AMBIVALENT SEXISM, SCRIPTURAL LITERALISM, AND RELIGIOSITY

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This correlational study explores the hypothesis that religiosity and scriptural literalism (the degree to which one interprets scriptures literally) are associated with sexism. Participants were female and male ($N = 504$) university students who anonymously completed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997, 2001a, 2001b), the Scriptural Literalism Scale (Hogge & Friedman, 1967), and the Religious Orientation Scale–Revised (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). Intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and scriptural literalism were positively associated with benevolent, but not hostile, sexism. Intrinsic religiosity and scriptural literalism were positively related to the protective paternalism subscale, whereas extrinsic religiosity was related to the heterosexual intimacy, complementary gender differentiation, and protective paternalism subscales.

Women's studies scholars and feminist theologians have long suggested that religion shapes gender ideologies (Daly, 1974; Ruether, 1974, 2002; Sered, 1994). A number of studies have found that traditional gender role attitudes are associated with conservative religious beliefs and religiosity (Brinkerhoff & Mackie, 1985; Hunsberger, Owusu, & Duck, 1999; Jensen & Jensen, 1993; Kirkpatrick, 1993; McFarland, 1989). However, the relationship between religion and sexism is complex. To paraphrase what Allport (1954/1979) said about the influence of religion on prejudice, the relationship between religion and sexism depends on which religion you are talking about and the role it plays in an individual's life. With that in mind, the present study examines the relationship between sexism, scriptural literalism (how literally the scriptures are interpreted by a religion), and religiosity (how religious an individual is).

As Ruether (2002) noted, it is a mistake to think that religiousness is authentically represented only by patriarchal, misogynous religious traditions. There are many variants within all of the world's major religious traditions, and it is the conservative and fundamentalist strains that most vociferously promote traditional roles for women (Anwar, 1999; Armstrong, 2002; Helie-Lucas, 1999). Common features of religious fundamentalism include a belief that society needs to be rescued from secularism, a commitment to the authority of the ancient scriptures, and the idealization of a past where gender spheres were separate and women were modest and subordinate (Anwar, 1999). Although all religious fundamentalisms express great concern and respect for family and child rearing, all are also associated with the patriarchal control of women and their sexuality (Anwar, 1999; Pollit, 2002; Rose, 1999; Ruether, 2002). Traditional religions often justify gender inequality as divinely mandated (Glick, Lameiras, & Castro, 2002). More orthodox and fundamentalist religious strains also commonly use a literal hermeneutic (principle of interpretation) and use religious scriptures to support traditional views of gender roles (Daly, 1985; Gross, 1996). Research confirms the idea that fundamentalism is a stronger predictor than religiosity in discriminatory attitudes toward women (Hunsberger, Owusu, & Duck, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 1993; Mangis, 1995).

Religious traditions may vary in how much they condone traditional gender ideologies, but the influence of a religious tradition on a person's gender beliefs may depend on the role religion plays in an individual's personal life. Allport (1966) posited that prejudiced people are more likely to be driven by comfort and security and external rewards such as social acceptance, friends, and God's protection (an extrinsic religious orientation). An intrinsic religious orientation characterized by a committed, internally motivated religion was thought to be incompatible

with prejudice because it involves internalizing religious teachings of universal acceptance and compassion (Allport, 1966). However, whereas researchers using self-reports consistently found that extrinsic orientations were positively correlated with prejudice, subsequent research using less reactive measures did not (Batson & Stocks, in press). Upon further examination, it appears that whether an extrinsic orientation leads to prejudice depends on the norms of the particular religious group, whereas the influence of intrinsic religious orientations on prejudice depends on which beliefs a person internalizes. For example, extrinsic orientations may reduce prejudice if a person's religion specifically opposes prejudice, and intrinsic religious orientations may increase prejudice if what people internalize from their religion is not universal tolerance and compassion, but rather a belief that they are a member of the "chosen people" (Batson & Stocks, in press). Indeed, it is telling that orthodoxy and fundamentalism tend to be highly correlated with intrinsic religiosity (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993).

