30**	-.23*	-.06	.27**	-.03	.09
<i>N</i>	102	102	102	97	97	97
<u>Peer-Advocacy</u>						
Fear of Backlash	-.23*	.06	.04	-.34**	.14	.15
Promotion Focus	.29**	.07	.08	.30**	.00	.00
Advocacy Success	.09	-.09	.11	-.04	.14	.19
<i>N</i>	110	110	110	77	77	77

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5

Predictors of Women's Self-Advocacy Success

<u>Self-Advocating Women (N = 102)</u>					
Self-Advocacy Success Models	Step	β	t	$R^2 \Delta$	p
Model 1 – (Proposed Model)					
Fear of Backlash	1	-.25	-2.63**	.07	.01
Fear of Backlash	2	-.17	-1.83		
Promotion Focus	2	.39	4.23**	.14	.00
Model 2 – (Competing Model #1: Entitlement)					
Fear of Backlash	1	-.25	-2.63**	.07	.01
Fear of Backlash	2	-.18	-1.76		
Entitlement	2	.24	2.42*	.05	.02
Model 3 – (Comparing Model 1 and Model 2)					
Fear of Backlash	1	-.25	-2.63**	.07	.01
Fear of Backlash	2	-.18	-1.76		
Entitlement	2	.24	2.42*	.05	.02
Fear of Backlash	3	-.12	-1.24		
Entitlement	3	.18	1.89		
Promotion Focus	3	.36	3.90**	.12	.00

Self-Advocacy Success Models	Step	β	t	$R^2 \Delta$	p
Model 4 – (Competing Model #2: Prescriptive Stereotypes)					
Fear of Backlash	1	-.25	-2.63**	.07	.01
Fear of Backlash	2	-.26	-2.75**		
Agentic Stereotype	2	-.24	-2.50*	.06	.01

Note. The criterion for each model is in parentheses. Standardized regression coefficients are shown.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 6

Advocacy Condition x Gender Analysis of Variance Results for Primary Judges Variables of Interest

	Advocacy Condition					Participant Sex					Interaction
Measure	Self		Other		Effect size	Women		Men		Effect size	Ad x Sex
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>F</i>
Overall Positive Attributes	4.23	2.77	7.00	3.78	-.78	6.10	3.85	4.90	3.07	.51	1.45
Agentic Attributes	2.97	2.08	4.33	2.33	-.59	3.85	2.38	3.36	2.17	-.21	.12
Communal Attributes	.73	1.07	1.60	1.62	-.38	1.39	1.56	.85	1.16	-.38	3.88*
Overall Accomplishments	.93	1.50	2.06	1.91	-.63	1.60	1.79	1.33	1.80	-.15	.20

Note. Positive effect sizes indicate higher scores for self relative to peer advocacy, and men relative to women. Small, medium, and large effect sizes correspond to .20, .50, and .80, respectively (Cohen, 1988). All *ds* greater than .38 reflect a significant main effect at the $p < .01$ level.

* $p < .05$.

Table 7 *Advocacy Condition x Gender Analysis of Variance Results for Four Judges Variables*

	Advocacy Condition					Participant Sex					Interaction
Measure	Self		Other		Effect size	Women		Men		Effect size	Ad x Sex
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>F</i>
Advocate	2.00	.81	2.80	.85	-.87	2.51	.92	2.33	.88	-.20	.23
Recommend	1.74	.72	2.53	.84	-.91	2.25	.89	1.97	.82	-.32	.01
Self-disclosed Failures	.58	.56	.45	.40	.27	.53	.46	.50	.53	-.06	.48
External Attributions for Success	.57	.56	.38	.28	.41	.53	.47	.41	.42	-.26	1.84
Irrelevant Information	1.97	.66	1.43	.52	.83	1.80	.62	1.63	.68	-.26	.16
Creativity	1.71	.55	1.92	.51	-.39	1.81	.54	1.76	.54	-.09	.87
Perceived Sex	1.50	.40	1.54	.42	-.10	1.69	.35	1.31	.38	-.93	8.04**

Note. Positive effect sizes indicate higher scores for self relative to peer advocacy, and men relative to women. Small, medium, and large effect sizes correspond to .20, .50, and .80, respectively (Cohen, 1988). All *ds* greater than .20 reflect a significant main effect at the $p < .05$ level.

* $p < .05$.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Proposed mediational model of fear of backlash, self-regulatory style and advocacy success for women (conceptual model for Experiment 2).

Figure 2. Means for LDT reaction times (Pilot test for LDT, Experiment 1).

Figure 3. Mediational model for self-advocating women (Experiment 2).

Figure 4. Competing mediational model replacing promotion focus with perceived entitlement (Experiment 2).

