HANDBOOK OF PREJUDICE, STEREOTYPING, AND DISCRIMINATION

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Sexism

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Social psychological research on sexism has come a long way in the second half of the 20th century, from a mere page on sexism (termed antifeminism) in Allport's (1954) classic text *The Nature of Prejudice* to the current rate of thousands of pages of scholarly work published every year devoted exclusively to the topic. The accumulating knowledge of the significance of sexism is both a reflection of and reflected by dramatic changes in women's status. Women in Western countries have rejected second-class citizenship, obtaining rights to vote, hold property, seek divorce, run for public office, make choices about their personal health care and reproduction, wear pants, pursue higher education, develop careers of their choosing, and take legal action against abuse, sexual harassment, and rape. Although women's status is highly varied across cultures, efforts to resist sexist oppression can be found worldwide.

Still, at present, a pressing issue in the social sciences has been how to make the case that sexism exists in many different forms and that it produces measurable consequences. Documenting sexism and its consequences is important due to several myths about sexism. We use the term myth here, not as sacred stories, but as widely held cultural misnomers. One myth is that sexism is not that harmful (e.g., sexual harassment is just flirting; traditional gender-role divisions are good for women and men; "mild" domestic violence or emotional abuse is normal; using masculine pronouns or male-identified occupation titles are simply traditions; gendered career choices are functional; hostile sexism is balanced by benevolent caretakers; claims of antifemale sexism are blown out of proportion because both women and men experience sexism; women should not expect life to be easy; and women do not appreciate what has been done for them already). A second myth is that women enjoy their lesser status roles in society, freely choosing to comply with gender-role restrictions (e.g., wearing makeup, doing more domestic work than men, pursuing low-paying occupations, engaging in prostitution, living with abusers). Early psychological theory justified women's desire for their own oppression by characterizing them as masochistic or martyrs by nature (e.g., Deutsch, 1930). Although this early view is not likely to be currently widely accepted, the myth still exists when cultural context, social norms, and lesser social power are not fully acknowledged. Many religious and traditional beliefs continue to promote norms that reward women for embracing subservient roles. These two myths contribute to a third myth that sexism is rare. The prevalence of sexism is masked by restrictive definitions of what constitutes sexist beliefs and behavior; targets' lack of recognition, acknowledgment, or reporting of their experiences; and perpetrators' lack of awareness or willingness to admit their own sexist beliefs and behaviors.

In this chapter we examine evidence about the prevalence of sexism by examining different ways in which sexist beliefs can be manifested, evidence documenting sexist behaviors, and some of the consequences of sexism. We define sexism as individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, and organizational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative evaluations of individuals based on their gender or support unequal status of women and men. Most of the chapter focuses on an individual level of analysis and antifemale sexism, as these represent most of the
psychological research on sexism. However, it is important to acknowledge all levels of analyses are intertwined and both women and men experience sexism. We begin by placing research on sexism within the historical context of the study of gender differences.

**GENDER DIFFERENCES**

When the field of psychology was still in its infancy, some of the earliest research addressing sexism appeared, critical of a large body of pseudo-science “proving” that women were different and deficient (Caplin & Caplin, 1994). Research disputing innate gender differences represents a major chunk of the social scientific work on sexism, growing rapidly midcentury and continuing well into the 21st century. This research also spawned critiques of social scientific methods that lead to the refinement of nonsexist research practices and alternative methods of studying sexism.

Against a backdrop of historic social changes (e.g., the Industrial Revolution, the U.S. women’s suffragist movement, and the major liberalizing social reforms following the French revolution and the antislavery movement), this research finds its roots in the “woman question,” which inspired much debate about differences between women and men and whether women’s lesser social status was fair. This was not a debate about “sexism” per se, for that term was not even coined until the 1960s (Lehrer, 1988; Shapiro, 1985). Arguments could be quite vicious, as is found in the “scientific” work of Mobius (1901), who declared that “all progress is due to man. Woman is like a dead weight on him” (p. 629).

Psychologists contributed to this debate. When psychology was just establishing itself, one could argue there was a fair amount of research pertaining to sexism. The majority of this work reinforced rather than questioned the sexist status quo (Caplin & Caplin, 1994; Shields, 1975). Antisexist scholars wishing to weigh in on the issue encountered some formidable foes, such as Freud who conjectured:

> It is really a stillborn thought to send women into the struggle for existence exactly as men. If for instance I imagined my gentle sweet girl as a competitor, it would only end in my telling her as I did 17 months ago, that I am fond of her and that I implore her to withdraw from the strife into the calm uncompetitive activity of my home. . . . Long before the age at which a man can earn a position in society, Nature has determined woman’s destiny through beauty, charm, and sweetness. (Jones, 1961, p. 118).

G. S. Hall (1906) viewed the coeducation and shared workplace of women with men as “race suicide.” On coeducation and menstruation, he questioned, “At a time when her whole future depends upon normalizing the lunar month, is there something not only unnatural and unhygienic, but a little monstrous of her having daily schooling with boys?” (p. 590). Much of this sexist work was invigorated by the popularity of Darwin’s evolutionary theory.

For several decades, psychologists continued to “scientifically” demonstrate women’s intellectual, moral, and mental health deficiencies, borrowing from a familiar racist formula of demonstrating deficiencies in non-White racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Guthrie, 2004). In fact, much of the sexist “scientific” theory was not merely similar to racism, but entangled with it in the belief that “more developed races” evolved to have greater sex differences. This is illustrated in the early work by Vogt (1864) who argued that “the male European excels much more than the female European, [more so] than the Negro and Negress” (p. 212), as part of his “woman-as-child-as-primitive argument” (Richards, 1983).

Early psychologists who might have disputed these sexist assumptions were up against decades of sexist “scientific” research against women (Shields, 1975). It is not surprising that antisexist researchers reacted by agreeing that women were different, but then offering alternative explanations (socialization and experience). For example, at the turn of last century, several women made scientific cases against sexist assumptions about the psychology of women. Helen Thompson and Mary Calkins refuted myths of women’s inferior IQ and achievement; Mary Putnam Jacobi
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criticized views of menstruation as debilitating; and Karen Horney and Clara Thompson challenged sexist assumptions about gender differences in jealousy, self-esteem, and psychosexual development (Morantz-Sanchez, 1983; Quinne, 1987; Scarborough & Furumoto, 1987). Despite their efforts, sexism was more of the social scientific modus operandi than a social problem to be studied in itself. As a result, even emerging applied fields, such as educational intelligence testing and research on the clinical treatment of mental illness, resulted in further sexist oppression of women (e.g., Caplin & Caplin, 1994; Lupton, 1993; Schiebinger, 1989; Tavris, 1992).

Midcentury feminist research on gender differences set out to show that differences between women and men were unfounded. One strategy was to compare women and men on various tasks, abilities, and interests, with the expectation of documenting a lack of gender differences. However, this research sometimes revealed tangible gender differences, confirming gender stereotypes (e.g., women are more likely to be able to decode nonverbal messages [Hall, & Carter, 1999]; men are more likely to be physically aggressive [Swim, 1994]). Another strategy was to compare very young children and babies, again expecting few differences, especially because this young population would have had few socialization influences. This research, too, did not always come out as expected. A large body of studies examining gender differences developed. Summarizing this research was aided by the introduction of meta-analytic research techniques that corrected for some of the sampling and power issues inherent in narrative review articles. These meta-analyses allowed for assessment of the relative size of gender differences, the ability to examine contexts that accentuated and attenuated gender differences, and temporal changes in the size of these differences. These summaries, however, still left room for interpretation leading to debate about the political and practical meaning of gender differences (see Eagly, 1995; Hyde, 2005; and commentaries associated with these articles).

