

# Aware of What? The Structure and Meaning of Gender Aware and Blind Ideologies Across Gender and Race

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## Introduction

Although colorblind and multicultural ideologies have received considerable attention (e.g., Plaut, 2015; Ryan, et al., 2007), parallel ideologies about gender, gender awareness (GA; the belief that gender differences should be acknowledged) and gender blindness (GB; the belief that gender should be ignored), are far less studied.

Koenig and Richeson (2010) developed a single-factor measure of GA and GB. Participants endorsed GB more in work (vs. social) settings. Greater GB also was related to lower benevolent sexism in work (vs. social) settings. In contrast, Hahn et al. (2015) developed a two-factor measure of GA/GB and demonstrated measurement invariance across gender. Although both ideologies were associated with warmer feelings towards women, GB was associated with less gender essentialism, whereas GA was associated with greater.

We examined the relationships of GA/GB to benevolent (BS) and hostile (HS) sexism among Blacks and Whites. We assessed the factor structure of GA and GB and examined measurement equivalence across gender and race separately. We expected greater GB to be associated with less sexism. We also expected that the relationship between ideology and sexism might depend on race, as White women might be more attuned to gender prejudice, whereas Black women contend with both racial and gender prejudice.

## Method

**Participants.** Participants ( $N = 377$ ; 73% female) were recruited from a northeastern college for a study about views of social groups. Most participants were White ( $n = 159$ ) or Black ( $n = 126$ ), but 97 were multiracial, Latinx, Asian, or declined to indicate race. **Procedure.** Participants completed the measures below as well as parallel measures of ideology and prejudice for race. All measures were assessed on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

**GA and GB** adapted from Hahn et al. (2015) and Koenig and Richeson (2010).

- GA: e.g., “The differences between men and women should be acknowledged and celebrated” (5 items;  $\alpha = .83$ )
- GB: e.g., “We should describe others in terms of their individual traits rather than their gender” (4 items;  $\alpha = .81$ )

**HS and BS Sexism** (short form; Glick & Whitehead, 2010)

- HS: e.g., “Women exaggerate the problems they have at work” (5 items;  $\alpha = .81$ )
- BS: e.g., “Women should be cherished and protected by men” (4 items;  $\alpha = .67$ )

## Results

Evaluation of the GA/GB measure indicated two positively correlated factors. A change in CFI of .01 was used to compare nested models (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Consistent with Hahn et al. (2015), GA and GB were invariant across gender. Further analyses indicated they were also invariant across race (See Table 1).

We then estimated a SEM model including GA, GB, HS, BS, race (Black vs. White), and gender (See Figure 1):

- GA was associated with greater BS but not HS, whereas GB was positively (albeit weakly) associated with greater HS but not BS.
- Blacks exhibited more BS than did Whites ( $M_s = 4.73$  and  $3.84$ ), but racial differences did not emerge in GA, GB, or HS.
- Women endorsed GB more ( $M_s = 4.17$  and  $3.63$ ) and HS less than did men ( $M_s = 3.31$  and  $3.90$ ). Gender differences did not emerge in GA or BS.

We were unable to test interactions directly in SEM because of the small number of Black men ( $n = 20$ ). However, OLS regression analyses revealed no evidence that the relationships of GA and GB to BS and HS depended on race and/or gender,  $p_s > .29$ .

## Discussion

Consistent with Hahn et al. (2015), GA and GB represented two factors that were invariant (i.e., exhibited the same measurement properties) across gender, although gender differences emerged in GB in the full model. This study expanded existing work by showing that GA and GB are also invariant across race.

In contrast to previous research (e.g., Koenig & Richeson, 2010; Hahn et al., 2015), GA and GB were both associated with sexism: GB was positively associated with HS and GA was positively associated with BS. The latter finding, however, seems consistent with Hahn et al.’s finding that GA is associated with greater essentialism inasmuch as BS assesses the belief that women merit special attention.

Our results may have differed for several reasons. Our studies relied on different measures and different samples. Further, Koenig and Richeson (2010) assessed the extent to which ideologies predicted sexism in work and social settings, whereas we assessed GA and GB as global ideologies. Context seems to matter for GA/GB.

In sum, in contrast to interethnic ideologies, both GA and GB were associated with greater sexism, suggesting that the ideology-prejudice relationship may function differently for gender than for race. Future studies might compare these relationships across race and gender simultaneously.

