

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN REJECTING
TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES INFLUENCE
PERCEPTIONS OF SEXIST ENVIRONMENTS AND
SELF-CONCEPT

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Three studies were conducted to investigate how different individual difference measures of gender role beliefs predicted attributions to discrimination and self-concept. I began by conducting a factor analysis of a variety of scales measuring different types of gender role attitudes and found three primary factors: gender consciousness, rejection of traditional gender roles, and desire to act to improve women's status. In Study 1 I created a measure of each of these factors and conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to ensure that these were in fact three distinct concepts. In Study 2 I assessed the influence of individual differences as assessed by these factors on reactions to an ambiguously discriminatory environment. Results show that rejection of traditional gender roles was the best predictor of perceiving a sexist environment as offensive and that these perceptions predicted a decrease in self-concept for those with less traditional attitudes, but predicted a slight, but non-significant increase in self-concept for those with more traditional attitudes.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN REJECTING TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES
INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS OF SEXIST ENVIRONMENTS AND SELF-
CONCEPT

by

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Individual Differences in Rejecting Traditional Gender Roles
Influence Perceptions of Sexist Environments and Self-Concept

There are both costs as well as potential benefits to perceiving that one has been the victim of discrimination, and which occurs depends upon both initial perceptions of the events, as well as resulting attributions (e.g. Stangor, Swim, Sechrist, Van Allen, & Ottenbreit, in press, Major, Quinton, & McCoy, in press a, Crocker & Major, 1989). For example, those reporting frequent exposure to discrimination also report more depression, lower life satisfaction and happiness, and poorer psychological health (see Stangor et al., in press for a review). In terms of benefits, making attributions to discrimination (rather than to failure on a task, for instance) can allow the individual to maintain positive self-esteem in the face of negative outcomes (Major et al., in press a). One goal of the present research is to determine under what conditions and for which people the costs and benefits of perceiving discrimination may accrue.

Stangor et al. (in press) considered this issue in their “ask-answer-announce” model of perceiving discrimination. According to this approach, the individual must first become suspicious that a discriminatory event has occurred. Suspicion may be the result of cues in a given situation, chronic individual differences in likelihood of perceiving discrimination, or a combination of these two factors. Once one initially notices the potential for discrimination, she may then engage in further processing of the event, looking for cues to confirm or disconfirm her initial suspicion. However this will only occur when the individual has sufficient motivation and capacity to do

so. In this attributional “answer” stage, individuals may seek out new information to help them determine whether their initial characterization was correct.

In the third “announcing” stage, assuming that the individual has decided that the event is indeed an instance of discrimination, the individual must decide whether or not to publicly report the discrimination. Stigmatized individuals may be aware of the many potential costs of publicly reporting discrimination, and that these frequently outweigh the benefits. For example, Kaiser and Miller (2001) found that individuals who make attributions to discrimination are seen as complainers. Both individual differences and situational constraints can affect how and when members of stigmatized groups publicly report discrimination. For instance, Stangor, Swim, Sechrist, and Van Allen (2002) found that women were more likely to report that they had experienced sexism in private or in the presence of another female participant than they were to report this in the presence of a male participant.

The present research focuses on the initial perception and the subsequent attribution stage of the model. The goal is to determine how and when women perceive subtle forms of discrimination, which individual differences influence these perceptions, and how these perceptions then influence the self-concept. Individuals may vary in terms of their likelihood of initially perceiving discrimination. In one relevant study, Operario and Fiske (2001) had minority participants, preselected as high and low ethnically identified, interact with a White, female confederate, who after a brief, awkward interaction, left the room and did not return. Prior to the interaction, participants read that the confederate either did (high ambiguity) or did not (low ambiguity) like diversity. Operario and Fiske (2001) found that individuals who

were more identified with their ethnic group made more attributions to prejudice and rated the confederate as significantly more discriminatory than did those low on ethnic identity.

Stangor, Sechrist, and Swim (1999) had women who were preselected as high, medium, and low on a sensitivity to sexism measure come to the lab and read newspaper headlines. These headlines encompassed four different categories, including one on gender discrimination. Participants then estimated how many of each category of headlines they had seen. Women with high gender sensitivity estimated that they had seen significantly more articles related to sexism than did those medium or low on sensitivity to sexism. The high sensitivity group also estimated that they had seen significantly more sexism headlines than headlines from any other category, and they estimated that they had seen more sexism headlines than they actually had seen.

The results of these studies confirm that individual differences in the initial perception of discrimination do exist. But what are the potential costs and benefits of this perception on the self-concept? One possibility is that individuals who perceive discrimination will internalize the negative effects elicited by it. For instance, Crocker, Cornwell, and Major (1993) told overweight women that a male had rejected them for a date. As a result, these women made attributions to prejudice against their weight as the cause of their rejection, and subsequently showed lower self-esteem than did normal weight participants.

Similarly, Dion and Earn (1975) had Jewish men participate in a nonverbal interaction with three other participants whom they never met. These other

participants (who did not really exist) were either all Christians (prejudice condition) or individuals with unknown religious/ethnic affiliation. The Jewish participants completed a task of giving pluses or minuses to opponents, with the goal of getting as many pluses as possible. All were told that they had failed the task in comparison to their opponents. Dion and Earn (1975) found that in the prejudice condition, those who made attributions to prejudice reported more negative affect and greater stress. Similarly, a large number of correlational studies have found that people, particularly minority group members, who report more experience with discrimination, also report having lower life satisfaction, and poorer physical and mental health (see Stangor et al., in press, and Major et al., in press a, for reviews).