Only one reported study has explicitly examined intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and sexism. After controlling for fundamentalism, McFarland (1989) found that social-extrinsic religiosity (a religiosity that reflects the use of religion for social benefits) was positively associated with men's discriminatory attitudes toward women and intrinsic religiosity was negatively associated with prejudice against women. However, for women there were no significant relationships between either type of religiosity and sexism once fundamentalism was controlled.

The Present Study

The correlational study described below examines the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, scriptural literalism, and ambivalent sexism in a predominantly Christian sample.

Ambivalent sexism, assessed with the two subscales of hostile and benevolent sexism, is linked to a variety of attitudes and behaviors indicative of gender inequality (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997; Glick et al., 2000; Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira, & Aguiar de Souza, 2002). Hostile sexism (HS) is "an adversarial view of gender relations in which women are perceived as seeking to control men through sexuality or feminist ideology" (Glick & Fiske, 2001a, p. 109). Benevolent sexism (BS) is a chivalrous ideology that views women as best suited for traditional roles and as pure creatures needing male protection and adoration (Glick & Fiske, 2001a). There are three domains of BS: *protective paternalism* (i.e., men should protect and provide for women), *complementary gender differentiation* (i.e., women are the better sex with regard to female-specific gender roles as they are nurturing, pure, delicate), and *heterosexual intimacy* (i.e., heterosexual romantic relationships are essential for true happiness). Only one reported study has examined the relationship between religion and ambivalent sexism. With a Spanish sample, Glick et al. (2002) found that strong Catholic beliefs were positively related to BS. However, religiosity was measured narrowly (respondents were asked whether they were "nonbelievers," nonpracticing Catholics, practicing Catholics, or adherents of another faith).

Hypotheses

Consistent with past research (Glick & Fiske, 2001a, 2001b), we expected men to score higher on HS and BS than women. We did not expect to find gender differences on the religiosity measures. Further, a positive relationship between BS and scriptural literalism was expected. Scriptural literalism is typical of fundamentalist and conservative religions. Religious texts generally prescribe traditional gender-role divisions and have multiple passages suggestive of protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy. Such passages are likely to influence the gender ideologies of those that read texts literally. For instance, this verse from the King James Version of the Bible is suggestive of protective paternalism, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (Corinthians 11:3; see also Ephesians 5: 22–25 and Colossians 3:18–19). Complementary gender differentiation is suggested by this passage, "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives" (1 Peter 3:1–7; see also Proverbs 31:10–15, 28 and Titus 2:5). Heterosexual intimacy is reflected in this passage, "And Adam said, this is now the bone of my bones, and the flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24; see also Proverbs 5:18–20 and Ecclesiastes 9:9).

Extrapolating from the thinking on religiosity and prejudice to religiosity and sexism, it makes sense that both extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientations could influence sexism. Thus, we expected a positive relationship between both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity and BS. For example, many religious communities promote traditional gender roles, and in such cases extrinsic religiosity would likely be predictive of BS. An intrinsic religious orientation may be consistent with BS if a person reads the scriptures literally and internalizes religious teachings and scriptures suggesting that God intends women and men to occupy traditional gender roles and "designed" them with complementary qualities. No specific predictions were made with regard to the relationship between the two types of religiosity and the BS subscales.

No relationship between HS and religiosity was expected, despite some biblical passages that may be consistent

with HS (e.g., Genesis 3:2–25, 1 Kings 21:25, 1 Peter 3:7, 1 Corinthians 14:35, and 1 Timothy 2:11–15). Like Glick et al. (2002), we agree that religious institutions that are embedded in societies that reject overtly hostile forms of sexism are more likely to emphasize benevolent justifications for traditional gender roles. BS also arouses less resistance from women, especially because it can be viewed as "celebrating" women's special roles in the family and the church (Glick et al., 2000).

