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**Sexism in intimate relationships:
The interpersonal sources and consequences of ambivalent sexism**

Matthew D. Hammond

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology
The University of Auckland, 2015**

Abstract

Four articles investigated the origins and consequences of sexist attitudes by focusing on interpersonal processes. Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) states that intimate relationships are central to why sexism toward women exists in *two* interrelated forms. *Hostile sexism* is the label given to the overtly sexist, antagonistic attitudes toward women who challenge men's power, such as "women exaggerate problems they have at work". In contrast, *benevolent sexism* describes subjectively positive, paternalistic attitudes which position women in a low-status, relationship role, such as "a good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man". Chapter Two investigated a reason why men's hostile sexism is linked with relationship negativity—hostile sexism distorts men's views of intimate partners. Two longitudinal studies of romantic couples demonstrated that men who endorse hostile sexism interpret their partner's behavior more negatively, which led them to feel more manipulated, behave more negatively, and experience lower relationship satisfaction. Chapter Three investigated how benevolent sexism can simultaneously be patronizing and romantic by examining the types of goal-support behaviors associated with benevolent sexism. Men and women who endorse benevolent sexism provided distinctly different forms of support which, respectively, impede women's competence and facilitate men's closeness and intimacy. So, why do women endorse benevolent sexism? Chapter Four presents articles demonstrating that one reason women endorse benevolent sexism is the benefits the ideology offers. In a nationally representative sample, women higher in psychological entitlement (i.e., more attracted to gaining resources and praise) increasingly endorsed benevolent sexism over time. Next, two dyadic longitudinal studies and a series of supplemental experimental studies supported that women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is maintained over time when they perceived that their male *partner* more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism. In conclusion, investigating the *dyadic* functions of sexist attitudes identifies: (1) key factors

that underlie the persistence of sexist attitudes, such as the continued availability of the romantic promises of benevolent sexism within relationships, and (2) the consequences of sexist attitudes, including the subtle ways that sexist attitudes shape people's perceptions, behaviors, and beliefs in relationships which ultimately bolsters the gender inequalities that exist across societies.

Preface and Acknowledgements

This thesis begins with a quote from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*—the wife of Bath's monologue about the complexity of the relationship between men and women. The prologue to this tale is an Aesop fable: A man is debating with a lion about whether lions or men are superior. The man shows the lion a painting in which a man stands victorious over a defeated lion. The lion replies, "If a lion had painted it, you would instead see a lion defeating a man", and takes the man to a coliseum to see how men *actually* fare versus lions. I like this fable because it conveys a simple message about the power of intergroup ideologies and the process of the scientific method. And, as illustrated in the fable, the pictures painted in the name of ideology can be more appealing than the investigations in the name of science. For this reason, amongst others, I have found the help and support of my colleagues, partner, friends, and family invaluable, and would like to briefly acknowledge them here. Foremost to Nickola, thank you for demonstrating how academia is and how academia ought to be, and thank you for more things than you can be thanked for. Thanks to my extended academic family—Chris, Danny, Annette, Garth, and Jeffry. Thank you to my real-life family, in particular Jane, David, and James, along with my friends, and Rachel, who is a champion. Thanks to the ever-expanding research family inside the relationship lab—Yuthika, Phoebe, Patrick, Emily, Shanuki, Rebecca, Valerie, Natalie, Holly, and Aramis—and outside of the relationship lab, Ryan, Nikhil, Sam, and Petar. Finally, thanks to the University of Auckland for funding and supporting this research, the professional staff, including Andrea, Helen, Kamalini, Larissa, Meena, Michelle, Rajni, Sharon, and Sue, and the heads of school during my PhD, Doug and Will.

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Hammond, M. D., & Overall, N. C. (2013). Men's hostile sexism and biased perceptions of intimate partners: Fostering dissatisfaction and negative behavior in close relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39, 1585-1599. DOI: 10.1177/0146167213499026

Nature of contribution by PhD candidate

Study design and collection (Study 2), data analysis, writing and revising the manuscript (Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, References).

Extent of contribution by PhD candidate (%)

75%

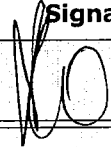
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Chapter 3.

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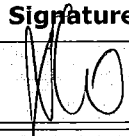
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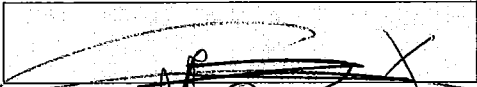
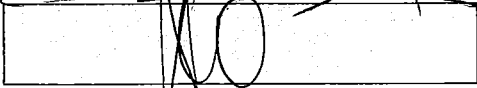
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Dr Nickola Overall	Supervisory support, including feedback on writing the manuscript.

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Dr Nickola Overall	Supervisory support, including feedback on study design, writing, and revising the manuscript.

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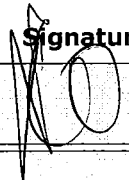
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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

"You say that it displeases me
 Unless you praise and flatter my beauty,
 And save you gaze always upon my face
 And call me "lovely lady" every place—
 Thus you go on, old barrel full of lies!