Table 1. Measurement invariance analyses of GA and GB by participant race and gender

Race						
Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\Delta \chi^2$	p-value	CFI	$\Delta$ CFI
Configural (constraining factor structure)	50.760	36	--	--	.984	--
Metric (constraining factor loadings)	60.34	50	9.58	>.05	.989	+0.005
Scalar (constraining item intercepts)	70.61	57	10.27	>.05	.985	-0.004
Factor Variance/Covariance	71.20	60	0.59	>.05	.988	+0.003
Latent Mean	71.51	62	0.31	>.05	.990	+0.002
Gender						
Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\Delta \chi^2$	p-value	CFI	$\Delta$ CFI
Configural (constraining factor structure)	64.76	36	--	--	.976	--
Metric (constraining factor loadings)	79.14	50	14.38	>.05	.975	-0.001
Scalar (constraining item intercepts)	94.50	57	15.36	<.05	.968	-0.007
Factor Variance/Covariance	101.37	60	6.86	>.05	.965	-0.003
Latent Mean	109.26	62	7.98	<.05	.960	-0.005

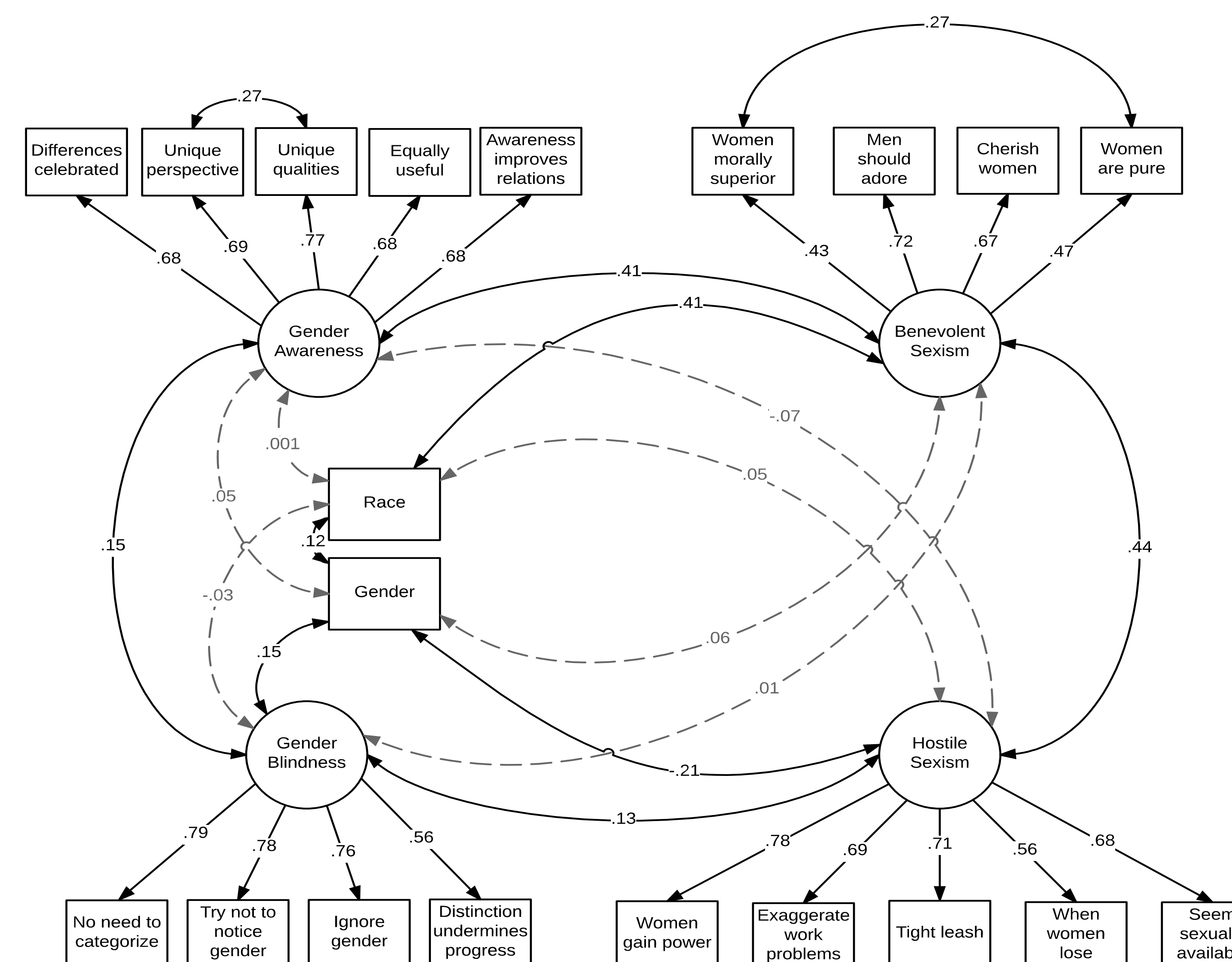


Figure 1. SEM of the associations among gender, race, ideology, and sexism.  $N = 377$ ,  $\chi^2(155) = 323.42$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .93, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .05, 90% CI (.05, .06), SRMR = .05. Gender coded as +1=women, -1=men, and race coded as +1=Black, -1=White.