However, it is also possible that making attributions to discrimination may buffer the impact of negative events that occur to the self, if those negative events can clearly be attributed as being the result of discrimination. For instance, African Americans have been found able to maintain positive self-esteem in the face of explicit negative feedback if they are able to attribute their failures to discrimination (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991). In this experiment, African Americans received negative feedback from a White evaluator who either could, or could not, see them. Those who could be seen made more (though not significantly) attributions to discrimination and their self-esteem was buffered. In contrast, those who could not be seen showed a significant decrease in self-esteem. Williams, Spencer, & Jackson, (1999) found in a correlational study that African Americans with low levels of racial self-concept, who had experienced discrimination, reported having poorer overall health. However, this association decreased as racial self-concept increased.

Similarly, for those with low levels of racial/ethnic identity, discrimination was positively related to chronic health problems. However, this relationship also decreased as racial/ethnic identity increased. In this case, as in the previous study, racial identification seems to be a buffer against the adverse effects of discrimination.

In a study assessing both the perception of discrimination and its outcome on the self-concept, Major, Quinton, and Schmader (in press b) had female participants perform a creativity task to determine who would be the leader of their team for a second task. The leader was eligible to win a prize of \$100. While the experimenter was out of the room having the tasks evaluated, a female confederate told the participants either that she hoped the experiment did not last long (no prejudice condition), that she had heard that the evaluator graded men and women differently (ambiguous prejudice condition), or that she had heard that the evaluator is prejudiced and never chooses a woman to be the leader (overt prejudice condition). All participants were then told that they scored below average on the creativity task and that they were not chosen as the leader.

As in Operario and Fiske (2001), Major et al. found that women who were more highly identified with their gender were more likely to make attributions to discrimination in the ambiguous condition than were those lower on gender identification. In contrast, the high and low gender identified did not differ on attributions to prejudice in the overt condition. Major et al. (in press b) also investigated the self-esteem outcomes of perceiving that events were due to discrimination. Self-esteem was significantly higher in the overt than in the ambiguous or no prejudice conditions, consistent with the idea that perceiving events

as discriminatory serves to buffer self-esteem from negative feedback. However, Major et al. did not find that individual differences in gender identification influenced women's self-esteem.

Although Major et al. (in press b) did not find this gender identification effect, it is possible that other gender orientation measures may predict differences in self-esteem in ambiguous situations. A wide variety of gender oriented measures have been created, and I attempted in the present research to summarize these measures and study their role in perceptions of discrimination and self-esteem. Also, Major et al. (in press b) focused on prejudice that one does not encounter regularly; participants were explicitly told that the judge rated men and women differently. However, most situations encountered daily do not contain such explicit information. I investigated a situation in which women faced a more realistic, everyday, type of discrimination.

In a pilot study I collected a large array of scales measuring different forms of gender identity, including rejection of traditional gender roles, gender consciousness, collective self-esteem, and a desire to act to improve gender roles. I then conducted a factor analysis of these measures. In Study 1 I created scales to assess each of the three factors that had I found in the pilot study, distributed these to women, and conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to determine that these were, in fact, three different factors. In Study 2 I then used these measures to pre-select women who were high and low on each of the measures to participate in a laboratory session. In this session half of the participants were exposed to an ambiguously sexist environment, where they completed ratings of perceptions of both the environment and the experimenter, as well as measures of implicit and explicit self-esteem, and body

image. Furthermore, half of the participants were primed with a sexist cue whereas the other half were not in order to make discrimination a more salient and potentially plausible explanation for the environment.

PILOT STUDY

The goal of the pilot study was to begin to examine how the wide variety of measures currently used to assess gender perceptions might be inter-related. Gender-oriented measures were administered to a sample of 190 women who completed these measures in lab sessions in exchange for \$5 or for extra credit in a class. Participants were recruited in their psychology classes and from fliers hung in the psychology building. Female participants completed the following measures: Gender Role Journey Measure (O'Neil, Egan, Owen, & Murry, 1993); the Stigma Consciousness Scale (Pinel, 1999); the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996); the Modern and Old-Fashioned Sexism Scale (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995); items from Operario and Fiske (2001) measuring perceptions of gender discrimination for both the self and for one's whole gender; the Feminist Identity Development Scale (Bargad & Hyde, 1991); Collective Self-esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992); the shortened version of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973); seven items assessing feminist consciousness found in Henderson-King and Stewart (1994); six items found in Foster (2000) assessing gender consciousness through the subscales common fate, collective action, and helplessness behavior; and six items found in Duncan (1999), measuring feminist consciousness through the subscales power discontent, system blame, and collective orientation. Altogether 33 subscales were analyzed.

I conducted an exploratory factor analysis of these subscales using a principle components extraction and an oblique rotation. This analysis produced seven factors, of which the first three accounted for 50% of the variance. These three factors were

Gender consciousness, Traditional gender roles, and Desire to act to improve women's status (see Appendix 1). The other four factors had only a few subscales loading on each, and thus I felt none were accounting for enough variance to include in further analysis.

STUDY 1

Because the pilot study used only an exploratory factor analysis, Study 1 was designed to verify, via confirmatory factor analysis, that these measures represented three distinct factors.

Method

Participants

Participants were 361 female University of Maryland students in an introductory psychology class who participated in exchange for credit in their class. The ethnic breakdown of the sample was: 65% Caucasian, 14% African or African American, 4% Hispanic, 12% Asian or Asian American, and 5% other.

Procedure

Based on the results of the pilot study, I selected items from each of the subscales that had loaded on the three factors -- gender consciousness, rejection of traditional gender roles, and a desire to act to improve women's status. The gender consciousness factor included 18 items, rejection of traditional gender roles included 22 items, and the desire to act to improve women's status factor included 23 items (see Appendix 1). I distributed these measures to female introductory psychology students during a mass testing session held at the beginning of the fall semester.