- "The Wife of Bath",
Geoffrey Chaucer, Canterbury Tales

Sexism is pervasive across the world and is unique compared to other forms of prejudices because sexist ideologies exist in *two* forms. One form of sexism reflects a more aggressive and competitive perspective of women. The tale told by the Wife of Bath contains these hostile attitudes toward women. For example, the wife of Bath explains to her audience about manipulating each of her five husbands to gain power and status through artful use of “deceit, weeping, and spinning” (Chaucer, N.D.). However, evident in the epigraph above, there is another form of prejudice toward women that does not convey overt hostility. Sexism toward women can also carry a subjectively positive tone. The subjectively positive form of sexism reflects the values and desires of women *as seen by men*, such as women being praised by men for being beautiful, delicate, and able to ‘complete’ men with their love and warmth.

The distinction between these two forms of sexist attitudes—hostile on the one hand, and benevolent on the other—is important because one reasons that sexist attitudes are so prevalent and are so effective at maintaining gender inequality is because of the ambivalence between these subjectively positive and overtly derogatory attitudes (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001). So, for example, literary scholars read the monologue made by the wife of Bath either as subverting sexist attitudes *or* reinforcing sexist attitudes (see Laskaya 1995; Treharne, 2002). The complexities of sexist attitudes are partly because sexism can express a romantic

“happily ever after” image of men and women while *simultaneously* expressing warnings about the threat that women pose if they are in a position to gain power over men.

One way to address the complexities of sexism is by focusing on the contexts and processes of endorsing these two types of sexist attitudes. In the current thesis, I examine sexism in intimate heterosexual relationships. The majority of the literature on sexist attitudes focuses on how sexism operates to maintain gender inequalities at a societal level (e.g., Becker & Wright, 2011; Brandt, 2012; Connelly & Keesacker, 2012; Glick et al., 2000; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; Napier, Thorisdottir, & Jost, 2010). However, romantic relationships are a key context in which the ambivalence of sexism is abundant: The more romantic and effusive the praise for women’s love, the greater the fears over the power women have to control and manipulate men. This thesis compiles my research investigating how sexist attitudes influence processes within intimate relationships and, in turn, how relationships shape and maintain people’s endorsement of sexist attitudes. In this chapter I provide a general overview of ambivalent sexism theory, discuss the importance of intimate relationships in understanding the content and function of sexist attitudes, and outline the content of the thesis.

Ambivalent Sexism Theory

Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001) describes how sexist attitudes exist in two forms and operate to maintain men’s advantaged status, access to resources and societal power relative to women—inequalities which are apparent across every country in the world (see United Nations Development Programme, 2014). *Hostile sexism* is the label given to attitudes which people typically characterize as ‘sexist’ and encompasses attitudes toward women which have a derogatory and threatening tone, expressing that women are incompetent and seeking to subvert men’s power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism portrays men and women as competing for power at both the societal level and at the

interpersonal level. The societal-level competition takes the form of warning that women in non-traditional roles (e.g., feminists, career women) will use the “guise of equality” to gain power over men (Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1996). At the interpersonal level, competition takes the form of fears that women will exploit men’s need for emotional and sexual intimacy to humiliate or manipulate men, such as by “seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances” or putting men “on a tight leash” (Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Benevolent sexism is the label given to the counterpart of hostile sexism and describes attitudes which carry a paternalistic and subjectively positive tone. Instead of overtly resisting or derogating women’s power, benevolent sexism acknowledges that heterosexual men are reliant on women for the fulfillment of interpersonal needs, such as intimacy, emotional closeness, and reproduction (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Like hostile sexism, benevolent sexism also addresses relationships between men and women both at the societal level and at the relationship level. At the societal level, benevolent sexism emphasizes how men and women have complementary traits and social roles: ‘Competent’ men use their status and resources to protect and provide for women. In turn, ‘warm and nurturing’ women adopt social roles as caregivers and manage relational and domestic domains. At the relationship level, benevolent sexism idealizes women who adopt traditional, supportive relationship roles, such as by expressing that men are uniquely “completed” by the woman they love, and that men should put women “on a pedestal”, protecting and providing for their partners even at the expense of their own wellbeing (Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Although benevolent sexism appears to be protective and caring, this ideology works hand in hand with hostile sexism, justifying hostilely sexist derogation of non-traditional women, and offering safety and praise to women wishing to avoid hostile sexism (e.g., Fischer, 2006; Glick et al., 2000).

Alongside the recurrence of romantic relationships in the content of sexist attitudes, ambivalent sexism theory describes how interdependency and intimacy are prominent in the sources of sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The first source, *paternalism*, concerns men holding more status and power than women across the world, generating attitudes that justify this power difference by expressing that men are dominant over women (hostile sexism) and that men are responsible to protect and provide for women (benevolent sexism). Second, *gender differentiation* emphasizes the existence of masculine and feminine traits which justify a positive and complementary relationship between the genders: Women are characterized as warm and delicate (and therefore suited to domestic roles), whereas men are characterized as competent and strong (and therefore suited to career roles). Finally, *heterosexual intimacy* encompasses heterosexual men's reliance on women for the fulfillment of fundamental needs for closeness, support and reproduction, and generates powerful idealizations of women's warmth (benevolent sexism) and fears of women's capacity to use this dyadic power to manipulate or emasculate men (hostile sexism). In sum, interdependence and intimacy between men and women are at the core of sexist attitudes. However, as I review next, the majority of research examining the function and consequences of sexist attitudes has focused on the relationship between men and women as *groups* rather than as partners in romantic relationships.