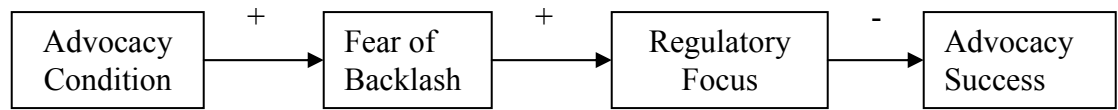
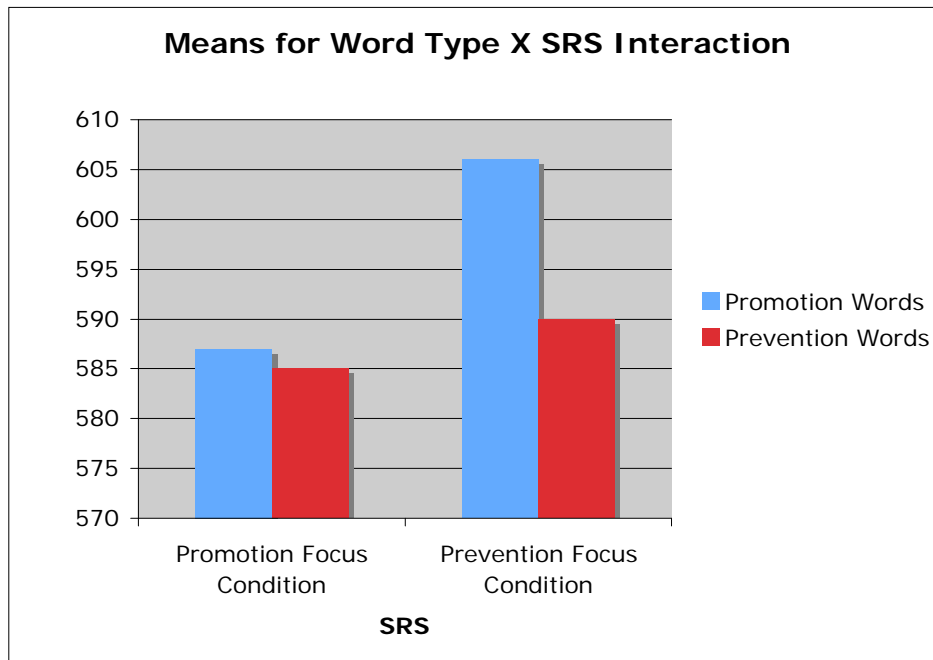


Figure 1. Model of advocacy success for women. Advocacy demand coded 1 (*other*) 2 (*self*) and regulatory focus coded so that high scores reflect greater prevention focus.



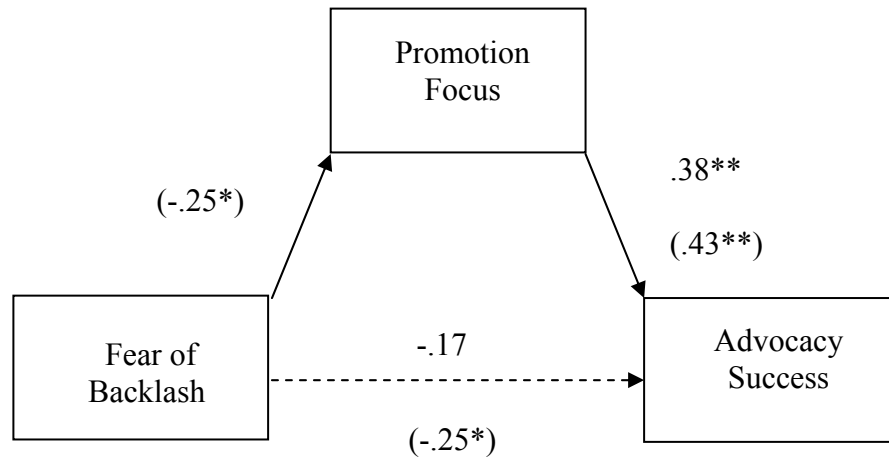


Figure 3. Regression analyses testing promotion focus as a mediator of the relationship between fear of backlash and advocacy success for women in the self-advocacy condition ($N = 102$). Coefficients in parentheses reflect a bivariate analysis. A dashed arrow indicates successful mediation. Sobel's $Z = 1.89$, $p < .05$.

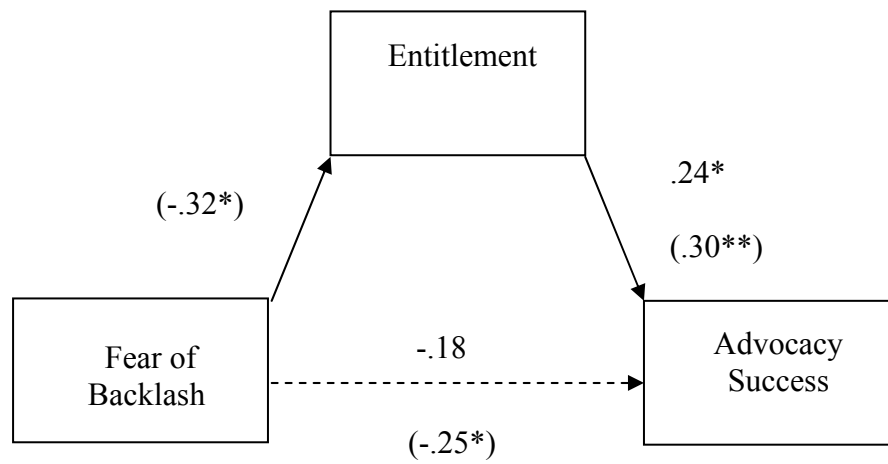


Figure 4. Regression analyses testing the competing model of entitlement as a mediator of the relationship between fear of backlash and advocacy success for women in the self-advocacy condition ($N = 102$). Coefficients in parentheses reflect a bivariate analysis. A dashed arrow indicates successful mediation. Sobel's $Z = 2.03, p < .05$.