Results and Discussion

I began by conducting an exploratory factor analysis of all the items from each measure. I identified 26 items that did not load well on the expected factor, which I then deleted. Eleven items were dropped from the rejection to traditional gender roles

measure, six items were dropped from the gender consciousness measure, and eight items were dropped from the desire to act measure.

Using the remaining items, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (Amos 4.01, 1999) to determine whether the three hypothesized factors adequately summarized the measures. A single factor model did not well fit the data, $\chi^2(665) = 2309.60$, CFI = .65, RMSEA = .08. A two factor model fit significantly better, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 501.58$, $p < .01$, but the fit was still not adequate, $\chi^2(664) = 1898.02$, CFI = .75, RMSEA = .07. The three factor model fit significantly better than the two factor model, $\chi^2(662) = 1577.73$, CFI = .81, and RMSEA = .06, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 320.29$, $p < .01$. The correlation between factor 1 and factor two was significant, $r(361) = .21$, $p < .05$, but the correlation between factors 1 and 3 was not, $r(361) = .10$, $p > .05$. The correlation between factors 2 and 3 was also significant, $r(361) = .74$, $p < .05$.

Although the three factor model fit best, its fit was not ideal. One reason for this is that the error terms were constrained to be uncorrelated. This may be unrealistic because responses to different items may be influenced in similar ways. Therefore, on the basis of Wald modification indices, I identified a small number of error correlations to free in the model. By allowing 4 error correlations for the first measure $\chi^2(40) = 60.39$, $p = .02$, CFI = .96, and RMSEA = .04. By allowing 5 error correlations for the second measure, $\chi^2(49) = 122.72$, $p < .01$, CFI = .95, and RMSEA = .07. For the last measure, $\chi^2(84) = 188.45$, $p < .01$, CFI = .95, and RMSEA = .06. For the full 3 factor model, with these errors correlated, $\chi^2(647) = 1160.35$, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .05.

Because CFI for all these measures, except the full three factor model with errors correlated, exceeded .95 and the RMSEA measures were smaller than .06 for all but the second measure, I concluded that my three measures are indeed valid. Reliabilities for each factor were, $\alpha = .73$ for the traditional gender roles measures, $\alpha = .86$ for the gender consciousness measures, and $\alpha = .89$ for the desire to act measure. Therefore, I concluded that the confirmatory factor analysis revealed three separate and valid scales. The final version of this measure and each item's loadings are shown in Appendix 1.

STUDY 2

Having determined that three potential individual difference variables exist that might relate to how women perceive sexism, I designed Study 2 to assess how these variables might influence perceptions, attributions, and self-regard. Major et al. (in press b) found that perceiving discrimination buffered women's self-esteem from the effects of negative feedback in a situation in which overt cues to discrimination were present (the confederate had specifically indicated that the judges might discriminate). However Major et al. (in press a) hypothesized that the discounting of negative events would be less likely to occur when overt cues to prejudice are not present. In these cases interpreting a situation as sexist might lead to more negative self-regard.

The goal of Study 2 was to examine a form of discrimination that does not come with any explicit discrimination cues. I chose a situation that women may face daily – the presence of sexist images. Such events are common occurrences for women. For instance in a daily diary study by Swim, Hyers, Cohen, and Ferguson (2001), women reported experiencing about one event that denoted sexism each week, and the more sexist incidents they reported, the lower their state self-esteem. I chose to create a potentially sexist environment using a room in which magazine cutouts of women in revealing clothing (such as two-piece swimsuits) were posted on the walls (the swimsuit room). I measured women's interpretation of the room as well as the effects of the room on both body image and self-esteem.

Images of thin attractive women may lead women to *self-objectify* (see Frederickson et al., 1998). Self-objectification occurs when women think about and value their bodies from an outside perspective. This tendency can, over time, cause

women to become preoccupied with their physical appearance. Self-objectification has been related to eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression. I therefore included a measure of body image to assess self-objectification as well.

In addition to body image and explicit self-esteem, measured using the Rosenberg (1965) scale, I also examined the effects of discrimination on implicit self-esteem. Bosson, Swann, and Pennebaker (2000) defined implicit self-esteem as the “automatic, overlearned, and nonconscious evaluation of the self that guides spontaneous reactions to self-relevant stimuli” (p. 631). It is possible that implicit self-esteem will be affected by a discriminatory situation differently than will explicit self-esteem. Bosson et al. (2000) posit that measures of implicit self-esteem, such as the Implicit Association Test (IAT), are independent of explicit self-esteem. Bosson et al. (2000) reported the correlation between the IAT and the Rosenberg scale to be nonsignificant, $r(84) = .22, p < .10$.

I predict that, in a situation in which the cues to prejudice are very subtle, the presence of discrimination (in this case a sexist environment) would not buffer self-esteem and body image, but would rather lead to more negative self-related outcomes. Thus women with more feminist views, as defined by the three factors, because they are more sensitive to the occurrence of gender discrimination, should find the swimsuit room more offensive than the less feminist/more traditional women, and should subsequently show lower self-esteem and body image. To test the role of cues more directly, I also manipulated the presence of cues to discrimination in the experiment. Before entering the swimsuit room, half of the women read a paragraph concerning the presence of sexism, whereas the other half read a neutral paragraph. I

predicted that priming cues to discrimination would not influence the interpretations made by women who were already concerned about sexism, as they should already be more likely to interpret the room negatively. However, cues to discrimination should make less feminist women more likely to make attributions to sexism, as the cues make discrimination more salient and plausible in their minds.

Method

Participants

Eighty-two female undergraduates at the University of Maryland participated in exchange for credit in an introductory psychology class. Participants included 15% African American; 67% Caucasian; 10% Asian American; and 8% Latin, Arab, and other. Participants were pre-selected based on their scores on the three different measures of feminism found in Study 1. Participants who scored either high or low on any of the three measures were solicited to participate. These measures had been given at a mass testing session in participants' introductory psychology classes early in the semester.

