

subject of academic interest for more than 100 years, Glick and Fiske sought to examine these attitudes in a more nuanced way, looking at the possibility of complex sexist attitudes that may entail both positive and negative attitudes toward women.

To understand ambivalent sexism, one must first understand its components: paternal and caring attitudes, or benevolent sexism, and aggressive and mistrusting attitudes, or hostile sexism. Together, these two attitudes are known as ambivalent sexism, as they imply attitudes that are seemingly both positive and negative.

Benevolent Sexism

Benevolent sexism is best thought of as a set of attitudes toward or beliefs about women that categorize them as fair, innocent, caring, pure, and fragile. Rather than being overtly misogynistic, these attitudes are often characterized by a desire to protect and preserve women. In many situations, these attitudes may be casually referred to as chivalry or traditional values. However, despite their seemingly positive characteristics, the attitudes that constitute benevolent sexism are often dangerous and damaging to women's rights and even their safety.

Hostile Sexism

Hostile sexism is much more openly misogynistic than benevolent sexism. A hostile sexist is likely to think of women as manipulative, angry, and seeking to control men through seduction. Hostile sexism often views gender equality as an attack on masculinity or traditional values and seeks to suppress movements such as feminism. Hostile sexism often represents a significant danger to women.

Ambivalent Sexism

At first, hostile and benevolent sexism seem to be incompatible. It may seem impossible for individuals to simultaneously believe that women are both pure and fragile and also manipulative and angry. However, ambivalent sexism may be understood in light of sexism more broadly. Particularly within Western societies, sexism is largely based on traditional gender norms, which place men in positions

AMBIVALENT SEXISM

In an attempt to understand more fully the nuances of gender-based prejudices, Peter Glick and Susan Fiske developed the idea of ambivalent sexism in the late 1990s. Although sexism has been the

of authority in the home, the community, and government. In the majority of cultures, women are expected to submit to male dominance. Until relatively recently (the late 19th century until the present), this system of male dominance was largely unchallenged in the Western world. However, women's liberation, universal suffrage, and the modern feminist movement have gained much power over the past century and a half, and traditional gender norms have progressively become less and less universal. In keeping with these changing societal norms, there have been increasing numbers of women who do not conform to traditional, male-dominated gender norms. Herein lies the basis for ambivalent sexism. Women who conform to gender norms by respecting and submitting to a largely patriarchal (male dominated) society are often the target of benevolent sexism. More simply, women who conform to expectations are viewed as pure, innocent, and gentle. By contrast, women who do not conform to patriarchal norms are viewed as deserving hostile sexism, in that they are perceived as manipulative, angry, and seeking to control men.

Impacts of Ambivalent Sexism

The impacts of ambivalent sexism are multifaceted. Individuals who endorse high levels of hostile sexism are more likely to tolerate and even engage in sexual harassment of women in a variety of settings. Individuals who endorse such attitudes are also more likely to accept and perpetrate violence toward their intimate partners. Finally, individuals who are high in hostile sexism are more likely to engage in or excuse sexual violence, such as rape, against women.

While benevolent sexism may not appear to be as overtly dangerous an attitude as hostile sexism, there are many consequences. At its core, benevolent sexism is still based on the assumption that women are somehow weaker than and inferior to men. Women may be seen as pure and caring, but they are also seen as fragile and needing protection. Although benevolent sexism is largely associated with positive emotions toward women, it still places men in a position of authority over the perceived weaker sex. Men who are high in benevolent sexism tend to express discomfort with women in leadership positions, to support

male-dominated political systems, and to believe that a woman's place is in the home. Importantly, these associations often are above and beyond the associations between hostile sexism and the relevant outcome. Benevolent sexism predicts—perhaps even causes—inequalities between men and women in a way similar to hostile sexism. Adding more concern is the notion that while hostile sexism predicts violence against women, benevolent sexism tends to predict victim blaming in the context of that violence. Although a benevolently sexist man may object to violence against women, he is also more likely to find the woman partially at fault for the violence she has experienced. Finally, benevolent sexism also affects how women view themselves. Women who are exposed to benevolently sexist statements are often less likely to disagree with such statements than they would with hostile sexist statements, less likely to organize against sexist inequalities, and less likely to challenge patriarchal norms. In short, benevolent sexism functions as a subtle, yet effective, means of perpetuating traditional gender norms.

Sexism in Women

Ambivalent sexism may extend beyond simple dichotomies between men and women. Although women are typically the target of sexist attitudes and behaviors, men are not the only perpetrators of such attitudes. Women can be prejudiced too, in both hostile and benevolent ways.

At first, the notion of women endorsing sexist values and behaviors seems absurd. After all, if sexism is inevitably damaging to women, then it makes little sense that women would endorse such attitudes. However, there is precedence for the notion that victims of discrimination and prejudice might internalize some of the views that have victimized them. As a by-product of living in a patriarchal society, both men and women are raised in an environment that subtly as well as openly enforces sexist ideals. In turn, women often internalize these ideals. In the face of rampant inequality, women are forced to either challenge the inequality by embracing more egalitarian and feminist values or accept the inequality by embracing sexist attitudes.

