

# Sexism-patriarchy

[Sociology](#), [Feminism](#)



Sexism-Patriarchy Brian S. Slevin Sexism by definition is discrimination by members of one sex against the other, especially by men against women, based on the assumption that one sex is superior. It regards women as inherently inferior intellectually, psychologically, and physically to man. This view, is shared by both men and women, and has historically shaped institutions of world society. It has been continued through the cultural modification of groups of people through prolonged and continuous interaction involving intercultural exchange of generations of children with resulting differences between the sexes. On-job sexual discrimination such as low-level work experience caused by traditional sexist viewpoints has hindered allot of female job promotion. Women with the same qualifications as a man that applied for a job would be turned down based on the simple fact that they are a woman. Prior to the Women's movement women were constantly discriminated against in this manner. Sexual discrimination still exists but its occurrence has drastically reduced, subtle discrimination is however, still quite prevalent in our society. Salary is one aspect of this still present discrimination, a vast majority of women employed in the work force today receive less of a paycheck for the same amount of hours worked on the same jobs as men. This is reinforced by the low number of women who have a high paying, high powered job. There are a significant ly higher number of women who have little or no power in decision making and earn a low salary. The women that do get promoted are often the subjects of rumor and remarks made in poor taste. Men just can't stand to see they're egos shattered and so they lash out against the woman with authority. They demean her position and make it seem less important or trivial. All of this

does hurt female self- esteem and is just one of the ways sexism hurts women. Women are not just harassed verbally but physically. " As in the movie Flashdance, the male employer comes on to the female employee. In lawsuits, such " coming on" is considered sexual harassment; by definition it is considered a misuse of his power. When she resists and he persists, as in both the movie and the Harlequin formula, it is an even clearer form of sexual harassment." In many cases if a woman does not give in to a man's sexual advances she stands the chance of losing her job! This was the tendency and in many instances still is the tendency of many men who have authority over women. Sexism runs rampant in every facet of our society. It even reached the Presidency a number of times and the Supreme Court. Two prominent examples are Bill Clinton and the accusations made by Jennifer Flowers and Judge Thomas's alleged sexual remarks to Anita Hill. Granted these were never a hundred percent proven cases of sexual harassment but they are sufficient enough to show that sexism reaches everywhere in our society. Women in many instances have to be very cautious as to what they wear to work. If they're employer finds them attractive it could mean a sexist advance or two. Any woman has to be on her guard against traditional sexist men. " If femininity got lost in the pursuit of independence, a woman would lose power (because real power means having control over one's life), which is having the option to work and not to lose one's gentler side." Sexist tendencies don't just abuse women in the work place but also at home. The traditional sexist view of a head of any household is the man. When this idea is threatened, it is as if their masculinity were being stripped away. Physical violence is sometimes caused by a sexist man who feels as though he has to

reclaim his home. This is the type of man that feels women should be kept underfoot. There are plenty of other reasons men batter their wives, but this ranks highly among them. Contrary to popular beliefs (both of men and women) the incidents of men who are physically violated in comparison with women is relatively equal. Sexist men are influenced by many sources in society, one very basic source is that of the father. He would often, inadvertently and sometimes purposely plant the seed of sexism in an impressionable young mind. The media, which is also sexist tends to portray a woman at home cooking, cleaning, and taking care of her children. Now with the accusations of sexism running rampant in the media they have toned down on female portrayal as being weak. They now have more opposition than they used to have from feminist organizations (National Organization for Women) and Brian S. Slevin discrimination laws. Today's sexist man is a careful and disheartened individual. Long gone are the days when sexist viewpoints can run free in society. This is allowing women to finally gain momentum in their overall goal for equality. There is somewhat of a balance between traditional sexist tendencies and the new sexist man. This balance is maintained by, subtle differences between the two. The traditional sexist man believed that being a devious man was a good plan in life, and that devious women were merely plotting against them. But the new sexist man might say that women use power deviously when they marry for money. Stubbornness and weakness are still looked at as female traits among many new sexist men. This balance is a complicated one and traditional sexist beliefs both influence and reinforce new sexist tendencies. Some sexist ideology is actually sometimes good for women. Most sexist