Procedures

Participants arrived at the lab in pairs and were greeted by a male experimenter. They were shown into a lab room where they first read either a paragraph designed to prime discrimination against women or a control paragraph. In the prime paragraph about discrimination against women in the workplace, participants read that women continue to make money less than men, that men continue to fill higher level and paying jobs, that women are not promoted as often as men, and that women are more likely to live in poverty than are men. In the control

paragraph about work ethic, participants read how Americans are now devaluing hard work, discipline, and commitment, and that these qualities are important for our future.

All women then completed a brief questionnaire asking them to rate how well the paragraph was written (e.g. “this article has good use of grammar,” “this article is well written”). The experimenter then showed one participant into the swimsuit room, which contained pictures of women in revealing clothing on the walls, as well as a screensaver of women in swimsuits. The other participant remained in the original lab room. In their respective rooms, participants completed an implicit measure of self-esteem using the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald & Farnham, 2000); the Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem scale, an explicit measure of self-esteem; a measure of body image; and some demographic information.

Participants were then asked to rate the experimenter and the room where they had completed the measures. The experimenter handed each participant an envelope with these ratings sheets, explaining that the university was conducting a survey about research at the university. He told them that when they had completed the rating measures, they were to seal them in the envelope and to place the envelope in a box with a slit cut in its top which was sitting on a table in their respective rooms. He explained to them that their answers would remain anonymous and that he would never see their responses. After participants had completed these measures, they were debriefed and dismissed.

Measures

The Implicit Association Test (Greenwald & Farnham, 2000) is a reaction time measure that was completed on one of two IBM compatible Pentium 2 computers. Participants were to press a left or right key (d or k) to categorize each of a series of words shown on the screen. During two practice rounds, the word was categorized as relating to either “self” or “other,” or as being “good” or “bad.” Each trial included 20 words, 10 self or good and 10 other or bad, which were randomly shown to the participant. Self words included *me, myself, mine*, the participant’s first and last name, and her student identification number. Other words included *other, them, their, they*, another student’s first and last name, and another student’s student identification number. Examples of good words include *joy, smile, and pleasant*; examples of bad words include *pain, death, and tragedy*. After the practice trials, participants had to categorize items into combined categories. On the *match* trials, self was paired with good items and other with bad items. On the *mismatch* trials, self was paired with bad items and other with good items. The order of appearance of match and mismatch trials was randomized. The computer recorded in milliseconds the length of time taken to press the button matching each word.

The Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem scale is a ten item Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree). Body image was measured using an eight item scale (see Appendix D), and participants again responded using a four point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 4 = strongly agree). Ratings of the experimenter and the room were completed on a seven point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). Participants rated the experimenter on six traits -- knowledgeable, friendly, likeable, well informed, competent, and pleasant. The more one liked the

experimenter, the higher her score should be on this measure. Participants also rated the room on a variety of characteristics. Of particular interest, were *distracting*, *offensive*, and *unusual*, which were the only traits that I analyzed; however, other traits were also included in order to distract from the true purpose of the measure. This measure was scored such that the higher the score, the less offensive one found the room.

Results

I assessed reliabilities for all measures, except the IAT, using coefficient alpha. For the Rosenberg scale; $\alpha = .88$, for the body image measure, $\alpha = .90$; for the ratings of the experimenter, $\alpha = .91$; and for the ratings of the room, $\alpha = .69$. I then computed the scores on the IAT measure. First, I computed the mean reaction times in milliseconds of both the match and mismatch trials, and then subtracted the match mean from the mismatch mean to create a difference score. Higher difference scores indicate higher implicit self-esteem. I also calculated the number of errors made on the IAT by counting the number times each participant matched a word into the wrong category by pressing the wrong button.

To examine my data, I first assessed the correlations among the three individual difference measures, separated by room condition. These results are shown in Table 1. As would be expected from the findings of Study 1, the traditional gender role factor was not correlated with either the gender consciousness factor or the desire to act factor in either room. However, the gender consciousness and desire to act factors correlated significantly in both rooms. Because only the rejection of traditional

gender roles factor yielded significant results in the following analysis, I will focus my discussion on this measure.

I then examined the correlations among the other measured variables (again, see Table 1). As expected, implicit self-esteem (the IAT) did not correlate significantly with explicit self-esteem (the Rosenberg scale) in either room. These correlations replicate prior results demonstrating that implicit and explicit self-esteem represent different constructs. Furthermore, and also as expected, the correlations between body image and explicit self-esteem were significant in both rooms.

Rosenberg scores correlated marginally with ratings of the room in the swimsuit room, but not in the control room. The more offensive women found the swimsuit room, the lower their self-esteem. This provides at least some evidence for my hypothesis that perceiving discrimination predicts lowered self-esteem. The correlation between Rosenberg scores and experimenter ratings was not significant in the swimsuit room and was positive and significant in the control room. This may be because the swimsuit room produced more variability in judgments among the participants.

Initial analyses found no effects of the cue manipulation, thus I collapsed across these conditions. Reading about discrimination before experiencing the swimsuit room did not increase or decrease self-esteem (implicit or explicit), body image, or perceptions of the room or experimenter.

To study the effects of rejecting traditional gender roles and room condition, I divided women into traditional and nontraditional groups on the basis of a median split of the traditional gender role measure. I ran a series of 2 (gender traditionalism: high

vs. low) x 2 (room: swimsuit vs. control) ANOVAs on the dependent measures (for means, see Table 2). As expected, I found a significant main effect of room on ratings of the room, $F(1, 78) = 35.83, p < .01$. Women who completed their measures in the swimsuit room found the room more offensive and distracting than did women who completed their measures in the control room. I also found an interaction between room and gender traditionalism on Rosenberg scores, $F(1, 78) = 5.15, p < .03$. As I had anticipated, women who rejected traditional gender roles and who completed the measures in the swimsuit room tended to show lower self-esteem than did the more traditional women in the swimsuit room. Somewhat surprisingly, in the control room, less traditional women showed self-esteem slightly higher than the more traditional women.