METHOD

Participants

Data were collected from 535 participants. Participants that identified Judaism ($n = 15$), Islam ($n = 3$), Buddhism ($n = 9$), or Hinduism ($n = 4$) as their religion were excluded from analysis due to the study's focus on Christianity. The remaining participants were 248 female and 256 male ($N = 504$) general education students from 71 majors at a central California community college and state university. The participants ranged in age from 17 to 45 years old ($M = 19.78$, $SD = 2.52$). Approximately 51.7% were first-year students, 18.3% second-year, 11.4% third-year, 12% fourth-year, and 6.7% fifth-year or greater. Participants were predominately Euroamerican (80%) but approximately 1% of the sample was African American, 6% Asian American, 7% Latin American, .2% Arab, .4% Native American, 2% Pacific Islander, and 4% checked more than one ethnic category. Most identified as Christian (77%); however, 9.4% of the sample was agnostic, 6.7% atheist, and 6.8% reported having no religion. The composition of those identifying themselves as Christian was as follows: Catholic (37.6%), Presbyterian (7%), Baptist (6.1%), Methodist (4.5%), Lutheran (3.7%), Episcopal (2.3%), Church of Christ (2.2%), Evangelical (1.8%), Pentecostal (1.2%), Orthodox (1.2%), Born-Again (1%), Reformed (.8%), Christian Science (.6%), Latter-Day Saints (.6%), Church of God (.6%), Friends (.4%), Amish (.2%), Adventist (.4%), and nondenominational (8%). Because participants could choose the "other" category to specify their Christian denomination, approximately 6% of responses included replies such as "Baptist/Catholic," "Church of Nazarene," and "Assembly of God."

Measures

Sexism. BS and HS were measured with the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), a 22-item self-report measure consisting of two 11-item scales (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997, 2001a, 2001b). The 11 items of the Benevolent Sexism Subscale cover the three domains concerning power differences (paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexuality). The Hostile Sexism Subscale is unidimensional and does not contain subfactors (Glick & Fiske, 2001a, 2001b). BS items include "Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives" (Protective Paternalism), "Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility" (Complementary Gender Differentiation), and "Men are incomplete without women" (Heterosexual Intimacy). Items measuring HS include "Many women get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances" and "Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist." The ASI has undergone extensive psychometric testing and its construct validity and reliability have been demonstrated (Glick & Fiske, 2001a). Participants responded to the items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A mean BS score was then computed (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$) and three subscales created: protective paternalism (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$), complementary gender differentiation (Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$), and heterosexual intimacy (Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$). Likewise, a mean of the HS items was taken to create an HS scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$).

Religiosity. The degree of participants' religiousness was measured with Gorsuch and McPherson's (1989) Religious Orientation Scale–Revised. This 14-item index measures the centrality of religion in the individual's daily life on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Eight items tap intrinsic religious orientation including "My whole approach to life is based on my religion." Six items measure the extrinsic orientation including "I go to church because it helps me to make friends." Hill and Hood (1999) reported that this scale is a reliable and valid measure of religious orientation. Alpha for our sample was .89 for the intrinsic subscale and .77 for the extrinsic subscale.

Scriptural literalism. The extent to which biblical scripture is interpreted literally was measured with an adapted version of Hogge and Friedman's (1967) Scriptural Literalism Scale. This 16-item index measures the degree to which a person believes in a literal interpretation of religious texts versus viewing religious texts as literature on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The Scriptural Literalism Scale has high split-half reliability. Its discriminant and convergent validity have been documented (Hill & Hood, 1999). Some sample items are "The precise words spoken by God may be found in the Scriptures" and, "Most of the writing in the Scriptures should be taken literally." Alpha for the Scriptual Literalism Scale with our sample was .97.

Procedure

Consent forms were given to each potential participant and read aloud by one of the researchers. After collecting the consent forms, the questionnaires were distributed, and instructions were read aloud by a researcher. The instructions emphasized that the questionnaires were anonymous and that participation was voluntary. Participants were instructed to place their completed questionnaire in an envelope at the front of the room and were thanked for their

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for ASI Subscales and Religion Indexes

	ASI Subscales		*BS Subscales*			*Religion Indexes*		
	HS	*BS*	*PAT*	*GD*	*HI*	*LIT*	*REL-I*	*REL-E*
				Women ($n = 256$)				
M	3.42	3.40	3.48	3.37	3.36	4.32	3.96	3.24
SD	1.01	1.09	1.13	1.2	1.32	1.69	1.43	.94
				Men ($n = 248$)				
M	4.12	4.02	4.58	3.29	4.04	4.38	4.13	3.09
SD	1.06	.91	1.12	1.13	1.44	1.69	1.42	1.12

Note. HS = Hostile Sexism, BS = Benevolent Sexism, PAT = Protective Paternalism, GD = Gender Differentiation, HI = Heterosexual Intimacy, LIT = Scriptural Literalism, REL-I = Intrinsic Religiosity, and REL-E = Extrinsic Religiosity.

participation. Study results were made available upon request. All participants were treated in accordance with APA ethical guidelines.