men still think women shouldn't work or pay for things. To a woman with low self-esteem this could be a plus, because she could stay at home and only have to shop and basically live life as a maid. The new sexist man may split some of the money making and spending responsibility, but he is eventually the one that makes the final decision in where and how the money will be spent or saved. Confusion is often the grave result of this uncertain balance in decision and responsibility. " A woman often finds she has difficulty fully sharing responsibility for the income. He finds, often, he has difficulty fully sharing responsibility for the child care and housework." For women who are not already married, simply dating can be a powerful dilemma. Many single men share a sexist ideology and a great deal of women are finding that they have to compromise on their aggression and power in order to find a mate. Almost all sexist beliefs hold pride as one of the highest traits of a man. A sexist man would find the idea of having a successful and aggressive wife to be a threat to their pride. These sexist tendencies in men lead to a lot of disappointment from women. Advertising is also a reinforcing characteristic for sexism. Women see a man sitting behind a big desk giving orders and see women receiving the orders. Almost all forms of advertising done in the past was sexist. It is still a sexist industry, but now women can dispute how they are represented in an advertisement. I interviewed Miss Edie Lanzano of Jackson Hgts. (age 23). When asked, " How do you feel about the way women are portrayed in advertising?" She replied, " I think it is very degrading to see a woman always on the bottom of everything. Also it makes women look like mindless idiots and makes men look very smart." To get a better feel of how women felt about women's portrayal in advertising I interviewed two other

females. The first was Mrs. Emilia LoSciuto of Woodside (age 45). When asked the same question she replied, " I feel that they are being exploited, especially in the way they dress. They seem to be so ignorant that it makes men look like the greater sex." In my final interview with Mrs. Mary Fabio of Woodside (age 70) I asked the same question but also added, " How do you feel about advertising's past portrayal of women?" She replied, " Some are very bad and most have hardly any clothe on, they are literally disgusting to see. In the past they were much better then what you see now. They were much more dignified and respectable looking." Speaking as a man who has discussed this issue with other men, I can honestly say that most men sexist or not do not care how women are portrayed either way. I have discussed women's portrayal in advertising because, next to your parents, many images of how you should act come about from what you see advertised. These impressions can cause men and women to become what they are as members in our society. In the Christian bible (the old testament) women have traditionally been thought of as lower or powerless unless they were " specially" selected by God. Women were given the arduous task of bearing children freeing men up to go about and attain a job or a powerful status. Until Mary gave birth to the " Messiah" a boy, no woman had really exuded any power. Of course without God's ordaining that Mary give birth to Jesus this would never have happened. Jesus went around and in all the parables and stories told in the bible, women would flock to his feet and he would always protect and help them. Meanwhile men in the stories would often attain Sainthood and become heroes. To quote the bible, " God, made man in his own image." In other words if God is the supreme being then we at least

look like him and women were only created to bear our children. Also when God created Adam and Eve he took a rib from Adam to make Eve. " Then the Lord God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed lifegiving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live." " Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and grow it. Then the Lord God said," It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him. So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and that is how they all got their names. So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him. Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him." It is also true that according to the bible " woman" not " man" was the one that was fooled by the devil and was also the one that forced the fruit onto the " man." This in and of itself is a sexist idea and teaching of the bible. But these are only two stories taught by the Catholic church, there are a great many more. It is precisely because of these blatant sexist ideas that some Catholic men and women are the way they are. Sexism is found everywhere in our society and to discuss everywhere that it is found would take forever but I feel I have covered the most important realms of sexism and there effects on men and women. Sexism however, remains a major influence on both conscious and unconscious assumptions in American mass culture. Bibliography: Berkowitz, Bob, What Men Won't Tell You But Women Need to Know, New York: William Morrow and Company, 1990 Carison, Dale

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