competent and hardworking, yet they still dislike them. For these and other reasons, stereotypes and prejudiced feelings are not always closely associated (Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner, 1996).

People’s attitudes toward women illustrate the complex relation between stereotypes, prejudiced feelings, and discrimination. The first words uttered in a delivery room generally announce the child’s sex (“It’s a girl”), and this information immediately shapes how an infant is treated and perceived. One study found that parents of one-day-old girls were more apt than parents of one-day-old boys to use words like beautiful, cute, and pretty when describing their infants (Rubin, Provenzano, & Luria, 1974). Similar characterizations persist throughout life. Across a variety of age groups and nationalities, women are perceived to be warmer, more affectionate, more understanding, and more supportive than men, and men are perceived to be more confident, capable, ambitious, and objective than women (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; J. E. Williams & Best, 1982). Both men and women endorse these characterizations, indicating that the sexes largely agree when it comes to judging what men and women “are like.”

1. Two Types of Sexism: Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism

When I was recruited as a policewoman in 1971, the only things they would let women do were menial jobs and paper-shuffling. They thought women were weak, and just gave us gentle work, and this really got me thinking. All of the things people do to overprotect women are really just ways of looking down on them.

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