Confronting Prejudice: Comparing reactions to race versus gender biases

Prior research has shown that confrontations of sexism tend to be dismissed and unpersuasive. Participants in this experiment were led to believe they had exhibited either a gender or racial bias after evaluating a lab manager applicant in a science field. They were subsequently confronted about their biases. Contrary to previous findings, participants reacted similarly to confrontations of racism and sexism by reporting equal levels of negative self-directed affect (e.g., guilt), intentions to monitor their future behavior, and concern over their biases. Furthermore, a path model was supported whereby participants who were more prone to implicit biases were more likely to believe they have exhibited subtle biases in their evaluation of the applicant; this belief was associated with greater negative self-directed affect following confrontation and, consequently, greater monitoring intentions and bias concern. Implications for when confrontations of sexism, like those of racism, can help to curb prejudiced responses are discussed.