There were several responses to the documentation of gender differences. Some researchers moved toward a feminist version of essentialism, accepting the differences but arguing that these differences should be valued (Gilligan, 1982). Some looked at gender differences in process rather than in terms of raw skills or innate differences (e.g., differences in math confidence and choice rather than actual math skill [Hackett & Betz, 1981], gender differences in anticipated consequences of behaviors predicting gender differences in behavior [Eagly & Steffen, 1986], and concerns about confirming stereotypes interfering with women’s math performance [Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999]). Others emphasized the importance of comparing differences as a function of gender (the subjective state of being masculine or feminine) rather than sex (biological category; e.g., Lott, 1997). More recently, it has been argued that gender should not be considered an aspect of a person but should be examined as an emergent property of same-sex groups (Maccoby, 2002).

Feminist Theories of Gender Socialization

A frequent framing of debates about gender differences is one where nature and nurture, and sometimes interactions between nature and nurture, are pitted against each other as alternative explanations for gender differences. Of particular importance to understanding sexism is not so much whether nature plays a role in gender differences, but documenting that sexism plays a role in developing or accentuating gender differences.

Behaviorism played a larger role in understanding the role that nurturing, and by extension sexism, plays in the emergence of gender differences. Behaviorist John B. Watson, not typically known as a feminist himself, denied the existence of maternal instinct, pointing out that, “We have observed the nursing, handling, bathing, etc. of the first baby of a good many mothers. . . . The instinctive factors are practically nil” (Watson, 1926, p. 54), thus, leaving room for the role of nurturing on gender-typed behaviors. Social learning theory, although broad in scope, was perhaps the most important springboard for what is now a common understanding of the role of learning on gender differences in behavior. Social learning theorists made the—now ridiculously obvious—claim that learning has something to do with the gender differences we observe. Likewise, social learning theory uncovers
a major source of sexism in our culture, namely that we teach girls and boys to be different people. Such a concept is in stark contrast to the assumptions of the vast body of research that had come before that was used to argue that women were naturally different and inferior. Although social learning theory applies to more than just gender and sex differences, it was further elaborated on by three subsequent theories of gender.

Bem’s (1981) gender schema theory provided a social-cognitive spin on social learning theory. Specifically, in teaching gendered behaviors to our girls and boys, we raise them to develop gender schemas, or stereotyped categories, by which they can judge all information about their own and others’ gender-related behaviors that they encounter. Her theory offers important insight into the mechanisms by which women and men internalize sexism and come to perceive that they are choosing to perpetuate the status quo. It also provides some answers as to why some women and some men defy gender stereotypes and are critical of sexism, and others are not—those with more rigid gender schemas will be less concerned about what others may perceive to be sexism.

Eagly’s (1987) social role theory is also consistent with the basics of social learning theory, exploring some of the cultural mechanisms that underlie gendered learning. This theory suggests that the appearance of sex-linked traits, skills, and interests are a result of women and men doing their best to live up to the roles in which they are placed. Because we have a sex-linked division of labor, women are directed toward different roles and tasks (e.g., babysitter, kindergarten teacher) than men (e.g., yard worker, soldier). In doing their best to live up to those roles, they develop traits that will help them perform well (e.g., nurturance vs. independence). Again, because of the basic desire to do well, women and men may not realize these subtle sexist forces they have internalized that operate on their skill development and interests.

Miller (1987) and Unger, Draper, and Pendergras (1986) introduced a more systemic explanation for sexism. Specifically, they argued that a larger patriarchal system serves to maintain sexist oppression. They make the case that there is not anything unique about sex, gender, and sexism, per se. Rather, sex and gender are the dimension on which society is stratified and sex differences are simply a manifestation of this sexist system on women and men. All that we associate as differences in gender or sex are really just differences due to women having less power. This theory is useful because it provides a means to link research on sexism to research on racism and other prejudices.

**Feminist Methodological Critique**

Whereas some continued to explore characteristics and sources of gender differences, others critiqued the methods and data used to document gender differences. Some explored how systemic bias in research methodology led to findings of spurious gender differences (e.g., looking at measurement strategies, sample characteristics, and study context, such as experimenter gender, how variables were manipulated or measured, and public or private nature of data collection). Others argued that feminists need to be vigilant of the implications of research on gender differences, such as research on evolutionary perspectives in psychology, for women’s social status (Greene, 2004). Finally, others found the effort to study gender differences ultimately counterproductive and futile and switched to new ways of studying sexism.

Those who identified the social scientific methods themselves as the root of the problem in studying gender differences took two different approaches to critiquing these methods. The first group, feminist epistemologists, sought to critique and offer improved or alternative methods to standard scientific practice, all the while standing by the scientific method as a liberating force for women. They sought to improve scientific practice by making methods more true to the principles of objective and unbiased science (e.g., Denmark, Russo, Frieze, & Sechzer, 1988). The APA Task Force on Sexism identified several ways in which sexist bias contaminates scientific research. In reviewing the several decades of research in psychology, the task force revealed sexism in question formulation, methods, data analysis and interpretation, and conclusions. This work is a treatise on much of the sexism that feminist gender difference researchers were themselves tackling.
The second, methodological revisionists saw the idea of “objective” methods in and of themselves to be problematic and reifying of the oppressive status quo (Harding, 1993; Jagger, 2004; Keller, 1985). This other camp, although offering very different solutions (feminist standpoint, feminist postmodernist perspectives), are similar in their rejection of standard scientific practice as a systematic form of sexism was further oppressing disadvantaged groups (Brooks & Hesse-Biber, 2007). Problematic elements of objective science include the denial of the voice and authority of those being studied and the production of exclusive knowledge defined by and written for those with power. Feminist standpoint theorists focus more on the former two issues, valuing the unique perspective of the marginalized voice. Feminist postmodernists focus more on the power dynamics involved in the latter two issues, including how those with power have the privilege to define the terms used to articulate experience, and how all knowledge is situationally constructed and inextricable from one’s place in the power hierarchy. Further, the androcentric and patriarchal bias of the scientific method itself has been argued to inhibit and even stifle the voices of those who might define their own experiences with sexism.

For the most part, this latter approach to studying sexism has not infiltrated much into mainstream research on sexism in psychology. However, the implications of both of these methodological critiques for the research on sexism have been vast. Some have sought to clean up the sexism in scientific research practice, to get on with the business of sexism as research topic instead of sexism as research practice. Some have developed research on topics such as violence against women, sexual harassment, the role of power on stereotyping, sexual objectification of women, sexist language, and interpersonal forms of discrimination into the field of research on sexism that may not have traditionally been considered part of the domain of research on prejudice. Others have sought to devise new methods to bring silenced perspectives into research. Still others have turned from an analysis of sexism in research methods, providing a much more complex analysis of the insidiousness of patriarchal control over all aspects of our self-understanding, our relationships, and our lives.