Women are less likely than men to endorse hostile sexism, but they are often just as likely as men

to endorse benevolently sexist values. This is likely due to a variety of reasons. Given that conforming to traditional gender roles often acts as a buffer against hostile sexism, women may endorse benevolently sexist attitudes as a means of avoiding being the target of hostile sexism. In some sense then, women endorsing attitudes of benevolent sexism may be a means of self-preservation via choosing the lesser of the two evils. Finally, benevolent sexism may appeal to a sense of entitlement among some women. Taken at face value, benevolent sexism seems to be devoted to the well-being and protection of women, which may seem like good things. However, given the impact that benevolent sexism has in discouraging women from engaging in activism against gender-based inequalities, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism may be considered in some ways more subversive to gender equality than hostile sexism.

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See also Equal Pay for Equal Work; Feminism: Overview; Gender Equality; Gender Socialization in Men; Gender-Based Violence; Gendered Stereotyped Behaviors in Men; Gendered Stereotyped Behaviors in Women; Microaggressions; Rape Culture

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BENEVOLENT SEXISM

Benevolent sexism is a type of sexism that includes seemingly positive views of women and is a component (along with hostile sexism) of ambivalent sexism. There are three subcomponents of benevolent sexism: (1) protective paternalism, which is the belief that because women are warm, caring, and maternal, they should be protected and provided for by men; (2) complementary gender differentiation, which is the belief that women (who are warm, other oriented, morally pure, and weak) and men (who are competent, independent, morally corruptible, and strong) have contrasting but complementary attributes; and (3) heterosexual intimacy, which is the belief that women and men are dependent on each other for both emotional closeness and reproduction. Although benevolent sexism rewards women with prosocial treatment, it reinforces their subordinate position relative to men and has detrimental effects on women, both as individuals and as a collective. This entry briefly introduces benevolent sexism in relation to ambivalent sexism and then discusses the large-scale societal impacts as well as the smaller-scale individual impacts of benevolent sexism. The entry concludes with current research directions regarding benevolent sexism.

Connection to Ambivalent Sexism

Ambivalent sexism was conceptualized by Peter Glick and Susan Fiske to include both negative (hostile) and positive (benevolent) sexism and is measured with the self-report scale they created, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. The two types have been found to be moderately positively correlated in all the nations studied, with those men and women who score high on both scales being termed ambivalent sexist. Benevolent sexism has been identified in 19 different countries, with women typically endorsing benevolent sexism to a greater extent than hostile sexism. Benevolent

sexism predicts positive evaluations of women who conform to traditional gender roles, whereas hostile sexism predicts negative evaluations of women who violate traditional gender roles. Thus, together they create ambivalent views of women as a whole.

Societal-Level Effects

Glick and Fiske, as well as other researchers, argue that the combination of hostile and benevolent sexism contributes to societal gender inequality. Benevolent sexism is prosocial treatment directed toward gender conforming or traditional women (e.g., mothers, wives), and thus rewards women for staying in lower-status roles relative to men. Indeed, national levels of benevolent sexism have been shown to be objective indicators of societal gender inequality. In cultures characterized by a high level of hostile sexism, women are more likely to endorse benevolent sexism, suggesting that they may enact gender conforming, lower-status behaviors to earn protection rather than risk overt hostility from men. Benevolent sexism therefore may weaken women's resistance to sexism and gender inequality. Indeed, John Jost and Aaron Kay found that priming women with complementary gender stereotypes as well as complementary (benevolent plus hostile) sexist items increased support for the societal status quo (i.e., reduced women's motivation to enact change in a sexist society). Thus, benevolent sexism is implicated in the maintenance of gender inequality at the societal level.

Individual-Level Effects

A great deal of research has also shown the negative effects of benevolent sexism on individual women. Benoit Dardenne and colleagues found that women exposed to benevolent sexist instructions prior to taking a test of job skills as part of an employment interview performed more poorly than women exposed to hostile sexist or nonsexist instructions. They argue that because benevolent sexism is not as easily recognized as sexist (i.e., it seems positive), exposure results in women doubting their competence and cognitive abilities in a workplace context. Laurie Rudman and Peter Glick presented evidence that paternalistic/

benevolent sexist beliefs in employment settings can prevent women from being offered high-risk/high-status opportunities, slowing their career advancement. Instead they are offered lower-status, communal job roles that are more congruent with traditional gender norms. Benevolent sexism has also been shown to limit women's opportunities in romantic relationship contexts and is associated with acquaintance rape victim blaming. Benevolent sexism is often unrecognized as sexist, yet research shows that it can have damaging consequences on individual women's lives.

