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“Women’s Beliefs about Men’s Identification Influence Perceptions of Sexism, Anger, and Professional Desirability”

Abstract:

This paper proposes a new theoretical model of women’s responses to strongly versus weakly identified men by drawing from theories of intergroup relations and perceptions of sexism. One content analysis and four experiments examined women’s ideas about strongly versus weakly identified men. These studies showed that women see strongly identified men as more sexist (Studies 1-5), more angering (Studies 1, 3, 4, and 5), and less professionally desirable (Studies 1, 3, 4, and 5) than moderately or weakly identified men. The proposed model was supported using three different methods (content analysis and two experimental paradigms), and potential alternative explanations were ruled out—women’s own identification (Studies 2-5), men’s masculinity (Study 4), and men’s prototypicality and entitativity (Study 5) did not explain the effects of male identification. Women’s perceptions of male identification, however, did mediate the effects of manipulated male identification on women’s perceptions of sexism (Study 5). Implications are discussed.