I found a significant traditionalism by room interaction on ratings of the experimenter, $F(1, 78) = 9.20, p < .01$. As predicted, less traditional women in the swimsuit room tended to rate the experimenter less positively than did the women who endorsed traditional gender roles in the swimsuit room. In the control room, the less traditional women tended to rate the experimenter more positively than did the more traditional women. These findings support my hypothesis that women who rejected traditional gender roles would rate the experimenter more negatively in the swimsuit room than would women who adhered more to traditional gender roles. I also found an unexpected main effect of IAT on room, $F(1, 78) = 9.04, p < .01$, such that women in the swimsuit room had significantly higher implicit self-esteem than did those in the control room. I also found a main effect of rejecting traditional gender roles on IAT, $F(1, 78) = 4.87, p = .03$. Less traditional women had significantly lower self-esteem

than did the more traditional women. For match and mismatch trial means, see Table 6.

In terms of errors on the IAT, more traditional women made significantly more errors than did less traditional women, $F(1, 78) = 9.88, p < .01$, and women in the swimsuit room made significantly more errors than did those in the control room, $F(1, 78) = 4.83, p = .03$. Further, the interaction between rejecting traditional gender roles and room on errors was significant, $F(1, 78) = 5.32, p < .03$ (for means, see Table 5). Women who endorsed traditional gender roles in the swimsuit room also had a tendency to make more errors in comparison to the other three conditions. Also, as would be expected, all women made significantly more errors on the mismatch trials ($M = 1.33$) than they did on the match trials ($M = .34$), $t = 5.68, p < .01$.

To test the hypothesis that self-concept would be mediated by ratings of the room, I conducted a series of multiple regression analyses, treating traditionalism as a continuous variable. These analyses were conducted separately for the swimsuit and the control rooms. In the swimsuit room, as expected, I found a significant main effect of rejection of traditional gender roles on Rosenberg scores, $\beta = -1.41, t = -3.52, p < .01$, as well as a significant main effect of room ratings on Rosenberg scores, $\beta = -2.54, t = -3.18, p < .01$ (see Table 4). The interaction between rejection of gender roles and room ratings on Rosenberg scores was also significant, $\beta = 2.99, t = 3.59, p < .01$. To view these correlations better, I divided the women into high and low traditional gender role categories at the median, and correlated room rating with Rosenberg scores separately for each group (see Table 3). Women who rejected traditional gender roles had a significant, positive correlation between Rosenberg

scores and room ratings ($r = .71$) whereas this correlation was nonsignificant and negative for the women who endorsed traditional gender roles ($r = -.33$).

Also as predicted, in the swimsuit room, rejecting traditional gender roles was a significant predictor of body image, $\beta = -1.05$, $t = -2.34$, $p < .03$. Ratings of the room also predicted body image in the swimsuit room, $\beta = -1.59$, $t = -1.78$, $p = .08$, and the interaction between gender role endorsement and ratings of the room predicted body image, $\beta = 1.74$, $t = 1.88$, $p < .07$. In the swimsuit room the correlation between room ratings and body image for women who rejected traditional gender roles was positive ($r = .35$) although not significant, but for the women who accepted traditional gender roles it was negative, although again not significant ($r = -.23$). In the control room, I found no significant effects of rejecting traditional gender roles, room ratings, or experimenter ratings on any of the three dependent measures. Taken together these results are consistent with my expectation that in the swimsuit room, for women who reject traditional gender roles, finding the room more offensive predicts lowered levels of self-regard.

Discussion of Study 2

Results show support for many of my hypotheses. Participants in the swimsuit room rated the room as more offensive and distracting in comparison to those in the control room. Furthermore, the less traditional women in the swimsuit room showed a tendency to rate the experimenter more negatively than did the more traditional women in the swimsuit room.

Those rejecting traditional gender roles who were in the swimsuit room also showed a tendency toward lower explicit self-esteem than did those endorsing

traditional gender roles in the swimsuit room, again supporting my hypothesis that women who reject traditional gender roles would show a decrease in self-esteem resulting from interpreting the room as representing discrimination against women. Also, for women who rejected traditional gender roles, room ratings positively predicted Rosenberg scores in the swimsuit room, showing that the more offensive these women found the room, the lower their self-esteem. In contrast, for women who accepted traditional gender roles, this correlation reversed, such that finding the room offensive was negatively correlated with self-esteem. The body image measure showed results similar to those observed on the Rosenberg scale.

The findings on the IAT measure are puzzling. Women who accepted traditional gender roles and who were tested in the swimsuit room showed higher (though not significantly) implicit self-esteem than women in the other conditions. However, the women in this condition also had more errors on the IAT measure than did the women in the other conditions. It is possible that the more traditional women, although not reporting it, nevertheless did find the room distracting, which made performance on the mismatch trials significantly more challenging than the match trials (see Table 5 for means). Perhaps the less traditional women, in contrast, did not show the same effect because they realized the distraction caused by the room, but chose to focus on the task and block out the room while working on the task.

It is also possible that more traditional women did not try as hard on the IAT as did more traditional women. Possibly, these women did not perceive the room as illegitimate or offensive, and as a result, behaved in a more stereotypical manner. Because women are stereotyped as being less computer knowledgeable, they may

have assumed that they would not do well on the computer task, and as a result, made more errors and took longer to do the more difficult mismatch trials. In fact, a few women did tell the experimenter before beginning the task that they were not “good” with computers and that because of that they may have questions. Alternatively, more traditional women may have made some errors and slowed down on the mismatch trial as a result of these errors.