In the remainder of the chapter we describe research that illustrates the breadth of research on sexism, some of the underlying assumptions about what constitutes sexism, difficulties associated with different methodologies used to study sexism, and approaches that have been used to overcome some of the difficulties. We begin by examining various types of sexist beliefs. We then describe research that has documented sexist behaviors. We end by examining the consequences of sexism for women and men.

**GENDER-RELATED BELIEFS AND IDEOLOGIES**

Research on sexist beliefs has spawned a number of different theories, measures, and methodologies that help us better understand the nature of sexist beliefs and identify individuals who endorse sexist beliefs. This research reveals that people explicitly and implicitly endorse sexist beliefs, some of which most would agree are sexist and other beliefs that can be argued to be sexist.

**Gender Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are expectations or beliefs about characteristics associated with different groups. Explicit and implicit measures have been used to assess gender stereotypes. Identifying stereotypes as sexist rests on the assumption that women and men should be seen similarly or that gender stereotypes, no matter how accurate, can lead to sexist behavior by inappropriately leading to differential treatment of women and men.

**Explicit Stereotypes**

Discussion of gender stereotypes and explicit assessment of gender stereotypes often examine expectations about personality traits. Communal traits (e.g., nurturing, expressive, warm) are associated with women and agentic traits (e.g., active, instrumental, competent) are associated with men.
These different expectations are not, however, equally applicable to different subtypes of women. Housewives are characterized as warm but not competent and career women and feminists are thought of as competent and assertive but not warm (Fiske et al., 2002; Rudman & Glick, 1999; Twenge & Zucker, 1999). This no-win situation is not found for men; when working women become mothers they are perceived as warmer but less competent but when working men become fathers they are perceived as warmer and perceptions of their competence do not change (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004).

The extent to which individuals perceive the association between these traits and gender is not historically stable. Eagly’s (1987) social role model predicts that gender differences in behaviors and expectations about gender differences are derived from gender differences in social roles (Diekman & Eagly, 2008). Consistent with this analysis, changes in women’s status from 1931 to 1993 are associated with changes in perceptions of women’s assertiveness, increasing when social indicators point to increases in women’s status and decreasing when social indicators point to a decrease in their status (Twenge, 2001). Cross-cultural data also support this analysis (e.g., Diekman, Eagly, Miadinic, & Ferreira, 2005; Wilde & Diekman, 2005).

It is important to remember that stereotypes about women and men include a wide variety of characteristics, not just those associated with personality traits (Ashmore, 1990; Twenge, 1999). Other attributes include beliefs about gender differences in abilities, occupations, roles, interests, physical appearance, nonverbal behavior, and emotional displays (Ashmore, 1990; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Robinson, Johnson, & Shields, 1998; Twenge, 1999). It is important to examine these components because many are perceived to covary more with each other than with a gender label given to people (Deaux & Lewis, 1984).

**Implicit Stereotypes**

A variety of gender stereotypical characteristics have been assessed using implicit measures. These include testing associations between men and leadership, math, science, careers, and hierarchical structures relative to associations between women and caretaking, art, liberal arts, family, and egalitarian structures (Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2002; Rudman & Kiliasnki, 2000; Schmid, 2004). Comparisons between explicit and implicit stereotypes reveal a mismatch, with individuals, particularly women, being more likely to endorse gender stereotypes implicitly than explicitly (e.g., Rudman & Kiliasnki, 2000). An interesting aspect of implicit stereotypes is that they are malleable. For instance, women’s tendency to associate leadership with men and supporters with women is diminished the more women are exposed to female leaders in their social environments including their exposure to female faculty (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004).

Much research documenting implicit associations has used the Implicit Association Task to assess these differences. A limitation of this method is that it requires testing whether one characteristic is associated with men more than women, relative to an opposite characteristic being associated with women more than men. For instance, a tendency to associate careers with men more than women is compared with a tendency to associate families more with women than men. A better understanding of implicit stereotypes could emerge if other methods were used, such as the go/no-go task (Nosek & Banaji, 2001), to determine whether implicit gender stereotypes are a result of associating men more than women with masculine domains, associating women more than men with feminine domains, or both.

**Stereotypes as Sexist Beliefs**

Using endorsement of stereotypes to document sexism is based on an individualistic, gender-blind framework. Perceiving differences between women and men is considered sexist or potentially sexist when the stereotypes are applied to individuals. However, if stereotypes are accurate, they are not biased but reflect actual gender differences and may provide useful general knowledge. There is evidence that several general stereotypes about women and men are descriptively accurate (e.g., J. A. Hall & Carter, 1999; Swim, 1994). If stereotypes are described in terms of all women or men
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having certain attributes, they will be inaccurate. When stereotypes represent average beliefs about the size or direction of gender differences, then general stereotypes may still be generally accurate even with substantial variability within gender groups and even when a particular stereotype may not be accurately applied to particular women and men (Jussim, 2005). See also Chapter 10.

Yet, there are several reasons why gender stereotypes can be considered sexist even if descriptively accurate. First, people may oversimplify the characteristics associated with particular groups. For instance, although men do perform better on spatial tasks than women, the size of the difference depends on the test used (Hyde, 2005). Also, people may perceive women to be more emotional than men, but they still may perceive that men are more likely to display anger (Shields, 2002). Second, although there may be general tendencies to be accurate, there are individual differences in the tendency to be accurate (J. A. Hall & Carter, 1999). Third, people may essentialize gender differences, perceiving that differences are inevitable. If they perceive the differences to be inevitable, they may perceive that what is generally true should be true, thereby translating descriptive stereotypes into prescriptive stereotypes. Fourth, stereotypes justify the status quo (Jost & Kay, 2005), rationalize the distribution of women and men into social roles (Hoffman & Hurst, 1990), and can create differences through confirmatory biases (Deaux & Major, 1987). Fifth, essentializing gender differences overlooks, for example, behavioral confirmation processes, different situational constraints for women and men, and cultural or situationally primed social norms that differentially affect women and men (Deaux & Lafrance, 1998). These situational factors make it hard to determine how much variance is attributable to characteristics of women and men versus characteristics of the situations; what may be perceived as gender difference in traits or abilities may be a difference in reactions to social situations, selection into different situations, or how people in situations treat women and men. Finally, gender stereotypes can be problematic when they become self-limiting and self-destructive, or result in diminished confidence or underperformance.

Traditional Gender Roles

Another classic way of assessing sexist beliefs is to document that individuals perceive that women and men should occupy different social roles. One of the most frequently used measures of endorsement of traditional gender roles is the Attitudes Toward Women Scale. Respondents indicate the extent they believe, for instance, “The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men,” and “In general, the father should have more authority than the mother in bringing up the children.” Although not technically measures of attitudes toward women (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989), endorsement of such beliefs can be considered sexist because they reflect lack of support for those who do not occupy traditional roles, they limit people to particular roles, impart greater power and authority to men, and lead to women’s dependency on men. Longitudinal data reveal a decrease in endorsement of traditional gender roles. This is true when examining changes over time in endorsement of beliefs assessed by scales such as the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (e.g., Spence & Hahn, 1997; Twenge, 1997) and in national opinion poll data (e.g., Swim & Campbell, 2001).

