

It's also for my own good: prescription of paternalism (or is it intimacy?) and equality in a romantic and professional context

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Protective Paternalism (PP)

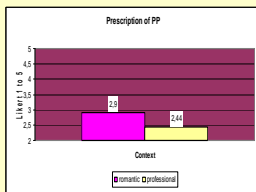
- One component of **Benevolent Sexism**, Glick & Fiske (1996). The belief that men should protect and provide for the women on whom they depend
- It contributes to controlling women by offering them the deal to conform to a traditional, subordinate role in order to be protected and cherished
- A subjectively affectionate attitude but nevertheless a condescending discrimination that reinforces women's low status
- Detrimental to women at various levels and often undetected as sexism (Dardenne et al., 2007; Dumont et al., in press)
- A romantic and intimate context makes paternalistic restriction appear more positive than a professional context (Moya et al., 2007)
- Women, at least some of them and in specific context, tend to accept PP **BUT ACCEPTING PP IS NOT THE SAME AS PRESCRIBING PP...**

→ To prescribe is to specify how group members **SHOULD** be and **OUGHT** to act (Gill, 2004)

!!! We examined if PP would be PRESCRIBED to men more in a romantic context than in a professional context !!!

Prescription of PP

Ex: « men should protect women »



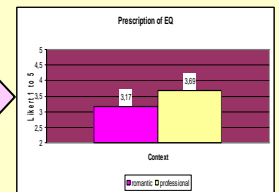
$F(1,48)=3.46, p=.069$

STUDY 1 : 50 female students were randomly assigned to a romantic (N=26) or a professional context (N=24). We activated either a romantic or a professional context by asking participants to evaluate a set of pictures obviously taken from a romantic or professional context (implicit activation). **PRESCRIPTION of PP** and of **EQUALITY** (egalitarian attitudes) (EQ) to men were collected. Participants had to evaluate «**how men-women relationships should ideally be and how men should ideally behave toward women**».

- We expected that **PP** would be more prescribed to men in a **romantic** than in a professional context.
- **BUT** we predicted that **EQ** would be more prescribed in a **professional** than in a romantic context.

Prescription of EQ

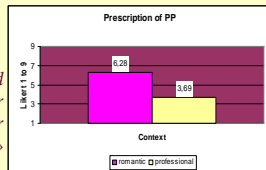
Ex: « men should see women as their equals »



$F(1,48)=5.13, p<.05$

!!No effect of GENDER!!

Ex: « men should provide help for women for some tasks »

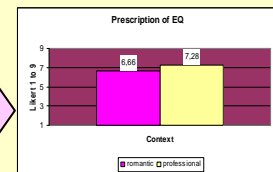


$F(1,50)=13.87, p<.001$

STUDY 2 : We activated explicitly a romantic and a professional context in a within-design with female (N=30) and MALE (N = 24) participants. **PRESCRIPTION** of both PP & EQ were collected.

- We wanted to **replicate** results of **Study 1** concerning prescription of PP & EQ.
- we expected **men to prescribe themselves PP to the same extent as women** prescribe it to men.

!!No effect of GENDER!!



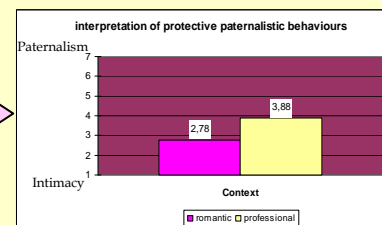
$F(1,50)=14.02, p<.001$

Ex: « men should promote equality between themselves and women »

STUDY 3 : Studies 1 & 2 demonstrated that PP is prescribed more in a romantic context than in a professional one, **BUT** the question of « **why** » does it happen is still unexamined.

- One possibility is that **compared to a professional context, a romantic one should lead to see protective paternalistic behaviour as a willingness from men to be intimate with women.**
- To test this hypothesis, we activated **explicitly** a romantic and a professional context in a within-design with female (N=27) and MALE (N = 26) participants. Participants had to evaluate whether protective paternalistic behaviour was related to either intimacy or paternalism.

!!No effect of GENDER!!



$F(1,49)=76.34, p<.001$

STUDY 4 : We showed in Study 3 that PP behaviour was seen as intimacy in romantic context. Therefore, we hypothesized that :

- **women's need of protective paternalism** (as evaluated by the protective paternalism' subscale of the ASI, Glick & Fiske, 1996) **would predict the prescription of PP in a professional setting.**
 - **BUT that women's need of heterosexual intimacy** (as evaluated by the Heterosexual intimacy' subscale of the ASI, Glick & Fiske, 1996) **would predict the very same prescription of PP in a romantic setting.**
- We activated explicitly a romantic and a professional context in a within-design with 32 female participants. **PRESCRIPTION** of PP was collected.

- **Replication of studies 1 & 2** : participants prescribed to men more PP in the romantic context than in the professional context $F(1,30)=133.6, p<.001$

- **In the PROFESSIONAL context**, women reported more prescription of PP if they were **HIGH** (rather than low) in need for protective paternalism ($\beta = .48, p<.05$)
- **In the ROMANTIC context**, women reported more prescription of PP if they were **HIGH** (rather than low) in need for heterosexual intimacy ($\beta = .39, p<.05$)

CONCLUSION

-Studies 1, 2, and 4 showed that women **prescribed PP more in a romantic than in a professional context** (whereas the reverse happened for the prescription of EQ). Because of the strong social pressure to conform to prescriptive stereotypes, Study 2 demonstrated that **PP is prescribed to men in a romantic context by both women and men themselves.**

-Study 3 showed that protective **paternalistic behaviour** is seen as **intimacy in a romantic context** :

This could explain why PP is accepted and even prescribed in a romantic context

-Study 4 showed that **PP in a romantic context** might better be named **intimacy**, at least, from the **point of view of female participants high in need of heterosexual intimacy**. The mere meaning of paternalistic behaviour changed according to which context is activated :

“...an act gains its meaning and significance from its relation to the particular conditions of time, place, and circumstance” (Asch, 1952, p. 442)

= This adds to the fundamental ambiguity of PP and should make it even more difficult to resist