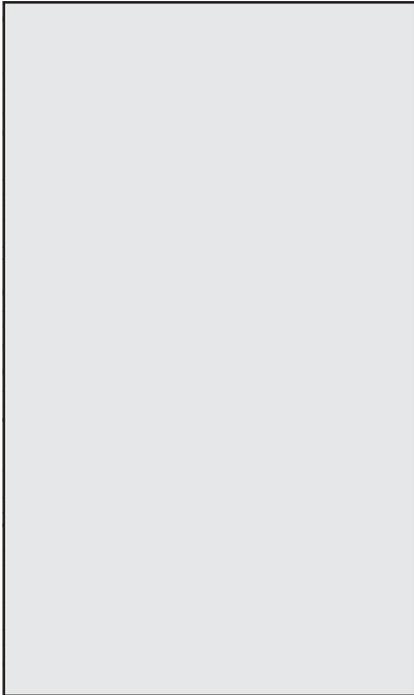


# Comment



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## Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Where's the Ambivalence?

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Glick and Fiske (February 2001), a distinguished pair of scholars, introduced an intriguing perspective of how benevolent sexism may play a potent role in the inequality between the genders, as does hostile sexism. They also provided an overview of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2000), which is a central measure supporting the findings relevant to their arguments. In an impressive undertaking, Glick and Fiske (2001) reported means from 19 different countries represented by over 15,000 participants across the two main scales of the ASI: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. They provided compelling arguments about the important impli-

cations of these findings for how researchers conceptualize and study both obvious and "kinder/gentler" forms of prejudice. They also cleverly used earlier findings, such as those of Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, and Zhu (1997), to explain how the dissonance generated from endorsements of both hostile and benevolent sexism can be reconciled.

Glick and Fiske (2001) discussed the prevalence of hostile and benevolent sexism and used the ASI results as a basis for describing the prevalence of these types of sexism. However, a close examination of both hostile and benevolent sexism scale means across the 19 countries, as well as the rating scale that participants used for completing the ASI, does not suggest that much ambivalence existed among the samples examined by the experimenters.

In the ASI, 11 items compose the hostile sexism scale, and 11 separate items compose the benevolent sexism scale. A 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*) is used to complete each of the 22 items. Raw scores for both scales are added and divided by 11. Thus, potential scale scores range from 0 to 5 for both scales.

On average, men from 6 of the 19 countries and women from only 1 country endorsed hostile sexism above 3.0 (*agree slightly*). Likewise, on average, men from only 5 of the 19 countries and women from 5 countries endorsed benevolent sexism above 3.0. Further, using the means displayed in Glick and Fiske's (2001) Figures 2 and 3, approximate descriptive data were computed for hostile sexism ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = 0.49$  for men;  $M = 2.04$ ,  $SD = 0.42$  for women) and benevolent sexism ( $M = 2.56$ ,  $SD = 0.62$  for men;  $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 0.46$  for women). For hostile sexism, these descriptives are slightly greater for men and much greater for women when comparing them with Glick and Fiske's (1996) descriptive results for a smaller sample. For benevolent sexism, the general results of Glick and Fiske's (2001) research are moderately reduced for men and women compared with the data reported by Glick and Fiske (1996). Assuming that the Likert-type scale can be used as a continuum of agreement or endorsement of both hostile and benevolent sexism, their 2001 results suggest that both

men and women, on average, "disagreed slightly" to "agreed slightly" with both constructs. Ambivalence, or *cognitive dissonance* as Festinger (1957) first described it, would seem to exist only if two separate cognitions are equally endorsed. Both men and women appear to endorse hostile and benevolent sexism to very minimal degrees. Thus, a discrepancy between the constructs does not appear to exist according to the ASI.

The data examined by Glick and Fiske (2001) were also reported in Glick et al. (2000). However, neither article reported standard deviations of the hostile and benevolent sexism scales by country. Much of the dilemma discussed here may be remedied by an examination of the variance of scale scores. However, if little variance does exist among the scale scores, the dilemma discussed here may also have important implications for the correlational results that are discussed within Glick and Fiske (2001). Given the degree of variance reported by Glick and Fiske (1996), it does not appear that the majority of participants endorsed hostile or benevolent sexism past "slightly disagree." Researchers are cautioned against considering the results discussed by Glick and Fiske (2001) as anything more than preliminary. Although the factor structure of the ASI has been supported, alternative instruments that better reveal benevolent prejudices are warranted before researchers can appropriately examine the intriguing ideas discussed by Glick and Fiske (2001).

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