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Gender Roles Are Not A Thing Of The Past

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Introduction

Misogynistic ideologies have been around for centuries setting the guidelines for the gendered roles that women are socialized to feel forced to conform to. These gender-typed expectations can be enforced through all social groups, more specifically through our families. A family holds the power to mold these behaviors and attitudes during early development. Familial opinions and behaviors obtain a huge impact on a child's values and morals which play a huge role in the development of one's beliefs. The primary focus of this research is to examine how misogynistic practices skew the way gender roles are depicted and how that affects the women in our society. Oppression of women is not a newly adopted behavior. Although our society has seemingly become increasingly progressive, there are still many individuals who obtain misogynistic beliefs, and or promote them, and I am curious to know how the way we treat women affects the feminine population as well as how society views them. My research question is, How have misogynistic practices skewed the way gender roles are depicted in society? By focusing on family, one's social crowd, and feelings surrounding a woman's role in society, I can obtain a personal elaboration as to how this individual truly feels about a woman's role in society versus what they believe they should say. I argue that no matter one's walk of life, misogynistic ideologies are skewing the roles society believes women must play to be seen as desirable for their gender. I am also interested in delving into the ways one is socialized into embodying, and or enabling misogyny.

Literature Review

Throughout my extensive research, there was a large summation of information regarding three concepts of importance: Gender Roles, Misogyny, and Feminism. These three themes play a crucial role in helping us to have a better understanding of the disadvantages women are faced in our present-day society.

Gender Roles

Gender Roles are social roles that encompass a range of behaviors and or attitudes that are considered desirable for an individual based on that person's sex. The book, *Understanding The relationships among self-ascribed gender traits, social desirability, and ambivalent sexism* by author Sonia Agut, examines whether “self-ascribed masculine traits moderate the modulating influence of social desirability in the linkage between feminine traits and benevolent sexism, and whether self-ascribed feminine traits moderate the modulating effect of social desirability in the association between masculine traits and hostile sexist attitudes”. In addition, “the need to gain others’ approval or, more importantly, to avoid their disapproval, leads individuals to offer more socially desirable responses that mask their hostility toward women, whereas this need is less evident when hiding benevolent attitudes” (Agut, 2022, 4-10).

In the journal entitled, “ How male consumers respond to “Enlightened Man-advertising” campaigns: gender schema, hostile sexism, and political orientation feed attitudes” written by Miglena Sternadori, the author studies the quantitative survey of U.S. men indicated that participants' “gender schemas, hostile sexism, political orientation, and support for women's rights influenced their attitude toward "enlightened manvertising," which refers to advertising that redefines masculinity by promoting both masculine and feminine traits as elements of contemporary manhood.” The results of this study link men's views on “redefining masculinity

and their views on women and women's roles in society, with implications for the success of campaigns that attempt to tackle gender identity and equality” (Sternadori, 2022, 8-12). In the book entitled, *Doing Gender* by authors Don Zimmerman and Candice West, the authors gave the readers a thoughtful explanation to deepen their understanding of gendered norms that society is constantly trying to restrain women in. This not only subjects women to change their behavior to fit these norms but also is subjected to objectification constantly. The authors claim such descriptions are themselves accountable, and societal members orient to the fact that their activities are subject to comment. Actions are often designed with an eye to their accountability, that is, how they might look and how they might be characterized. The notion of accountability also encompasses those actions undertaken so that they are specifically unremarkable and thus not worthy of more than a passing remark because they are seen to be in accord with culturally approved standards” (Zimmerman, 1987, 136).

In the article entitled “Instagram Use and Self-Objectification: The Roles of Internalization, Comparison, Appearance Commentary, and Feminism” written by Dawn M. Szymanski et al, the authors studied the internalization of cultural standards of beauty, which entails appearance comparison as well as both positive and negative appearance-related commentary, and engaging in upward appearance comparison on Instagram created an individual to self-objectify and have high feelings in body dissatisfaction. The endorsement of photos as a valid means of expressing one’s identity and obtaining social approval may indicate an increased focus and value placed on one’s outside appearance when interacting on social networking sites” (Szymanski, 2018, 5). Through a feminist lens, higher feminist beliefs play a buffering or protective role whereas lower feminist beliefs play an intensifying role.