RESULTS

Means and standard deviations for study variables appear in Table 1. To test our first hypothesis that men would score higher on HS and BS than women and that there would be no gender differences on the religiosity measures, several 2 × 2 analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. A 2 (gender) × 2 (HS/BS) repeated measures ANOVA yielded a main effect for gender on HS and BS, $F(1, 502) = 75.55$, $p < .001$. Men scored significantly higher on HS and BS than women. As predicted, we did not find gender differences on the religiosity measures. A 2 (gender) × 2 (intrinsic vs. extrinsic religiosity) repeated measures ANOVA found no gender differences for intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. However a significant main effect for religiosity was found, with both women and men scoring higher on intrinsic religiosity than extrinsic religiosity, $F(1, 471) = 184.71$, $p < .01$. There was also a significant interaction of gender and religiosity, $F(1, 471) = 6.15$, $p < .05$. Whereas both women and men scored higher on intrinsic religiosity than on extrinsic religiosity, the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity scores was greater for men than for women. There were no gender differences for scriptural literalism.

Correlational analyses supported the hypotheses that BS and scriptural literalism would be positively related and that both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity would be positively related to BS. Table 2 shows the partial correlations holding gender and HS constant (the correlation between HS and BS was $r = .45$, $p < .001$). Of the BS subscales, protective paternalism was most consistently associated with the religion variables. It correlated significantly with intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and scriptural literalism. Heterosexual intimacy correlated with extrinsic religiosity and scriptural literalism, although the latter correlation was small (.09). Gender differentiation correlated significantly with extrinsic religiosity only.

As shown in Table 2, the religion variables were highly intercorrelated. To control for the correlations between these variables, a regression analysis with BS as the dependent variable and extrinsic religiosity, scriptural literalism, and intrinsic religiosity as predictor variables was conducted. Due to their high correlations with BS, HS was entered at the first step and gender at the second as control variables. At the third step, the religion variable with the largest r, extrinsic religiosity, was added. These steps were followed by scriptural literalism and finally by intrinsic religiosity. Scriptural literalism was entered prior to intrinsic religiosity because it was suspected that the relationship between intrinsic religiosity and BS was largely due to the relationship between scriptural literalism and intrinsic religiosity. As suggested in the introduction, intrinsic religiosity may be associated with sexism only when religious beliefs are fundamental or orthodox and such religions generally promote a literal reading of scriptures with content reflecting BS.

HS was significantly related to BS at Step 1, $F(1, 400) = 99.64$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{chg} = .20$. The addition of gender as a control variable was significant at Step 2, $F(1, 399) = 14.02$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{chg} = .03$. Extrinsic religiosity was significantly related to BS at Step 3, $F(1, 398) = 25.27$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{chg} = .05$.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix for Benevolent Sexism and Religion Items

Variables	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
1. Benevolent Sexism	—						
2. Extrinsic Religiosity	.24**	—					
3. Intrinsic Religiosity	.17**	.36***	—				
4. Scriptural Literalism	.20***	.37***	.80***	—			
5. Heterosexual Intimacy	.82**	.25***	.07	.09*	—		
6. Gender Differentiation	.69***	.18***	.003	.05	.31**	—	
7. Protective Paternalism	.76***	.12**	.30***	.30***	.38***	.37***	—

Note. Coefficients are partial correlations, holding hostile sexism and gender constant. N was 398 for these analyses.
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

At Step 4, scriptural literalism was significantly related to BS, $F(1, 397) = 5.39, p < .01, R^2_{chg} = .01$. The addition of intrinsic religiosity at Step 5 was not significant, $F(1, 396) = .008$, $p > .05$, $R^2_{chg} = .00$. Three variables accounted for a unique portion of the variance with all variables in the equation: HS, gender, and extrinsic religiosity. However, it should be noted that prior to the entry of intrinsic religiosity, the beta coefficient for scriptural literalism was significant. Table 3 shows standardized beta coefficients at each step.