Other data, however, should be considered prior to concluding that there is a lack of endorsement of traditional gender roles. First, embedded within these trends remains a substantial number of individuals who endorse sexist beliefs. Certain populations are more likely to endorse such individuals in the southern part of the United States, those who are religious fundamentalists, and those from certain countries more so than other countries (e.g., Carter & Borch, 2005; Swim, Becker, Lee, & Pruitt, 2008; Twenge, 1997). Second, as reviewed later, people behave in ways that suggest that they endorse these roles by enacting gender roles in their domestic lives and backlash against those who violate gender roles. Third, changes in endorsement of gender roles could reflect dated phrasing in measures. Changes may only appear to occur because scales ask behaviors that are no longer relevant to gender roles. Plus, when phrased in benevolent terms, individuals may be more likely to endorse, for instance, paternalistic treatment of women and men, than if framed in terms of differential treatment of women and men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Fourth, overall changes may not be
reflected equally across different gender-role domains. Different domains that have been assessed across a variety of measures include marital, parental, employment, educational, and heterosexual relationship roles (Beere, 1990; King & King, 1997). There are also measures that focus on endorsement of gender roles for men, thereby providing a fuller picture of endorsement of gender-role ideology (e.g., Walker, Tokar, & Fischer, 2000). Examining trends within domains could shed more detailed light onto individuals’ endorsement of traditional gender roles.

**Modern Sexism and Neosexism**

Following research on modern racism, the Modern Sexism and Neosexism scales were developed as alternatives to more blatant measures of sexist beliefs, such as those assessed in measures of endorsement of traditional gender roles (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995; Swim, Becker, & DeCoster, 2008; Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995). For instance, the Neosexism scale was specifically designed to measure hidden negative attitudes toward women. Paralleling items found in the Modern Racism scale, both sexism scales assess: (a) denial of discrimination, (b) negative reactions to complaints about inequality, and (c) lack of support for efforts to reduce inequality. These beliefs are important because they relate to maintaining the status quo and, if gender inequity still exists, then endorsement of these beliefs relates to maintaining gender inequity.

Research using these scales supports their validity as measures of subtle or covert sexist beliefs. First, associations between beliefs about the prevalence of sexism and gender system justification beliefs support the assertion that denial of discrimination is related to maintaining the status quo (Swim et al., 2008). Second, factor analyses demonstrate that endorsement of Modern Sexist and Neosexist beliefs are related to but distinct from endorsement of traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Swim et al., 1995; Swim & Cohen, 1997; Tougas et al., 1995). Third, methodologically, these scales are more subtle measures of sexist beliefs than endorsement of traditional gender roles: Modern Sexism beliefs are less likely to be identified as sexist than are traditional gender role beliefs (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005b; Swim, Mallett, Russo-Devosa, & Stangor, 2005). Fourth, both scales demonstrate convergent validity. Endorsement of Modern or Neosexist beliefs are associated with less endorsement of egalitarian values; lesser likelihood of judging particular incidents as sexual harassment; more negative reactions to feminism, feminists, and women’s rights; overestimating the extent to which there is gender equity in the workforce; greater endorsement of rape myths; adversarial sexual beliefs; hostility toward women, hostile sexism, and antigay beliefs and behaviors; more positive reactions to sexist language; greater use of sexist language; greater perceived threat to men’s collective interests; men’s greater likelihood of engaging in coercive sexual behavior and verbal aggression during interpersonal conflicts; men’s greater perception of men’s experiences with discrimination (Cameron, 2001; Campbell, Schellenberg, & Senn 1997; Cralley & Ruscher, 2005; Forbes and Adams-Curtis, 2001; Forbes, Adams-Curtis, & White, 2004; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Masser & Abrams, 1999, Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Swim et al., 1995; Swim & Cohen, 1997, Swim, Mallett, & Stangor, 2004; Tougas et al., 1995; Whitly, 2001). Finally, research has demonstrated cross-cultural support for the validity of both scales primarily in European countries (for a review, see Swim et al., 2007).

Despite the similarity in theoretical origins of the two scales, there are some important distinctions between them. The primary distinction is that most of the items in the Modern Sexism scale assess beliefs about the prevalence of sexism, whereas items in the Neosexism scale primarily assess lack of support for efforts to improve women’s status (Swim et al. 2008). There is some evidence of higher reliability for the Neosexism scale than the Modern Sexism scale (Campbell et al. 1997), yet similar range in reliabilities can be found when looking across studies including studies using different age and ethnic groups. Revisions to both scales that highlight this distinction can improve their reliability (Swim et al., 2008).
**REACTIONS TOWARD FEMINISM AND FEMINISTS**

Another way to assess endorsement of sexist beliefs is to assess reactions to feminism and feminists. A goal of feminism is to address women’s lack of social and economic power and thereby address gender inequality. Therefore, unfavorable attitudes toward feminism and feminists can be considered markers of lack of support for gender equity.

One way attitudes toward feminism have been assessed is by examining support for social policies supported by feminists. These policies include comparable worth policies, the equal rights amendment, affirmative action, and abortion (see Beere, 1990, for example scales). There are a number of reasons for not supporting these policies, not all of which directly relate to attitudes toward feminist or gender equality. Yet, a central viable reason that may be expressed is lack of support for efforts to achieve equality and, with regard to abortion, beliefs about women’s rights to make decisions about their own bodies.

A second way to assess attitudes toward feminism is to assess attitudes at feminist organizations (e.g., the National Organization for Women), feminists (as representatives of those working to achieve gender equity), and about the feminist movement (e.g., Fassinger, 1994). Negative reactions to feminists are associated with feeling threatened by feminists (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005) including believing that feminists threaten values (Haddock & Zanna, 1994).

When considering reactions to feminism and feminists as markers of sexist beliefs, it is important to recognize that there are a variety of types of feminists that may not be captured by general reactions to feminism (Henley, Spalding, & Kosta, 2000). Some feminists are what Sommers (1990) calls gender equity feminists, arguing that women and men should be treated the same. Yet other feminists argue that women and men should not be treated the same. Cultural feminists might argue that treating women and men the same will result in women’s disadvantages because women and men are not the same; what needs to change is greater valuing of feminine attributes (e.g., Gilligan, 1982). Radical feminists might argue that treating women and men the same can be problematic because it does not take into account men’s greater social power and will result in maintaining status differences (e.g., Mackinnon, 1987). There are also a variety of other types of feminism, including socialist feminism, lesbian feminism, and Black feminism. Running through these different feminist perspectives is the recognition of women’s disadvantage relative to men, so general lack of support for feminism would reflect a general lack of concern about and willingness to address gender inequality. Yet, different types of feminists are associated with different beliefs about the cause of the disadvantages and what needs to be done to address women’s disadvantages. Thus, it may take more to understand the relation between lack of support for feminism and sexist beliefs.