Misogyny Through The Lens Of Sexism.

Misogyny is a dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women. Acts of violence against women generally create mass forms of fear within a woman, and other women, at which point one may predict women will take precautionary action to prevent any forms of potential violence from a man. The study entitled “Make it safe at night or teach women to fight? Sexism predicts views on men’s and women’s responsibility to reduce men’s violence towards women” written by Jessica Brownhills, highlights the roles played by gender and hostile and benevolent sexism toward women in determining support for intervening with men and women in the prevention of men’s violence against women. The author cites “there was a positive association between targeting men to reduce men’s violence toward women and targeting women to avoid violence from men. Hostile sexism was negatively associated with support for targeting men to not be violent toward women and positively associated with support for targeting women to avoid violence from men. Benevolent sexism was positively associated with support for targeting both men and women to reduce men’s violence toward women. The current study explores associations between sexism, gender, and support for two approaches to reducing men’s violence toward women targeting, men’s behavior to reduce male violence toward women, and two, women’s behavior so that they can avoid male violence” (Brownhills, 2021, 190).

The book, *You should smile more: the effect of self – and other – focus on women’s benevolent and hostile sexist attitudes and willingness to intervene in sexist situations* written by Jessica Campbell, the piece explores how different combinations of identities may impact how women endorse or reject benevolently sexist ideology. The purpose of this research is to understand how heterosexual Black and White U.S. American women apply ambivalent sexism to the self and women in general, and whether self- and other-directed benevolent sexism predict

women's willingness to speak out in situations where benevolent sexism with romantic partners. Benevolent sexism consists of positivity toward women, who are seen as pure, moral, and largely helpless. An example of a benevolently sexist belief is that women should be put on a pedestal and women should be cherished and protected by men. Men who are benevolent sexists are outwardly protective and chivalrous; however, benevolent sexism is detrimental to women's personal empowerment and agency, undermining their cognitive performance. Further, benevolent sexism is generally offered only to those women who behave in ways that align with traditional feminine stereotypes (i.e., passive homemakers. Hostile sexism is a complementary form of sexism that consists of overt negativity toward women. Hostile sexists view women as manipulative, power-hungry, and controlling, utilizing affection, sex, and feminism to achieve their goals. A core component of hostile sexism is male power: negative attitudes toward women maintain male dominance" (Campbell, 2022, 12).

Within the article "Is benevolent sexism more likely to manifest in a public context and hostile sexism in private contexts?" written by Tradies Chisango, the authors go in depth through researching a sample of married women who would be likely to report that their husbands express hostile sexist attitudes and engage in related actions towards them more in private than public contexts, where they lie concealed from public censure. The women reported "hostile sexist attitudes and actions to be more likely to occur in private than public contexts" and on the other hand, they reported, "benevolent sexist attitudes and actions to be more likely in public than private contexts" (Chisango, 2015, 9).

In the article entitled "Benevolent sexism and the status of women" written by Peter Glick, The author delves into "insidious ways in which benevolent sexism functions to undermine women's ascent toward gender equality" (Glick, 2018, 364-366) Secondly,

benevolent sexism legitimizes hostile sexism and current gender inequality, reinforces traditional gender roles in intimate heterosexual relationships, retards women's progress in the workplace through subtle discrimination, and saps women's career ambitions by undermining collective resistance to gender inequality.

In the paper entitled "Modern Sexism in Modern Times Public Opinion in the #Metoo Era" written by Allison M. Kam, the author assesses the degree to which levels of sexism have changed in response to current events, and finds very little change in levels of sexism from 2004 to 2018. The results also suggest that "modern sexism significantly correlates with views undercutting the pervasiveness of sexual misconduct, purporting that #MeToo has gone too far, opposing mandatory workplace harassment training, among other beliefs. Gender differences were primarily explained by underlying differences in ideologies. This finding emphasizes that such gender differences are often best conceptualized as men's and women's relative position on underlying dimensions that only partially align with gender, rather than men and women being fundamentally different types engaged in a 'battle of the sexes'" (Kam, 2020, 834).