Given these relationships using the Benevolent Sexism Subscale as a whole, we repeated the analyses for each of the three subscales to provide a more complete understanding of the predictors of BS. A regression using the Protective Paternalism Subscale and the predictor variables gender, extrinsic religiosity, intrinsic religiosity, and scriptural literalism was conducted. HS was entered as a control variable and was significantly related to Protective Paternalism at Step 1, $F(1, 401) = 77.19, p < .001, R^2_{chg} = .16$. The addition of gender was significant at Step 2, $F(1, 400) = 52.85$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{chg} = .10$. At Step 3 the addition of extrinsic religiosity was significant, $F(1, 399) = 5.47, p < .05, R^2_{chg} = .01$. Scriptural literalism was entered at Step 4 and was significant, $F(1, 398) = 33.18$, $p < .001$, $R^2_{chg} = .06$. Last, intrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor of protective paternalism at Step 5, $F(1, 397) = 4.60$, $p < .05$, $R^2_{chg} = .008$. With all variables in the equation, HS, gender, intrinsic religiosity, and scriptural literalism had significant beta weights (see Table 3 for standardized beta coefficients at each step).

Table 3

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for BS and BS Subscales

	BS	*PAT*	*GD*	*HI*
Step 1				
Hostile Sexism	.45***	.40***	.29***	.35***
Step 2				
Hostile Sexism	.39***	.30***	.34***	.30***
Gender	−.17***	−.33***	.17***	−.15***
Step 3				
Hostile Sexism	.36***	.29***	.31***	.27***
Gender	−.19***	−.34***	.15**	−.17***
Extrinsic Religiosity	.22***	.10*	.18***	.24***
Step 4				
Hostile Sexism	.36***	.28***	.32***	.27***
Gender	−.19***	−.33***	.15**	−.17***
Extrinsic Religiosity	.18***	.00	.18***	.24***
Scriptural Literalism	.10*	.26***	−.02	.00
Step 5				
Hostile Sexism	.36***	.29***	.31***	.27***
Gender	−.19***	−.32***	.14**	−.18***
Extrinsic Religiosity	.18***	.00	.19***	.24***
Scriptural Literalism	.10	.14*	.00	.02
Intrinsic Religiosity	.00	.15*	−.13	−.03

Note. Tabled values are standardized regression coefficients (β). BS = Benevolent Sexism, PAT = Protective Paternalism Subscale, GD = Gender Differentiation Subscale, and HI = Heterosexual Intimacy Subscale. Gender was coded 1 = Male and 2 = Female.
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

In a regression using the Gender Differentiation Subscale, the control variable, HS, was once again significant at Step 1, $F(1, 401) = 54.95, p < .001, R^2_{chg} = .12$. At Step 2, the addition of gender was a significant predictor, $F(1, 400) = 9.24, p < .01, R^2_{chg} = .02$. Extrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor at Step 3, $F(1, 399) = 26.73, p < .001, R^2_{chg} = .05$. Neither the entrance of scriptural literalism at Step 4, $F(1, 398) = .01, p > .05, R^2_{chg} = .00$, or intrinsic religiosity at Step 5, $F(1, 400) = .20$, $p > .05$, $R^2_{chg} = .00$, were significant predictors. With all variables in the equation, HS, gender, and extrinsic religiosity had significant beta weights (see Table 3 for beta coefficients at each step).

The control variable HS was significant at Step 1 in a regression predicting heterosexual intimacy, $F(1, 401) = 36.13, p < .001, R^2_{chg} = .08$. Gender was significant at Step 2, $F(1, 400) = 11.06, p < .001, R^2_{chg} = .025$. At Step 3 extrinsic religiosity was also significant, $F(1, 399) = 14.39$, $p < .001, R^2_{chg} = .03$. Scriptural literalism was not a significant predictor when entered at Step 4, $F(1, 398) = .11, p > .05, R^2_{chg} = .00$, nor was the entrance of intrinsic religiosity at Step 5, $F(1, 397) = 2.99, p > .05, R^2_{chg} = .00$. As shown in Table 3, with all variables in the equation, HS, gender, and extrinsic religiosity had significant beta weights.

