

stock attacks and opposing the wolf return, without addressing the ultimate market-based causes of sheep farming decline. In 2012, wolf-linked subsidies to sheep farming amounted to 8.8 € million (3), and data now reveal that sheep farming fares better in wolf regions (4).

There are strong political incentives to scapegoat large carnivores. We recommend developing a better understanding of the political ecology of large carnivore conservation.

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Obscuring Gender Bias with "Choice"

B. L. BENDERLY'S *SCIENCE CAREERS* ARTICLE "What is keeping women out of leadership jobs in academic medicine?" (7 January, <http://scim.ag/1hmBHVI>) about a recent report (1) misrepresents the study's findings and perpetuates gender biases by framing women's second-place standing in academic medicine as the result of personal choices rather than institutional barriers.

Benderly writes, "Women on medical faculties... may prefer teaching and treating patients to publishing research papers." Yet the report's authors clearly caution that their methods cannot detect whether personal

preferences or professional obstacles drive women to the "clinician-educator track" instead of the "traditional tenure track." Benderly offers a similar caveat, but nevertheless concludes by asking whether women's service motivations explain their downshift to the clinician-educator track.

Social psychological research repeatedly demonstrates that institutionalized gender bias hinders women's progress in academic science (including medicine). In a recent experiment, for example, men and women science faculty evaluated a job application from a woman less favorably than the identical application from a man (2).

Studies also reveal how attributing workplace inequities to women's preferences distracts observers from unfair institutional practices. One recent article, for instance, showed that professional women who viewed their move to stay-at-home motherhood as a personal choice, as compared to new full-time moms who did not view their move as a choice, less often cited discrimination, harassment, and family-unfriendly policies as sources of gender inequality (3). In this same article, undergraduates who incidentally saw a book titled *Choosing to Leave: Women's Experiences Away from the Workforce* more firmly believed that gender discrimination is not a problem that did undergraduates who saw *Women at Home: Experiences Away from the Workforce*. Other studies similarly demonstrate that framing unequal outcomes as the result of individual choices, rather than of institutional or societal forces, deadens empathy and delays action (4, 5).

To help end gender inequities, all publications must take greater care when reporting about women in science.

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Response

I BELIEVE THAT CONNER *ET AL.* MISREPRESENT my article and misconstrue my intentions in writing it. Along with them and *Science Careers*, I strongly deplore and oppose bias and discrimination of any kind in science. My colleagues and I work assiduously to help female (and male) scientists and aspiring scientists advance in the careers of their choosing.

In line with that goal, I report on research that helps scientists of both genders understand the career opportunities that currently exist so that they can make choices that maximize their chances of finding and prospering in positions that fit their values, goals, aspirations, and definitions of success. Research (1) reveals that scientists value and aspire to a wide range of career goals, with some of both genders desiring traditional academic careers leading to top institutional leadership positions and others desiring to pursue different career objectives both in and out of academe. Evidence both formal (2) and anecdotal also shows that many young scientists report feeling strong pressure from their professors and advisers to pursue traditional academic careers in preference to other types of work that they may prefer. The letter writers' use of the term "downshift" to describe a physician's choice to pursue a career of teaching and clinical practice rather than of academic research may in itself exemplify this type of bias.

Contrary to the Letter, I did not conclude—in the sense of arriving at a judgment—that "women's service motivations" keep them from traditional tenure-track careers. As Conner *et al.* acknowledge, I, like the study's (3) authors, do not know why women chose as they did. I suggested a possible explanation also mentioned by the authors and ended the article with the authors' own statement that the question "deserves further analysis." I do not believe that this misrepresents their work.

BERYL LIEFF BENDERLY

Science Careers Columnist

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Letters to the Editor

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