Feminist Identification

Feminism is defined as the advocacy of women's rights based on equality among the sexes. In the journal entitled “ Intersections of feminist identification and hostile sexism ” written by Amanda D. Hernandez, the author explores how religious women are no more or less likely to identify as feminists than the religiously unaffiliated, while evangelical and black Protestant men are less likely to identify as feminists. More importantly, both black Protestant women and Catholic men who identify as feminists express hostile sexist sentiment to a higher degree than their feminist unaffiliated counterparts, along with Latinas and Asian-identified men. “This study offers quantitative insights into the relationship between feminist identification, religious affiliation, and hostile sexist attitudes. Additional implications for this study include conceptualizations of feminism and sexism more broadly in society” (Hernandez, 2021, 28). The author also argues “Christian women are no more or less likely to identify as feminist than nonreligious women, white evangelical and black Protestant men are less likely to identify as feminist than nonreligious men. As stated throughout this project, feminists come from diverse backgrounds. People from an infinite number of intersecting identities find identity, promise, and hope in feminism” (Hernandez, 2021, 48).

The article entitled, “Sexism, Rape Myths, and Feminist Identification explain gender differences in attitudes towards the #MeToo social media campaign” by Jonas R Kunst, investigated whether gender differences in attitudes and feelings toward #metoo are due to underlying differences in ideologies and experiences that only partly overlap with gender. “These gender differences were largely accounted for by men being higher than women in hostile sexism, higher in rape myth acceptance, and lower in feminist identification. The results, hence, suggest that gender differences in attitudes to social media campaigns such as #metoo might be

best characterized as dimensional ideological differences rather than fundamental group differences” (Kunst, 2019, 828). Some criticized the #MeToo campaign as a battle of the sexes, essentially pitting men against women, Which is not what feminism is about.

Methods

Participants

For this study, I gathered ten participants to interview (five males and five females). I mainly reached out to peers of mine through texting as well as had friends refer me to other mutuals of theirs. All ten participants voluntarily participated in this study after meeting specific criteria to meet eligibility. The criteria were to be between the ages of 18-40, and have contributed and or dealt with misogyny in their past.

Procedure

To provide enough evidence to investigate my hypothesis, this study was designed using a qualitative approach. The ten interviews were conducted through Zoom, a video conference software program, as well as Facetime, another video conference app found on specific Apple products. These interviews were conducted through Zoom and Facetime which created an environment that promoted comfortability for my respondents to share and demonstrate vulnerability as these interviews tended to delve into personal experiences. All ten interviews included differing open-ended questions relating to their family, social crowd, and feelings surrounding a woman's role in society. The purpose of having open-ended questions was to get my interviewees to elaborate on their opinions and experiences as opposed to just “yes” and “no” answers. Each participant had the opportunity to share their personal feelings and thoughts without limitations on their responses. The interview time average ranged from 30 to 35 minutes. All interviews were recorded with consent from the participant before starting and were later transcribed for further analysis. For my study, I wanted to represent all walks of life as any individual, no matter their gender, race, and or sexuality, can contribute to, or experience misogyny in some way, or shape. or form. To ensure privacy, as promised to my respondents, I

will use an alias name to maintain anonymity. This study intended to provide more knowledge on the impact of one's family, social crowd, and feelings surrounding a woman's role in society and how that contributes to misogynistic manners in society.

Findings:

Gender Roles are social roles that encompass a range of behaviors and or attitudes that are considered desirable for an individual based on that person's sex. Interestingly enough, five out of the ten interviewees accurately understood what a gender role was and could promptly provide me with a personal elaboration on the theme. Aubrey, a Caucasian 25-year-old female who currently lives in Cupertino, California, and works as a Registered Nurse responded to the question

Me Q- And what kinds of views on women did your parents and or guardians Express?