Current and Future Directions

Benevolent sexism was first defined in the mid-1990s and is an active topic of research. Researchers who study benevolent sexism have begun investigating the social implications of confronting it, as well as interventions to reduce the endorsement of benevolent sexist attitudes and beliefs. Researchers have also begun studying the cardiovascular reactivity associated with experiences of benevolent sexism. Much of the research conducted on benevolent sexism to date has used primarily White, middle-class participant samples; future research should consider whether the findings generalize to different racial and ethnic groups as well as people with differing levels of socioeconomic status. Intersectional research on benevolent sexism has been strongly encouraged. Because benevolent sexism is often subtly experienced and not actively resisted in the same way as hostile sexism, research investigating its antecedents, effects, and reduction is of paramount importance.

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See also Ambivalent Sexism; Gender Discrimination; Gender Roles: Overview; Gender Stereotypes; Hostile Sexism; Sexism

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HOSTILE SEXISM

Hostile sexism is a form of sexism that is reflected in biased attitudes and behaviors toward people based on their gender. Specifically, hostile sexism is based on ideologies that seek to maintain and perpetuate the dominance of one group by focusing on the perceived inferiority of the other group. This type of sexism is one component of ambivalent sexism, which is a theory developed and described by Peter Glick and Susan Fiske to explain beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors concerning women and men. Hostile sexism has been associated with strict endorsement of traditional gender role behaviors that reinforce a patriarchal social structure. Adherence to such hostile sexist attitudes can lead to restricting equal opportunities and maintaining gender-based prejudices that result in negative psychological and emotional consequences for both women and men.

Hostile Sexism Toward Women

Hostile sexism is most often associated with negative prejudice against and hostile views of women that are rooted in the belief that women are inferior to men. People who harbor hostile sexist attitudes toward women tend to view women as intellectually inferior to men. In many cultures, men dominate high-status positions in areas including business, politics, religion, the military, law,

and other professional careers related to societal power. To maintain male control in society, women are relegated to subservient roles. Hostile sexist ideologies serve to maintain men's dominant role in patriarchal societies; consequently, women who defy their prescribed gender role and behave in nontraditional ways are perceived in a negative light, derogated, and demeaned.

Hostile sexism comprises several philosophies. One is the notion that men need to control "their" women because women are less intelligent and less competent than men. Women are perceived as too emotional, as easily offended, and as having a proclivity to create major issues over trivial events. Because women are perceived as incapable of making important decisions, hostile sexists believe that it is men's responsibility to dictate to women what they should think and how they should behave. This dominant paternalistic view serves to keep women submissive and subservient to men.

Hostile sexism also comprises beliefs that women do not belong in the workplace and are too sensitive and emotional to be in high-status positions. A hostile sexist might believe that women who do enter the workforce will likely make excuses for their own incompetence by complaining that they are victims of discrimination. Hostile sexists also perceive women as weak and dependent and not able to independently handle life situations; therefore, men need to be the ones in control. As such, women should be grateful for everything men do for them, and they should submissively accept their prescribed female gender role. Such hostile sexist beliefs incorporate the idea that a woman's place is in the home and that women should be the ones to cook, clean, and take care of the children. Not too surprisingly, women oppose these hostile sexist attitudes more than men.

Another notion underlying hostile sexism is the idea that women use their feminine wiles to gain special favors from men. In this view, women use sex to tempt and manipulate men in order to achieve power over them. Women are perceived as "whiny teases" who want to control men by using their sexuality. For instance, hostile sexists believe that women enjoy leading men on but whenever men respond by showing interest, women delight in shutting them down and refusing their advances. Furthermore, hostile sexist views include the perception that once in a relationship women will continue their attempts to control men by putting them on a "tight leash."

Hostile Sexism Toward Men

Although hostile sexism is often associated with feelings and behaviors directed toward women, hostile sexism can also be directed toward men. As a response to being subordinated by men, some women hold negative views against men that include feelings of resentment and disgust. Women with this view tend to perceive men as inferior in several ways. For example, hostile sexists tend to have a negative perception of men as childlike and in need of someone to take care of them; for instance, they might believe that when men become sick they act like “babies.” Hostile sexism toward men also includes the idea that men are not capable of being successful without women to guide and care for them. Hostile sexists are likely to perceive men as arrogant individuals caring only about their own personal wants and desires and continually trying to gain the upper hand and to control women at every turn.

Women who harbor hostile sexist beliefs tend to view men’s paternalistic attitudes and behaviors merely as selfish manipulation with the goal of asserting their superiority over women. Hostile sexists also hold the belief that men merely give lip service to the idea of gender equality. Although men might state that they are proponents of equality between the sexes, when it comes right down to it, men want “their” women to adhere to traditional gender roles.

Hostile sexism toward men also includes the idea that men use sexual aggressiveness as a means to control and dominate women. Hostile sexists perceive men as interested only in their own sexual satisfaction and conquests, and they believe that men will do whatever it takes to achieve their goal, regardless of how it affects women. Not surprisingly, this view leads to deep resentment and hostility toward men.

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See also Ambivalent Sexism; Benevolent Sexism; Gender Role Behavior; Gender Stereotypes; Sexism

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