**AMBIVALENT SEXISM**

Beliefs about women and men are not uniformly positive or negative (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexist beliefs about women consist of (a) beliefs about the complementary nature of gender differences, (b) endorsement of paternalistic behavior, and (c) beliefs in heterosexual intimacy. Although the three components of benevolent sexism appear on the surface to be positive, they can be harmful to women because of the unspoken assumptions associated with the beliefs. For instance, complementary gender differences can be translated into believing that women are less competent than men. Paternalistic beliefs can be translated into believing that women are childlike. Heterosexual intimacy can be translated into believing that women control men through their sexuality. The negative sides to these beliefs are hostile sexist beliefs. Positive correlations between benevolent and hostile sexist beliefs support concerns about benevolent sexist beliefs. Consistent with the idea of ambivalent reactions to women, benevolent sexism is associated with endorsement of positive stereotypes about women and hostile sexism. These researchers also demonstrate similar benevolent and hostile beliefs about men, framed in terms of negative implications of benevolent belief about men for men rather than for women (Glick & Fiske, 1999).
The positive nature of benevolent sexist beliefs can make them particularly problematic. Women and men are less likely to identify benevolent than hostile sexist beliefs about women as sexist (Swim et al., 2005). Similarly, although women prefer egalitarian men to benevolent sexist men, benevolent sexist men are seen as less sexist than hostile sexist men because they are perceived as more likeable, even though the latter two are likely to be the same people (Killianski, & Rudman, 1998; Barreto & Ellemers, 2005a). Additionally, women who endorse benevolent sexist beliefs are more likely to respond more favorably to benevolently sexist explanations for discrimination from intimate partners (Moya, Glick, Expósito, de Lemus, & Hart, 2007).

A number of studies have demonstrated the importance of ambivalent sexist beliefs for understanding sexism against women. Cross-culturally, countries where individuals have been found to be more likely to endorse benevolent than hostile sexist beliefs also tend to be countries where there is greater gender inequality (Glick, Fiske, Mladinic, Saiz, Abrams, & Masser, et al., 2000). Benevolent sexist beliefs have been found to be important in understanding reactions to rape victims. Benevolent sexists are more likely to blame women than men for acquaintance rape, particularly when she is perceived to have behaved inappropriately (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Viki, Abrams, & Masser, 2004). In contrast, hostile sexism is related to rape proclivity for acquaintance rape (Abrams et al., 2003; Viki, Chiroro, & Abrams, 2006). Hostile sexism is also related to greater tolerance of sexism after hearing hostile humor about women (Ford & Ferguson, 2004).

Research on ambivalent sexism has not focused on ambivalence per se, but more on the usefulness of considering two forms or ways of framing sexist beliefs. Moreover, the research has not focused on the different components of benevolent sexism, although it may be useful in the future to consider the three different components of benevolent sexism.

**BELIEFS SUPPORTING SEXUAL AGGRESSION AGAINST WOMEN**

Brownmiller (1975) was one of the first to argue that sexism was a central cause of violence against women when she said that rape was a form of male dominance serving to keep women in a state of fear. Consistent with this, young women report that fear of rape is one of their most salient fears (Hickman & Muehlenhard, 1997).

A set of beliefs that support that has received much attention are rape myths. *Rape myths* are “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women” (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 134). The concept of rape myths was first introduced by sociologists (e.g., Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1974) and feminists (e.g., Brownmiller, 1975) in the 1970s. Rape myths were theoretically tied to victim blaming and a belief in a just world (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999). Burt (1980) developed the first scale to assess rape myth acceptance and a number of others have since developed similar measures. Payne et al. (1999) developed one recent conceptually and methodologically strong measure that assesses beliefs such as blaming women for rape (e.g., she asked for it), denying rape (it wasn’t really rape, she’s lying, he did not mean to), and trivializing rape (rape is an infrequent and trivial event). Endorsement of rape myths is associated with, for instance, hostile beliefs about women, acceptance of interpersonal violence, and sex role stereotyping (Payne et al., 1999).

Going beyond rape myths, meta-analytic reviews have documented the association among several types of the beliefs about sexual violence and perceptions of and engaging in sexual aggression against women. *Perceptions* of specific incidents of rape and sexual coercion depend on the perceivers’ beliefs about violence and sexuality (e.g., rape myth acceptance, acceptance of interpersonal violence against women, sexual callousness, and adversarial sexual beliefs) and their perception of the situation (e.g., whether the victim and perpetrator had a prior relationship, whether alcohol was involved, the extent to which a woman resisted; Emmers-Sommer & Allen, 1999). Research predicting men’s sexual aggressive behavior reveals that similar beliefs, particularly those that direct men’s behavior, also underlie sexual aggression against women. Masculine ideologies are some of the most important predictors of male sexual aggression (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002).
These masculine ideologies include belief in male dominance as a motive for sexual relationships, endorsement of hypermasculinity (e.g., violence is manly, any man who is a man needs sex regularly), and hostile masculinity (including beliefs that force and coercion are legitimate to use in sexual relationships, believing that relationships are fundamentally exploitive and each party is manipulative, and endorsement of rape myths). Measures more typically used to assess more general gender-related beliefs (e.g., describing oneself as instrumental, endorsement of traditional gender roles) have been found to be related to sexual aggression in men, but not as strongly as masculine ideologies. Research has also documented the role of implicit beliefs in sexual aggression against women. Men who endorse sexually aggressive attitudes are more likely to associate sex and power (Bargh, Raymond, Pryor, & Strack, 1995). Men who report more frequent and severe sexually coercive and aggressive behavior are more likely to associate women with sex and with hostility (Leibold & McConnell, 2004).

SEXIST BEHAVIORS

A wide range of types of sexist behaviors have been documented. One of the most frequent types of behaviors is judgments about identically described women versus men. The judgments consist of evaluations, resources given (e.g., jobs, salary), trait attributions, and attributions given for success or failures. It is likely that this method of documenting sexism is often used because it is well suited to empirical tests that cleanly compare the effects of a target’s gender on others’ behaviors. Yet, the reliance on this paradigm has some limitations. Because the studies often rely on fictitious people with minimal information given about them, rated by college students with little involvement with the target or situation, the studies are vulnerable to criticisms about their external validity (Copus, 2005). A related limitation is that this paradigm results in a restricted definition of the types of behaviors that one might consider as sexist and restricted contexts for studying sexist behaviors. In contrast, research outside of the laboratory setting has examined a wide range of other types of sexist behaviors. This includes research examining behavioral enactment of gender roles within families, research documenting interpersonal partner violence and sexual harassment, and research on everyday forms of discrimination. Although stronger in its external validity, this latter research also has its limitations, primarily in terms of the internal validity.

JUDGMENTS OF WOMEN AND MEN

The logic behind research testing for differential judgments of women and men as evidence of sexist behavior is based on a gender-blind philosophy, akin to a color-blind philosophy on race-relations. Antifemale sexism is illustrated when a woman is judged less favorably or to have more female stereotypical attributes than an identically described man. This illustrates that women and men were not being judged as individuals but being judged as members of their gender groups. Individual characteristics such as the quality of a person’s work could influence judgments, but in addition to these characteristics, the targets’ gender-group membership influenced the judgments. Akin to research on the base-rate fallacy, some research suggests that people may underutilize their stereotypes in judgments relative to their general beliefs about women and men (e.g., Locksley, Borgida, Brekke, & Hepburn, 1980). Yet the concern in the literature is not whether gender stereotypes are underutilized or whether gender stereotypes are being used appropriately. Rather the concern from a gender-blind philosophy is that a target’s gender group membership is used at all. Thus, the focus has been on whether gender influences judgments with the assumption that any influence of gender-category membership on judgments is problematic because individuals should be gender-blind in their judgments.