Aubrey - “Definitely traditional gender roles. So they focused on the importance of women obtaining an education. But then on the flip side, they've pushed the idea that the man who'd be the breadwinner winner in the relationship should be making an adequate amount if not more money than the woman so that the woman is free to stay home and work with the children. So definitely very like the 1950s with a splash of the 21st century”.

Maya, a 22 Bulgarian female who currently lives in Zurich, Switzerland, and works as an intern at EY, answered the question,

Me Q - And how do you believe that misogyny has affected the women in your life or yourself and if you could, please give me an example?

Maya - “Yeah, I think my mom was always expected to not drink as much not smoke. Be there for her kids to cook and clean. That was just kind of the female role in Bulgarian culture. And also I'm assuming like, you know, American culture, like traditional or traditional views. And my grandmother as well, like she's also kind of just been stuck with the kids for most of her life, you know, like, the male figures and my family haven't been too involved. In taking care of their kids. They mostly just provide for them. And they express their love through buying gifts and

basically, just the monetary value of love. That's kind of how they express their love through money. Interest and care. Yeah, that's how they provided for us. You know, they worked hard to make money to support the family, and that's kind of how they showed their care, whereas the women were the ones that are the main caretakers. And the ones that are emotionally there”.

Charlotte, a 20-year-old white female who currently lives in Palo Alto, California, and works as a Manager at Kings Swim Academy cited in her interview, “My dad treats my brother differently than how he treats me and my sister” He’s very hard on him. Calls him a “pussy” and things like that. Told him, like, be a man. But he’s never said anything like that to me and my sister.”

Richard, a 24-year-old Brazilian male who currently lives in San Francisco, California, and is currently unemployed as a full-time student, mentions three key quotes concerning what he believes his gendered role is within society and his interpersonal relationships. “I do have that compulsion to make money because that’s what society expects of males too, you know, make a ton”. “. . . the cool characters you see on TV you kind of want to emulate. They don’t show anything (emotion). So you kind of want to be like that. And that turns into, like, the idea of what you grew up to be is like what a real man is. Just that greediness, you know, the tough, could survive outdoors, provide, you know, the typical manly man”. “She’s my girlfriend, it’s my job to protect her. The unwritten agreement in society”. Aubrey, a Caucasian 25-year-old female who currently lives in Cupertino, California, and works as a Registered Nurse responded to my prompts with the quotes, “So I think a big one is, there are a lot of stereotypical gender roles or a lot of emphasis on typical gender roles in nursing. For the longest time nurses were all female, there were no male nurses”.

“For example, you mentioned women being sweet and nurturing. Like, oh, they’re perfect for being nurses, right? Because they’re caring and they’ll take care of you”.

Throughout this plethora of qualitative information provided above, one can conclude that even if an individual has no clue as to what a gender role is, or believe it obtains no effect upon them, they still elaborated on personal traits that proved they too are victims to socially pressured gender roles.

Feminism is the advocacy of women's rights based on equality amongst the sexes. After conducting my surveys, I found that four out of the ten participants could accurately define feminism and how it has either personally affected them, or someone they know. Jacob, a 22-year-old white male from Vancouver, Canada, who currently works as a computing engineer, answered my question as follows.

Me Q - Do you stand up for women who are being targeted in a misogynistic manner?

Jacob - So there was one time when I was a little bit drunk. I will admit. There's this chick who was crying and this guy was like, essentially like getting her to like, like pulling on her arm. And like she was they're both drugged. He was trying to get her to like to go home with him for whatever reason. Like it just looks bad. Like it just didn't look like it felt kind of weird about it. So I just went up and asked him if everything was okay. And he instantly was like yeah, and I was like, okay. Just making sure that everything's alright, I can help you like, I asked, I was like, oh, like, like, Do you guys know, my friends? Are you drunk? Essentially I just, I like, stuck around, and started chatting with her until the guy left. It wasn't really like a big deal. but it was kind of a weird situation.