Because women who reject traditional gender roles are more prone to perceive discrimination in everyday situations, they may be more accustomed to blocking out its presence temporarily, allowing them to focus more fully on the task at hand. Since they are more rehearsed at doing so, it comes more naturally and without much effort. This might explain why these women in the swimsuit room did not appear distracted as did the more traditional women.

These results show that overall, when faced with a situation containing few to no cues to discrimination, women who are less accepting of traditional gender roles are more likely to make attributions to discrimination. In my case, women perceived the swimsuit, or objectifying, room as offensive, distracting, and unusual. These results also show that less traditional women, in conjunction with making more attributions to discrimination, show decrements to their self-concept. These findings coincide with Major et al.’s (in press b) and Crocker et al.’s (1991) findings that in ambiguous situations, in which there are no overt cues to prejudice, individuals who are more identified with their stigmatized group show lowered self-esteem as a result of perceiving discrimination.

My manipulation of gender discrimination cues did not influence the dependent variables. One possible explanation for this is that the discrimination cue described status differences between men and women, particularly in work environments. The actual discrimination manipulation, however, involved objectification of women's bodies. It is possible that these two forms of discrimination are not perceived as representing the same construct, and that the cue did not make the underlying associations accessible that were necessary to lead women to perceive the swimsuit room as discriminatory.

Although not predicted, I found that women who were more adherent to traditional gender roles tended to show negative correlations between perceptions of the room and self-concept. These women may have been able to protect their self-concepts by not attributing the swimsuit room to discrimination. Potentially, these women saw the room as legitimate and acceptable. The swimsuit room should only cause negative outcomes when women feel that the images are offensive. If this opinion is not held by the participant, she would not be affected by the room, except possibly to be more distracted.

Also, if women perceive objectifying images, such as those in the swimsuit room, as acceptable, they may have disengaged from noticing the room involuntarily (Major et al., in press a). By screening out the images at the preattentive level -- avoiding awareness of the images altogether -- women are able to protect their self-concepts from any potentially negative outcomes. In fact, a few participants did come out of the swimsuit room and comment to the experimenter that they had not even noticed the pictures on the wall until asked to evaluate the room. In contrast,

intentionally forcing one's self to ignore the discrimination already noticed could be maladaptive because denying the existence of something one knows is present can lead to increased stress. This increased stress might then lead to lower well-being.

General Discussion

The present research has investigated individual differences in perceiving discrimination and the effects of those perceptions on self-concept. The pilot study and Study 1 investigated the factor structure of measures of these individual differences, whereas Study 2 examined how these measures affect one's perceptions of discrimination and how those perceptions affect the self-concept. We see from the Pilot Study and Study 1 that rejection of traditional gender roles, gender consciousness, and desiring to act to improve women's status do not simply represent a single construct of gender orientation, but are in fact three separate constructs. Then in Study 2 I showed that rejection of traditional gender roles predicted perceiving discrimination in an objectifying environment, which then predicted a decreased self-concept. However, neither gender consciousness nor desiring to act predicted either noticing or self-concept.

Rejection to traditional gender roles might have been the most effective predictor for a variety of reasons. Swim, Cohen, and Hyers (1998) found that a factor assessing gender roles and stereotypes was similar to a factor measuring gender harassment (see Fitzgerald and Hensson-McInnis 1989). The gender harassment factor relates to generalized sexist remarks and behavior that is degrading and insulting, but not designed to elicit sexual cooperation. Possibly, rejection of traditional gender roles relates more to perceptions of the acceptance of objectification, while other measures (identity, consciousness, desire to act) are likely to be more predictive in situations containing immediate unjust effects and costs related to discrimination.

One question that has been important in this literature concerns the direction of effects on self-concept. Two possibilities have been proposed -- that the self-concept is either buffered by making attributions to discrimination, or that perceiving discrimination has negative effects on self-concept. Major et al. (in press a) argued that buffering will only occur when the individual is able to blame another for the negative event, and when she feels that the outcome was unjust. Only when both are present will attributions to discrimination buffer self-concept. In my study, the more traditional women did not perceive the room as offensive; therefore they made no attributions to discrimination. The less traditional women, in contrast, saw the room as discriminatory because they felt that it was unjust. However, because they had no immediate target at which to direct the anxiety elicited by these perceptions, they may have been unable to blame another for the injustice they felt. This might have led to decreased feelings of control or to simply perceiving the room as threatening, resulting in a lower sense of well-being.

It is also possible that when cues to prejudice exist, individuals are able to make attributions to discrimination with no fear of rejection from others or of other negative consequences. However, when these cues do not exist, people may feel more ambiguity in their attribution. This ambiguity may lead to greater distress, resulting in lowered self-worth. In my study, it is possible that the discrimination cues were ineffective because they were not semantically similar to the form of discrimination used. The cues related to a working environment, while the form of discrimination used related to objectification and sexual innuendo.

Also, in my second experiment, the less traditional participants may have interpreted the room as discrimination, but when they could not find sufficient cues to confirm their interpretation, such as an overly rude or bigoted appearing experimenter, they felt anxiety over the correctness of their interpretation. They may have also felt that their attribution was correct, but that without overt cues to blame a specific individual, they felt a loss of control over the situation. Because objectification is so commonplace, with no immediate individual or group to blame, the issue appears unchangeable, resulting in increased distress and lowered self-esteem.