In summary, the regression analyses indicate that gender is a significant predictor of BS and being male predicts higher scores on BS, protective paternalism, and heterosexual intimacy whereas being female is associated with higher scores on gender differentiation. Extrinsic religiosity is associated with BS, protective paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy but once scriptural literalism comes into play, it is no longer a significant predictor of protective paternalism. Scriptural literalism significantly predicts BS and protective paternalism but once intrinsic religiosity is entered, it is not a significant predictor of BS. Finally, intrinsic religiosity is a significant predictor of protective paternalism over and beyond the other predictor variables.

As predicted by our final hypothesis, religiosity was not correlated with HS. Partial correlations between HS (holding BS and gender constant), intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and scriptural literalism were not statistically significant and ranged from −.006 to −.06.

DISCUSSION

This study suggests that in some cases religion is an agent of BS. Intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and scriptural literalism were positively associated with BS, but not HS. Another finding from the study is that different types of

religiosity appear to be related to different aspects of BS. Of the BS subscales, protective paternalism correlated significantly with intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity, and scriptural literalism whereas heterosexual intimacy was correlated with extrinsic religiosity and scriptural literalism, and gender differentiation was correlated with extrinsic religiosity. In regression analyses, intrinsic religiosity and scriptural literalism accounted for a unique portion of the variance in protective paternalism but not in the other two BS subscales. In other words, a deeper religious or spiritual conviction and a literal approach to the scriptures were related to the view that men should protect and provide for women. Perhaps religions that embrace scriptural literalism emphasize passages supportive of protective paternalism, or possibly there are more scriptural passages consistent with protective paternalism. Also, of the three subscales, protective paternalism is the one that implies a duty of kindness and care to women. Protective paternalism may be more consistent with intrinsic religiosity. Recall that Allport (1966) postulated that an intrinsic religious orientation involves internalizing religious teachings of compassion. In contrast, regression analyses indicated that extrinsic religiosity accounted for a unique portion of the variance in BS and two of the three BS subscales, Complementary Gender Differentiation and Heterosexual Intimacy. These findings suggest that individuals with an extrinsic religious orientation may be more likely to view women as having moral and aesthetic sensibilities that men do not possess and to see men as incomplete without women. Perhaps this finding is a reflection of norms and mores of religious communities that promote these gender ideologies.

Because the study is correlational, we cannot draw causal conclusions. For instance, while it makes sense that religiosity promotes BS, it could also be that people with BS beliefs may be more attracted to types of religiosity that support those beliefs. The relationship could also be reciprocal. Likewise, a third factor, such as a sociocultural context supportive of BS and of BS-consistent types of religiosity, could be responsible for the relationships. In all cases, correlations were modest and stronger findings may have been obtained with a broader, more diverse sample including adults from a variety of religions and religious denominations, and from measures that more directly test the sexism identified by feminist theologians. The study's generalizability is also reduced because the sample was limited in age, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity. We do not know whether similar findings would be obtained with more diverse samples.

As noted at the outset, the relationship between religion and sexism is complex. Allport (1966) originally hypothesized that a committed, internally motivated religion was incompatible with prejudice because it involves internalizing religious teachings of universal acceptance and compassion. Such teachings are also incompatible with sexism and reformers have created inclusive God and prayer language, used religious texts and history to promote gender equality, and increased the number of women in religious leadership positions. These reformers are religious people convinced that God and the founders of their religions did not intend for religion and religious texts to be agents of women's subordination. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that religion and religiosity are not necessarily enemies of gender equality.

That being said, our findings do suggest that religiosity is correlated with BS. Thus, a consideration of the various forces that contribute to women's lower power and status should include religion. Religion is frequently a central part of a culture and many religions communicate to their followers that men's greater power and status relative to women is appropriate and acceptable. Although this perspective is presented "benevolently" rather than "hostilely," the net effect is still to support gender inequality—especially because women as well as men tend to endorse it. Not only does BS justify traditional gender roles but it also pacifies women's resistance to gender subordination by masking gender inequality with the cloak of chivalry (e.g., men need women and should protect and cherish them; Glick & Fiske, 2001a, 2001b). BS rooted in religion may be a significant obstacle to gender equality when it is rooted in literal scriptural interpretations and is essentially nonfalsifiable because there is no arguing with the word of God.

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