Me: For the record, that is a huge deal. Aubrey, a Caucasian 25-year-old female who currently lives in Cupertino, California, and works as a Registered Nurse quoted "I think my experience with hostile sexism has made me into more of a feminist". David, a white 19-year-old male from Boulder, Colorado who is currently an unemployed full-time student claim, "It mostly makes me

feel sad because I have a lot of girlfriends and those friends come up to me and tell me they hate the way we guys talk about women. I hate this, those girlfriends mean a lot to me. Seeing how this affects them impacts me more.”

Richard, a 24-year-old Brazilian male who lives in San Francisco, California, and is an unemployed full-time student claimed “So I feel like the world is pro-female for sure now, which is like, feminism’s a big thing. Everyone’s feminist, you know, it’s like you’ll get crucified if you’re not a feminist, kind of ideal, you know, in a great way.”

Through my qualitative research, I was surprised to find that not many of my participants had taken the initiative to look up the definition of feminism at a prior date. However, once my participants received clarifications and or examples, they had a much better time forming an opinion to my question.

Misogyny is a dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women. Seven out of the ten participants were able to accurately define misogyny as well as different forms of sexism which were surprising. David, a white 19-year-old male from Boulder, Colorado who is currently an unemployed full-time student elaborated on the following question.

Me Q: Could you please tell me about a time when you relate to or experienced misogyny? This could be personal or not.

David - I think I've noticed it a lot, kind of, at the end of high school and college. I feel like guys, when they talk, I feel like they can, um, I guess, not put respect towards women and the things that they say towards them. I think it's very prominent. And a lot of guys talk for sure.

Me - Do you have an example of some of the things that they say?

David - Um, I don't know, calling women bitches and like, making them is not calling them women and calling them babes, bitches, whatever like It doesn't matter. Like, I think, I think

there are a lot of guys who talk whether they believe it or not, they refer to them as less than what they are.

Me: And how do you feel when you hear this guy talk?

David -I think, I try to fit into the guy role as much as I can to try to fit in. "I feel like in guy groups, I feel like I view women as less because of the way everybody is talking to them and it puts them in a more objectified light". Aubrey, a Caucasian 25-year-old female who currently lives in Cupertino, California, and works as a Registered Nurse responded to my prompts with the quote, "So I think that, you know, men are the ones who benefit the most from stereotypical gender roles. And in a way, really strong gender roles are a form of slavery. Charlotte, a 20-year-old white female who currently lives in Palo Alto, California, and works as a Manager at Kings Swim Academy cited in her interview,

"Because my dad didn't respect women, when I was growing up, I felt like I didn't want to have the same experience as a woman". Eli, a 38-year-old Mexican-American male who lives in Livermore, California, and works as a restaurant manager claimed, "Dad on the other hand is a little aggressive and doesn't have the same views about women. He loves to look at them and cat-call them. That type of thing." "Dad treats my brother differently than how he treats me and my sister". Looking at misogynistic tendencies through a lens of sexism proved to be an easier realm to cross into for my interviewees. A high quantity was able to accurately define misogyny as well as different forms of sexism and apply these considerations to their own past experiences. Although it took some time for the interviewees to warm up, they all made stunning progress throughout helping me obtain reliable information to back up my claims.

Conclusion:

In summation, I am really impressed with how my project turned out, specifically with how willing my participants were to go in depth into personal experiences they commonly shared feeling shame for. To answer the question, “how have misogynistic practices skewed the way gender roles are depicted in society?” My findings have proven that misogynistic ideologies are skewing the roles society believes women must play in order to be seen as desirable for their gender. These roles put women into a social chokehold when it comes to decision making, how they dress, how they behave, what they are legally allowed to do with their own bodies, as well as minimizing women’s sense of comfort. Some implications for further research could extend further into the other forms of psychological disorders opposed to anxiety and depression, as well as gathering both quantitative and qualitative data on respondents over the ages of forty.