Because buffering of self-esteem is moderated by ingroup identity (Branscombe & Ellemers, 1998), it is possible that when cues for discrimination are overt, one's ingroup identity becomes more salient. Often discrimination manipulations involve rejection by a member of a higher status race (Crocker et al. 1991, Operario & Fiske, 2001), or making a comment which includes the participant's group membership (e.g. "like all women...") (Stangor et al., 2002, Major et al., in press b). These kinds of manipulations make one's group identity salient. By increasing the salience of one's ingroup, highly identified individuals make the necessary external attribution to discrimination to buffer their self-esteem. In contrast, cues for discrimination that are more ambiguous, or are nonexistent, may not increase the salience of one's ingroup, even for the highly identified. As a result, even if individuals make attributions to discrimination, they may not also discount personal ability. This would then lead to a decrease in self-esteem.

In my second study, ingroup identity may not have increased to allow for buffering. Possibly, because women completed the experiment alone with only a male

experimenter, women, especially those in the swimsuit room, may have felt isolated from others, including their ingroup. Another reason women may have also felt isolated from their ingroup of other women is that they disidentified with the women in pictures in the swimsuit room. This is particularly likely for less traditional women who might have found the pictures offensive. As a result of disidentification, ingroup identity is not enhanced, as is necessary to buffer self-esteem. Therefore, self-esteem decreases.

Another limitation of this study is that women only rated the swimsuit room as more or less offensive, distracting, and unusual. This does not necessarily mean that they would have labeled it discriminatory. However, the fact that it was seen as offensive should lead to the conclusion that the room is not appropriate in these women's minds. Similarly, the swimsuit room led to lowered self-worth for the less traditional as they found the room more offensive, meaning that it functioned similarly to other ambiguous manipulations of discrimination (e.g. Operario & Fiske, 2001, Major et al., in press b). Also, when women are objectified, they are valued for their bodies, as objects, not as people. They are not valued for their abilities, personality, or intellect, but merely for their appearance. It brings to mind the old cliché "piece of meat." For these reasons, I feel that I can conclude that the room did portray a form of discrimination that women come into contact with regularly.

Future research should also begin to examine variables leading women to legitimize men's objectification of women and the mediator variables leading from legitimizing ideologies to attributions. Do these women really not notice the objectifying material, or do they simply believe that it is acceptable for men to

objectify women? Also, future research should examine the variables mediating the relationship between ambiguous cues to prejudice and decreasing self-esteem. Does attributional ambiguity lead to increased distress? And does this then result in decreased self-esteem? It is possible that if the costs associated with making an attribution to discrimination are removed for ambiguous situations, stigmatized individuals would not show self-esteem decrements as they have in previous research. Many questions remain unanswered.

In sum, the present research has studied the potential costs and benefits of perceiving discrimination, and individual differences that predict these costs and benefits. One might argue that there were costs for the less traditional women in the swimsuit room, in the sense that their self-concept was negatively affected. However, the long-term costs of not perceiving discrimination could also be large. Not perceiving discrimination as it occurs may protect the self-concept in the short term, but it does not help to solve the deeper and more important issues women face. Only when one perceives that a situation is discriminatory can she begin to take steps to change the problems created by discrimination, helping make the lives of all women better. Learning how different forms of discrimination affect different kinds of women will make us better equipped to help women overcome any negative effects caused by prejudice in the future.

Table 1

Intercorrelations Between Each Feminism Factor and the Dependent Measures

	F Trad.	F Consc.	F Act	IAT	Rosenberg	Body	Exp. Rate	Room Rate
Swimsuit Room (41)								
F Trad.	-	.00	-.21	-.20	-.10	-.27 [^]	-.15	-.14
F Consc.		-	.67**	-.07	-.05	-.01	.03	-.10
F Act			-	.08	-.01	.01	.11	-.29 [^]
IAT				-	-.06	.09	-.04	-.27 [^]
Rosenberg					-	.63**	.19	.29 [^]
Body						-	.03	.10
Experimenter Ratings							-	.12
Room Ratings								-
	F Trad.	F Consc.	F Act	IAT	Rosenberg	Body	Exp. Rate	Room Rate
Control Room (41)								
F Trad.	-	.11	.14	-.19	.21	-.23	.39*	.00
F Consc.		-	.79**	.23	.19	.02	.13	-.19
F Act			-	.05	.31*	.06	.22	.06
IAT				-	.01	.16	-.09	-.06
Rosenberg					-	.54**	.47**	.10
Body						-	.05	.13
Experimenter Ratings							-	.11
Room Ratings								-

Note: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$, ^ $p < .10$

Table 2

Means (standard deviations) of Dependent Measures by Traditional Gender Roles and Room Condition

Traditional	Rosenberg	IAT	Body	Room Ratings	Exp Ratings
Swimsuit Room					
Less	2.94 (.57)	382 (213)	2.40 (.58)	4.10 (1.65)	5.85 (.89)
More	3.24 (.49)	513 (241)	2.69 (.64)	4.57 (1.54)	6.33 (.82)
Control Room					
Less	3.30 (.52)	311 (121)	2.67 (.67)	6.00 (.90)	6.17 (.75)
More	3.04 (.61)	360 (219)	2.79 (.75)	6.07 (.72)	5.49 (1.00)

Table 3

Correlations among Ratings of the Experimenter and Room and the Dependent Measures for Participants High and Low on the Traditional Gender Roles Factor

Traditional	Rosenberg/Roomrate	Rosenberg/Exprate
Swimsuit Room (41)		
Less	.71**	.13
More	-.33	.12
Control Room (41)		
Less	.25	.58**
More	-.04	.32
Feminism	Body/Roomrate	Body/Exprate
Swimsuit Room (41)		
Less	.35	.03
More	-.23	-.11
Control Room (41)		
Less	-.02	.18
More	.32	.02
Feminism	IAT/Roomrate	IAT/Exprate
Swimsuit Room (41)		
Less	-.29	-.13
More	-.38^	-.14
Control Room (41)		
Less	-.37^	-.28
More	.20	.08