Historically, a perceived lack of fit between women’s traditional roles, abilities, and traits was predicted to lead to judgments or attributions that did not favor women. Apart from predicting that some people would be more likely to judge women and men differently (e.g., those who endorse...
traditional gender roles), some domains might be more problematic than others (e.g., masculine domains for women), and some targets might be more likely to evoke negative gender stereotypes about abilities (e.g., attractive women), there was no discussion about the difference between, for instance, gender stereotype activation and application. Little attention was explicitly given to variables that would influence activation or suppression of stereotypes, whether activation of gender stereotypes could account for effects of a target’s gender on a perceiver’s judgments, the manner in which gender stereotypes influence judgments (e.g., contrast or assimilation effects), and variables that could attenuate or accentuate the relation between activation and application of gender stereotypes. As a result, although sometimes documenting differential treatment of women and men, these studies were not able to adequately account for heterogeneity of findings across studies.

In contrast, more recent research has paid much more attention to cognitive, affective, and motivational processes that influence the impact of target’s category membership on judgments. There has been more theoretical consideration about the particular aspects of gender stereotypes (e.g., descriptive vs. prescriptive stereotypes; Gill, 2004) and the ways that treatment can be manifested (e.g., paternalistic behavior; Vescio, Gervais, Snyder, & Hoover, 2005). As a result researchers are better able to pinpoint why, when, and how another person’s gender will influence judgments. Researchers are also beginning to attend more to intersections between category membership, such as the implications of both race and gender membership (e.g., Vescio, Judd, & Kwan, 2004). Research reviewing this literature is covered in detail in other sections of the *Handbook* (e.g., Biernat, chap. 7, this volume; Vescio, Gervais, Heiphetz, & Bloodhart, chap. 12, this volume). Therefore, we limit our review to two areas of research that have been of specific relevance to understanding judgments of women versus men.

**Backlash**

The concept of backlash against women was popularized by Faludi (1991) when she wrote a journalistic book arguing that there was an increasing negative reaction to women as they were gaining equality with men. Empirical data demonstrating backlash come from several different areas. For instance, the more women report attempts to access nontraditional careers, the more experiences with discrimination they report having. Plus, women’s upward mobility may be more likely to increase endorsement of some forms of sexist beliefs, such as resentment toward efforts to improve women’s status as assessed by Neosexist beliefs, than increase endorsement of traditional gender roles (Beaton, Tougas, & Joly, 1996; Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & St-Pierre, 1999).

Backlash can also be seen in greater negative evaluations of women than men in masculine domains (as documented by meta-analyses of evaluations of women and men; Bowen, Swim, & Jacobs, 2000; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989) and in reactions to women in gender-atypical roles (e.g., Rudman & Glick, 1999). Negative evaluations of women in leadership positions are particularly characteristic of backlash because it is within the context of reacting against women in positions of power (Eagly et al., 1992). Backlash against women in positions of leadership is not necessarily because people doubt women’s leadership skills. Another reason is that women who are leaders may be assumed to lack communal traits. For instance, when jobs require both agentic and communal traits, agentic women but not agentic men are less likely to be hired (Rudman & Glick, 1999). Another reason for backlash is that women in positions of power can threaten men’s dominance (Beaton et al., 1996).

Consistent with the implication that backlash implies an extreme negative reaction, Rudman and Fairchild (2004) illustrated that participants sabotaged the future performance of a woman who had behaved in a gender-atypical manner in a masculine domain and a man who had behaved gender atypically in a feminine domain. Extreme negative reactions are also shown in the form of sexual aggression. It has been argued that sexual harassment or sexual assault can be used as a form of backlash against women threatening male dominance. Consistent with this argument, Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, and Grasselli (2003) found that highly identified men were more likely to
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sexually harass women by exposing women to pornography when women threatened men's gender identity and threatened the legitimacy of gender inequality (i.e., they were portrayed as a feminist).

Social Context
One particularly interesting context that can influence sexist behavior is whether or not the context suggests that sexism is permissible. This is nicely illustrated by Ford and Ferguson's (2004) prejudice norm theory. They argue that sexist humor increases tolerance for sexism, rather than, for instance, increased activation of sexist beliefs. Greater tolerance of sexism has the potential to increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in discriminatory behavior. Individuals may also try to create a situation that allows them to be sexist. When individuals demonstrate that they are not sexist, their subsequent judgments tend to be more sexist (Monin & Miller, 2001). This suggests that individuals are credentialing themselves as non sexist individuals, thereby freeing themselves to be sexist. Contexts can also discourage sexist behavior, particularly for those who are motivated to be egalitarian. Those who are internally and externally motivated to not appear sexist have been found to rate sexist jokes more negatively when a situation indicated that it was not appropriate to be sexist but the type of situation did not influence those who did not report these motivations (Klonis, Plant, & Devine 2005).

Traditional Gender Roles
Although, as noted earlier, people are less likely to endorse traditional gender roles, data on gender division of labor suggest that many still support traditional gender roles. Unequal division of labor in the home is found for employed women including women in high-status and high-paying roles, not just women who depend completely on their partners’ income. Full-time employed women do more unpaid work than full-time employed men (Craig, 2006; Gershuny, Bittman, & Brice, 2005). Although the amount of women’s domestic work decreases as their earnings increase, this pattern alters when women earn more than 50% of the household income. The few women in this range seem to compensate for their higher earnings with a more traditional division of household work (Bittman, England, Sayer, Folbre, & Matheson, 2003). Although couples alter the amount of domestic work they do based on their partners’ employment status, resulting in greater equity in domestic work as their employment status changes, some data indicate that the alterations have as much or even more to do with women doing less than men doing more (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000). Other data indicate women are spending as much or more time with children as they did in 1965 (Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004). Division of labor in child care is particularly prominent. The time that women spend with children is more demanding time than that spent by men. Time use diary data indicate that mothers not only spend two to three times more time with children than men, but women also assume more responsibility for managing child care, do more multitasking, more physical labor, more tasks that are based on rigid timetables (e.g., adjusting one’s time to a child’s schedule as opposed to interacting with children when the parent has time), and spend more time alone with children (Craig, 2006).

Inequity in relationships is also revealed by power differentials in heterosexual relationships. For example, in addition to inequitable division of domestic labor, women have less control over household income. Even when women bring home income, men tend to take control over household money (Kenney, 2006). Unequal power is especially prevalent when women earn less than men, which is characteristic of most of the population.

Everyday Experiences and Interpersonal Sexism
Another form of sexist behaviors that women experience are those embedded in their everyday lives that often emerge in interpersonal exchanges. These experiences include endorsement of traditional stereotypes and preference for gender roles, hostile comments directed at women, and
unwanted sexual attention (Hyers, 2007; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). The experiences also include general mistreatment in work and academic settings that are not necessarily identified as sexist but are experienced as incivility and are more often experienced by women than men (Lim & Cortina, 2005; Settles, Cortina, Malley, & Stewart, 2006). The context and perpetrators for everyday experience with sexism are broader than just work and academic settings perpetrated by employers, teachers, and colleagues; they also include experiences in restaurants, bars, and stores perpetrated by employees directed at their customers, home and social gatherings perpetrated by friends and family members, and streets perpetrated by strangers, such as strangers engaging in what is called eve-teasing in India (Ramasubramanian & Oliver, 2003). Thus, these experiences include comments and behaviors that form hostile work environments, chilly classroom climates, and nonprosecutable comments and behaviors that intertwine within the fabric of women's public and private lives.