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Thank you so much for participating in my research project. My name is Georgia Van Amsterdam, I am currently in my last semester at Sonoma State University. I am requesting individuals' voluntary participation in my study that examines how misogynistic practices skew the way gender roles are depicted in society. My questions will focus on your family, social crowd, and feelings surrounding a woman's role in society. I want to remind you that this interview will be kept confidential. You are under no obligation to answer any questions if you feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview. The interview will be approximately 35 minutes long, do you mind if I tape your responses? Taping will free me from taking notes and allow me to focus more on our conversation.

Criteria

1. Identify as a man or woman (5 men, 5 women)
2. Between the ages of 18 - 40
3. Has contributed or dealt with misogyny

General Questions : Demographic

How old are you?

What gender do you identify with?

What is your ethnicity?

Where do you live?

What is your religious affiliation, if any?

What is your occupation, if you obtain one?

What is your current educational background?

Family

- Are your parents together or separated?

IF PARENTS ARE SEPARATED

- How old were you when your parents separated?
- Has the separation of your parents caused you to prefer one parent over the other? If so, which parent and why?
- What kinds of views on women did your parents and or guardians express?
- Did your parents and or guardians have any negative views on women, if so what were they?
- Which parent of yours was the primary caretaker of the house and children?
- Which parent was the breadwinner of the family?
- Do you have any siblings? If so, how old are they and what is their gender?

IF THEY HAVE (A) SISTER(S)

- What expectations did the girls have in your family?
- Did your parents validate your sister(s) to allow comfortability with displaying their emotions freely? Please give me an example.

IF THEY HAVE BROTHER(S)

- What expectations did the boys have in your family?
- Did your parents validate your brother(s) to allow comfortability with displaying their emotions? Please give me an example.

Social Experiences

- How would you define gender roles?

- DEF: A gender role, also known as a sex role, is a social role encompassing a range of behaviors and attitudes that are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for a person based on that person's sex.

IF DEFINED

- When and who did you learn of this definition from?

IF UNABLE TO DEFINE

- Why do you think you were never exposed to this kind of terminology before today?
- Could you please tell me about an experience where your view on gender roles had shifted or became questioned?
- How would you define misogyny?
- DEF: a dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.

IF DEFINED

- When and who did you first learn this definition from?

IF NOT DEFINED

- Why do you think you were never exposed to this kind of terminology before today?
- How do you believe misogyny has affected the women in your life, or yourself? Please give me an example.
- How has your experience with benevolent and or hostile sexism affected the way you view gender roles?
- DEF: Hostile sexism: Openly negative attitudes toward women.
- Benevolent sexism definition: Subjectively positive attitudes toward women that simultaneously idealize but subordinate women as men's dependents.

- How did you feel during the time you experienced hostile, and or benevolent sexism? It could be personal or not.
- What was your reaction to this experience?
- How have stereotypical gender roles impacted your life (ex: behavior, peers, occupation, self-expression, etcetera)? Please give me an example from your experience.
- Would you say that you fit the stereotypical gender role?

IF YES

- Is it important to you that you fit the gendered stereotype? If so, why?

IF NO

- Why do you believe you don't? What negative impacts has it caused you to not fit the societal "norm"? Please give me an example.
- Do your peers display respect for women? Please tell me why or why not with examples.
- Do you find the people in power (boss, teachers, governmental workers) in your life respect women? Please elaborate on your feelings surrounding this.

Personal Opinions / Thoughts on Women

- Do you believe women have a role in society? If so, what is their role?
- Do you believe men have a role in society? If so, what is their role?
- Do you think misogyny further enforces stereotypical gender roles?
- Do you respect women? Why do you think that is?
- How often do you notice misogyny in your life? This could also be personal or not.
- Do you stand up for women who are being targeted in a misogynistic manner?

IF YES

- How do you stand up for them? Please try your best to remember the context and what you said.
- Did other bystanders get involved? What was the result?

IF NO

- If not, was it because you felt nervous to intervene? In the future, would you intervene if you had another chance to? Why or why not?

Conclusion

Do you have any questions for me?

Is there anything you want to clarify or touch back on?

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