Note: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$

Table 4

Beta Weights for Rosenberg Scores and Body Image Scores Regressed onto Room Ratings and Feminism in the Swimsuit Room

	Beta	T-Test
Rosenberg Scores		
Traditionalism	-1.41	-3.52
Room Ratings	-2.54	-3.18
Traditionalism by Room Ratings	2.99	3.59
Body Image Scores		
Traditionalism	-1.05	-2.34
Room Ratings	-1.59	-1.78
Traditionalism by Room Ratings	1.75	1.88

Table 5

Means (standard deviations) of Errors on IAT by Room and Feminism (Traditional Gender Role Factor)

Room	Traditional	
	Less	More
Swimsuit	1.05 (1.63)	3.20 (2.42)
Control	1.09 (1.54)	1.42 (1.39)

Table 6

Means (standard deviations) of Match and Mismatch Scores on IAT by Room and Feminism (Traditional Gender Role Factor)

Traditional	Match	Mismatch	Diff
Swimsuit Room			
Less	1033 (249)	1415 (232)	382 (213)
More	1013 (177)	1526 (245)	513 (241)
Control Room			
Less	1068 (183)	1379 (211)	311 (121)
More	1139 (288)	1499 (298)	360 (219)

Appendix A

Factor 1; Rejection to Traditional Gender Roles

Item	Loading
2. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.*	0.684
3. I think that most women will feel most fulfilled by being a wife and a mother.*	0.917
5. If a woman was married and her husband was offered a job in another state, it would be her obligation to move in support of his career.*	0.857
8. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.*	0.695
10. Men should make the major money decisions for the family.*	0.896
14. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.*	1.105
17. A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.	0.761
19. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.*	0.601
20. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.*	0.701
21. I would be equally comfortable having a woman as a boss as a man.	0.505
22. When both parents are employed and their child gets sick	0.800

at school, the school should call the mother rather than
the father.*

Deleted Items

1. In a disaster, women should not necessarily be rescued before men.
4. One thing especially nice about being a woman is that men will offer her their seat on a crowded bus or open doors for her because she is a woman.*
6. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for “equality.”*
7. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.*
9. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.*
11. I feel angry that women are discriminated against.
12. Sexism hurts people and it must stop now.
13. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.*
15. Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.
16. It is insulting to women to have the “obey” clause remain in the marriage service.

18. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally

the expense when they go out together.

Note: * reversed scored items

Appendix B

Factor 2; Gender Consciousness

Item	Loading
1. Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination.	0.910
3. In the future, how much do you think you will personally be a target of discrimination because of your gender?	0.970
4. Realizing the kinds of discrimination women face has led me to believe that I too could face discrimination.	1.082
5. The obstacles that women have to face in the work world will ultimately affect me in my career too.	0.901
7. To what extent is your gender a target of discrimination?	1.062
8. I used to think that there isn't a lot of sex discrimination, but now I know how much there really is.	1.026
9. It makes me really upset to think about how women have been treated so unfairly in this society for so long.	0.995
10. Recently, I read something or had an experience that sparked a greater understanding of sexism.	1.037
11. When I see the way most men treat women, it makes me so angry.	0.783
12. It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities.	0.958
14. Do you think that what happens to women generally in	0.734

this country will have something to do with what happens
in your life?

15. Do you think that the movement for women's rights has affected you personally? 0.928
-

Deleted Items

2. Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.*
6. The media's portrayal of the ideal woman as "thin, beautiful, and sexy" has affected my own image of myself (either to achieve that ideal or to ignore it).
13. Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences.*
16. How much influence do you feel each these groups have?

Women

Men

Feminists

Note: * reversed scored items

Appendix C

Factor 3; A Desire to Act to Improve the Status of Women

Item	Loading
1. I want to work to improve women's status.	1.025
2. It is very satisfying to me to be able to use my talents and skills in my work in the women's movement.	1.097
5. Being a part of a women's community is important to me.	1.050
7. Especially now, I feel that the other women around me give me strength.	0.745
8. I use my knowledge about sexism to make a difference in my life.	1.238
9. I reflect on my feelings about gender role conflict and then act on them.	1.261
10. I feel inner strength and power because of my gender role freedom.	0.987
11. I am responsible for changing restrictive gender roles.	1.135
12. When I get angry about sexism, I want to fight back.	1.112
14. I am a feminist.	1.271
16. When I express my anger over sexism, I experience more conflict.*	0.796
17. Sexism is not a problem for me.*	0.720
18. I want to do something about sexism, but I am unsure how to.*	0.906

20. Sometimes I'm not sure if what I'm seeing or hearing is sexist.*	0.501
22. Men have more of the top jobs because our society discriminates against women.	0.813

Deleted Items

- 3. I care very deeply about men and women having equal opportunities in all respects.
- 4. I am willing to make certain sacrifices to effect change in this society in order to create a nonsexist, peaceful place where all people have equal opportunities.
- 6. I share most of my social time with a few close women friends who share my feminist values.
- 13. I feel powerless to do anything to prevent sexism.*
- 15. I sometimes feel confused about my role as a man or woman.*
- 19. I feel gender role freedom in my relationships.
- 21. How much power and influence in American society do you think feminists have?
- 23. Men have more of the top jobs because they are born with more drive to be ambitious and successful than women.*

Note: * reversed scored items

Appendix D

Body Image Measure

I am satisfied with my body's physical appearance.

Sometimes I am disgusted with my body.*

I wish I were thinner.*

I am ashamed of my body.*

I am embarrassed when I wear revealing clothing.*

I am an attractive person.

I believe that I need to work out often.*

I think I am fat.*

Note: * reversed scored items

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