Evidence of these types of experiences are often documented with self-reports. Although one might worry about oversensitivity by reporters, one could also consider issues related to reporters not always knowing or admitting that they or others have been targets of sexism. Reasons for not reporting sexism include not noticing or defining incidents as sexist and not wanting to publicly report incidents (Becker & Swim, 2007; Stangor, Swim, Van Allen, & Sechrist, 2002). Not noticing and defining incidents as sexist can occur if the incidents are not prototypical (e.g., a woman treating another woman unfairly; Inman & Baron, 1996), incidents are perceived as normative or they are habitual (e.g., “ladies first” or sexist language, Benekraitus & Feagin, 1997; Swim et al., 2004), the incidents appear to be positive (e.g., stereotyping women as nicer than men, incidents that could be interpreted as involving sexual interest; Becker & Swim, 2007; Swim et al., 2004), or assuming one must know a perpetrator's beliefs and intent before identifying an experience as sexist (Swim, Scott, Sechrist, Campbell, & Stangor, 2003). Not wanting to publicly report incidents can occur for several reasons, including concerns about interpersonal and practical costs associated with confronting prejudice (Hyers, 2007; Swim & Hyers, 1999).

Not surprisingly then, the frequency with which women report experiencing everyday sexism is influenced by the ways in which these experiences are assessed. If women are asked how often they experience sexism, their estimates will be lower than if one sums across their reported experiences with a range of types of everyday sexist behaviors (Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998). Women's recalled experiences with sexism are also lower than if they are asked to keep track of their experiences in a diary format. Plus, when asked to keep track of their experiences in a diary format, they will report more if they are given a list of possible behaviors to track than if they are not provided with such a list (Swim et al., 2001). If women are asked to publicly report whether they have experienced sexism, they are less likely to do so than if they can report it anonymously (Stangor et al., 2002). The focus here has been on antifemale sexism primarily reported by women, but it is also the case that people report antimale sexism, although the frequency of antimale sexism reported by women and men is lower than that of antifemale sexism (Swim et al., 2001).

Yet despite limitations associated with asking women about their experiences, much can be gained by examining the types of experiences individuals report. For instance, Benekraitus and Feagin (1997) conceptually identified and classified women's reported experiences with sexism into a large variety of types of sexist behaviors that provide insights into the ways that sexism is manifested in women's lives. Examples of such behaviors include condescending chivalry, tokenism, hostile humor about women, use of sexual innuendos or teasing as a way of intimidating women, fixating on women's gender or physical appearance rather than their work, making inferences that women are lesbians as a means to silence them, and encouraging women to be ambitious or successful but not following up this encouragement by misdirecting them into unchallenging positions, not rewarding them when they have nontraditional achievements, or giving them impressive titles without increases in salary or authority.

One prevalent type of everyday sexism is sexual or bodily objectification, which is experienced both indirectly, such as through media portrayals of women, and directly, such as through street
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remarks (Fredrickson & Roberts 1997). Women’s bodies and body parts are often the target of attention. For instance, the media is more likely to portray only men’s rather than only women’s faces and less likely to portray men’s than women’s bodies. The objectification is most clear when body parts or functions are portrayed separate from a person’s identity and are presented for the use or pleasure of others. Objectification can also occur from street remarks called or shouted out to women about their bodies or more generally through gaze, and specifically male gaze in the form of examining and presumably evaluating women’s bodies. These portrayals and attention are often focused on sexual attractiveness of women. The connection between objectification and sexualization of women is made explicit in pornography.

VIOLENCE

Violence against women is vast both in terms of the multitude of forms it takes and in its prevalence. A report published by the U.S. Department of Justice for practitioners defines violence against women as “any physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological abuse or violence committed against women by intimate partners or acquaintances, including, current or former spouses, cohabiting partners, boyfriends, or dates” (Carlson, Worden, vanRyn, & Bachman, 2003, p. 2). They describe physical violence as both fatal and nonfatal physical assaults; sexual violence as various forms of rape and sexual assault; and emotional and psychological abuse as any act intended to denigrate, isolate, or dominate a partner. This report largely focuses on sexual assault, domestic abuse, and stalking, much of which can be described as forms of intimate partner violence. The concept of violence against women is broadened by the same behaviors committed by strangers and including sexual harassment, which has largely been studied within workplace and academic settings.

Estimates about the prevalence of violence against women vary according to the type of violence examined and the type of reports examined. Yet, the data point to the pervasiveness of male-perpetrated violence against women, especially when considered in cumulative form across different forms of violence. The American Psychological Association (1999) reported that in the United States alone, “By most conservative estimates, almost 1,000,000 women experience violent victimization by an intimate each year.” Many also point to lifetime estimates of women experiencing violence. For instance, Carlson et al. (2003) reported that 25% of women experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime is a minimum estimate. The estimate is larger when one includes sexual harassment. The American Psychological Association (1999, p. 2) reported that nearly 50% of women are affected by sexual harassment during the course of their working lives.

Violence against women is seen as part of a larger picture of a sexist culture. Although recognizing multiple causal factors that lead to male violence against women, the American Psychological Association (1999, p. 3) noted this violence “remains fundamentally a learned behavior that is shaped by sociocultural norms and role expectations that support female subordination and perpetuate male violence.”

One cultural source of support for male sexual aggression and beliefs about sex and violence that has gotten much research attention is pornography. One meta-analysis revealed that exposure to pornography is associated with endorsement of several beliefs that are associated with perceptions of and engagement of sexual aggression, including endorsement of rape myths (Oddone-Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2000). A second meta-analysis revealed that nonexperimental exposure to pornography was not related to endorsement of rape myths but experimental exposure to violent and nonviolent pornography was associated with endorsement of rape myths (Allen, Emmers, Gebhardt, & Giery, 1995).

Although much attention has been given to interpersonal relationship violence against women, similar violence against men is also a problem, although not as prevalent. One representative U.S. national survey indicated that 17% of women and 3% of men reported experiencing rape in their lifetime, 8% of women and 2% of men experienced stalking, and 26% of women and 8% of men reported intimate partner violence (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Insights into gender differences in
these types of violence come from understanding differences in types of violence women and men experience. Johnson (2006) argued that there are four types of domestic abuse based on whether attempts to control one’s partner are also part of the relationship. Control tactics included use of threat, economics, privilege and punishment, children, isolation, emotional abuse, and sex. The four types are (a) intimate terrorism where one partner is violent and controlling and the other is not; (b) mutual violent control where both partners are violent and controlling; (c) violent resistance where one partner is violent and not controlling with a partner who is violent and controlling; and (d) situational couple violence where there is violence by at least one partner but no attempts at control. Based on wives’ descriptions of themselves and their husbands, Johnson found that intimate terrorism violence was more typical of husbands than wives, violent resistance is more typical of wives than husbands, and the remaining two types are found equally among wives and husbands.

Men experience more violence than women in other domains. Specifically, men report more experiences with physical assaults (e.g., being slapped or hit, pushed, grabbed or shoved, and being hit with an object) than women, with 52% of women and 66% of men reporting such experiences (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). This particular survey does not identify the gender of the perpetrator. Yet, even if the violence against men is perpetrated by a man, this violence can still be important for understanding sexism if it is part of a larger system of defining masculinity and establishing dominance hierarchies.

CONSEQUENCES OF SEXISM

The ability to detect the effects of sexism is not straightforward. There are direct, indirect, and secondary effects of sexism (Allison, 1998; Stangor et al., 2003). Direct effects include physical harm through, for instance, sexual violence, economic harm through loss of wages, and psychological harm through internalization of self-doubt and accumulated depression. Individuals may or may not be aware that sexism is directly affecting them. Indirect effects include those that are influenced by one’s interpretation of incidents, sometimes attenuating and other times accentuating the negative consequences of stressful incidents (Major & O’Brien, 2005). Secondary effects are those that follow from direct or indirect effects. For instance, if sexism causes women to have lower income than men, they are more likely to be in poverty then men and experience a wide range of consequences associated with poverty. Here the consequences we focus on are violence, objectification, and internalization of gender stereotypes and roles (see also Major & Sawyer, Chapter 5 and Aronson, Chapter 8, this volume, for discussion of more effects).

VIOLENCE

Violence can be understood both as a consequence of sexism and as a type of sexist behavior causing other subsequent consequences. Violence against women results in some of the most extreme consequences of sexism for women. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice, about 1,300 women in the United States in 1993 were murdered by partners or former partners, and this figure is likely an underestimate because in murders the relationship between victim and perpetrator is often not identified (American Psychological Association, 1999). There are also a number of subsequent consequences of violence against women, including those from sexual harassment. The American Psychological Association (1999, p. 2) summarized the following consequences:

Victimized women suffer from depression, substance abuse, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Many exhibit negative cognitive and emotional after effects and consistently show among the highest rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) associated with any type of traumatic event. Accordingly, PTSD is also a common diagnosis for many victims of violence. Violence against women has economic as well as psychological and physical costs. For example, the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (1995) estimated the cost of sexual harassment to the government over the course of the 2-year reporting period.
of their study (from April 1992 through April 1994) at $327.1 million in job turnover, sick leave, individual productivity, and workgroup productivity. The same study also found that nearly 21% of sexual harassment victims reported suffering a decline in productivity. The average rape in the United States is estimated to cost $92,100 in tangible expenses, emotional distress, and lost quality of life.

**Objectification of Women**

One consequence of sexual objectification of women is that women tend to perceive that they are heavier than normal and become dissatisfied with their bodies. When women watch sexualized portrayals of women, they are more likely to want to be thinner (Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999). Although body dissatisfaction in men is less common than in women, sexual portrayal of men can also influence men, for instance, by making them want to appear larger (Lavine et al., 1999).

A second consequence of objectification is self-objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Self-objectification involves having a third-party perspective on one’s appearance, thinking about how others might view one’s body rather than a first-party perspective about unobservable attributes such as one’s thoughts and feelings. Self-objectification is argued to be an adaptive response, a type of pro-active strategy. This strategy is like other pro-active coping responses to discrimination that allow women to counteract or attenuate negative reactions to their bodies (Mallett & Swim, 2005). Despite its adaptive value, Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) argued that body objectification leads to body shame and depletion of attention resources that can influence performance on other tasks. Self-objectification leads to constant monitoring of one’s body as to whether it fits cultural standards of beauty. Because these standards do not fit most women, most women will fail to meet them, resulting in shame and anxiety. The attention required to monitor one’s body can lead to a split in attention between a task that one is working on and attention to one’s body. It has also been associated with inattention to body cues, restrained eating, and disordered eating. Finally, it has been argued to be associated with other mental health risks such as depression and sexual dysfunction.

**Internalization of Sexism**

Internalization of prescriptive gender-role behavior can undermine women’s aspirations, undermine psychological well-being, and influence women’s and men’s behavior. For example, the more women endorse implicit beliefs that intimate male partners are “knights in shining armor” (i.e., men will take care of women and protect them), the less likely they are to aspire to higher education and high-status jobs (Rudman & Heppen, 2003). As another example, one prescriptive belief is that women should put other people’s needs ahead of their own needs in relationships. This belief is at the center of what Jack (1991) calls self-silencing. Self-silencing is the tendency to endorse relationship beliefs that prescribe that one should not express one’s thoughts and feelings in relationships to protect harmony of their relationships. Theoretically, these beliefs derive from gender-related beliefs about appropriate behavior for women in interpersonal interactions. The more women endorse these beliefs the more likely they are to have poorer psychological well-being, for instance, in the form of greater depression (Jack & Dill, 1992), and the less likely they are to confront everyday forms of sexism (Swim, Essell, Quinliven, & Ferguson, 2008).

Internalization of social role expectations can lead to gender differences in behaviors. The more women and men endorse stereotypical differences between women and men and the more situations prescribe expectations for gender differences in emotional expressivity, the greater the gender differences in self-reported and physiological measures of emotional intensity (Grossman & Wood, 1993). Similarly, although dominant women and men become leaders in same-sex dyads and in mixed-sex dyads doing a feminine task, in mixed sex dyads doing masculine or neutral tasks, less dominant men emerge as leaders (Ritter & Yoder, 2004). Ironically, this effect frequently occurs because more dominant women appoint the less dominant men. Conforming to gender-role norms can also be self-
reinforcing. When individuals perceive social norms to be relevant to themselves, they feel better engaging in the norm-congruent behavior (Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997).

CONCLUSIONS

Research on sexism has developed much from its origins of defending women against sexist research on gender differences. Research has documented a variety of sexist beliefs and behaviors and the consequences of sexism for women and to some extent men as well. The research is not without its challenges including: (a) defining what types of beliefs and behaviors will be considered sexist; (b) detecting sexist beliefs when it is not politically correct to express them; (c) addressing the importance of beliefs when it is often the case that it is hard to make connections between beliefs and behaviors; (d) documenting sexist behaviors through self-reports when sexism may be unnoticed, may be noticed but people may differ in their interpretation of them, and even when interpreted as sexist some may not wish to report them; (e) limited external validity of some of the research, (f) acknowledging gender differences in traits, abilities, and behaviors, whatever their source, while still striving for fair and equitable treatment; (g) understanding the impact of interpretation of incidents on the consequences of incidents; and (h) making connections between individual levels of analysis and organizational, institutional, and cultural levels of analyses.

There are assumptions running through much of the literature that are worth considering. One assumption is that sexism exists and we can better understand and document it if we devise better and more precise ways of defining and measuring it. Different research might arise if one attempted to document changes that have resulted from decreases in sexism. Another assumption is a gender-blind society should be strived for and the resulting assumption that gender equity would be obtained if people saw and treated others as individuals and not as members of gender groups. Different research might emerge if one took an approach more akin to a multicultural perspective where striving to value differences that exist and thinking about gender as a property of groups rather than individuals. A third assumption is that it is profitable to assess manifestations and consequences of sexism at an individual level perhaps because these contribute to organizational, institutional, and cultural manifestations and consequences of sexism. Different research might emerge if one did not assume this connection existed. The research reviewed here has proven the value of taking these assumptions. Yet more might be gained if one thought about the implications of such assumptions and considered alternatives to them.

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