The Societal Functions of Sexist Attitudes

Together, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism function across societies to maintain inequalities between men and women, such as in career and political representation (Brandt, 2011; Glick et al., 2000). One way sexist attitudes function to maintain men's societal power is by rationalizing this inequality (see Jost & Banaji, 1994). The image of men and women having separate but equally respected and mutually beneficial societal roles is a powerful justification for why men hold advantaged positions in career, legal and political domains.

Furthermore, men's advantaged access to resources is justified by the characterization that men use this power to protect and provide for women (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Accordingly, men and women who endorse sexist attitudes believe that both genders have a relatively fair chance at success in society (Connelly & Heesacker, 2012; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; Jost & Kay, 2005), meaning that women who endorse benevolent sexism are less supportive of policies which would improve women's access to career positions and societal power (Becker & Wright, 2011). Thus, one way that sexist attitudes maintain inequality is simply by projecting an image of fairness in society.

Another way that hostile sexism and benevolent sexism function at a societal level is by respectively expressing threats and reverence that push women to adhere to traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Hostile sexism derogates women who do not conform to sexist prescriptions (Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004), and moreover, rationalizes violence toward women, including violence toward partners in dating or married relationships (Forbes et al., 2004; Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira, & Aguiar de Souza, 2002) and in cases of acquaintance rape (Masser, Viki, & Power, 2006). The derogatory and aggressive expressions of hostile sexism toward women who deviate from traditional prescriptions operate in tandem with the romanticism expressed by benevolent sexism which incentivizes women's support of men's power. Benevolent sexism praises women who adopt warm, supportive roles (e.g., Glick et al., 1997) and expresses relative *intolerance* of violence toward women as long as women remain faithful relationship partners (Obeid, Chang, & Ginges, 2010). The *simultaneous* pressures of derogation and praise are so effective at incentivizing women's adoption of traditional roles because both attitudes justify one another: Benevolent sexism is acceptable and even beneficial because of the presence of hostility toward women, and aggression toward 'non-traditional' women can be rationalized

by women's apparent deviation from a cherished relationship position (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jackman, 1994).

Finally, benevolent sexism and hostile sexism operate together to maintain societal gender inequality by appealing for *women's* endorsement of sexism toward women. In particular, benevolent sexism appeals for women's agreement, suffusing traditional notions of romance and chivalry, such as expectations for men to pay on the first date (Viki, Abrams, & Hutchison, 2003), and appears to be romantic and protective rather than sexist (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Riemer, Chaudoir, & Earnshaw, 2014; Sarlet, Dumont, Delacollette, & Dardenne, 2012). Women's acceptance and internalization of benevolent sexism is important because endorsing benevolent sexism accompanies behaviors and goals which ultimately support men's advantaged power. For example, women who endorse benevolent sexism are less interested in educational or career goals (e.g., Fernández, Castro, Otero, Foltz, & Lorenzo, 2006; Sinclair, Huntsinger, Skorinko, & Hardin, 2005), and believe they should be warm, sensitive relationship partners focused on supporting their *partner's* career (e.g., Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009; Lee, Fiske, Glick & Chen, 2010). Thus, women's agreement with the romantic imagery of benevolent sexism encourages investment in a dependent relationship role at the expense of seeking independent success.

In sum, the existing literature has demonstrated the widespread impact of sexist attitudes in maintaining the status quo of gender inequality. However, this literature has also overlooked the central role that intimate relationships play in the sources and consequences of sexist attitudes. Foremost, intimate relationships and interdependence are important to understanding sexism because they comprise a core part of the content and sources of sexist attitudes. The implications of sexist attitudes also differ when moving from an intergroup perspective to an intimate-relationship perspective. For example, hostile sexism warns that feminists will seek to challenge men's societal power, but also that individual men are

vulnerable to being humiliated and manipulated by a woman. The consequences of this interpersonal threat can have serious implications for domestic violence. Moreover, a relationship perspective captures important *dyadic* processes of sexism that cannot be captured at a group level, including discrepancies in social perceptions between partners, how sexism prompts behaviors in relationships as partners seek to support one another's goals, and how experiences in romantic relationships bonds are one key context for maintaining women's endorsement of benevolent sexism. In the following section, I review the existing research and introduce the yet-untested questions regarding how sexist attitudes function within intimate relationships which I examined in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

The Interpersonal Functions of Sexist Attitudes

The beliefs, expectations and behavioral expressions of sexist attitudes manifest at the level of intimate relationships. In particular, the tone and content of sexist attitudes revolves around how men and women *ought to* think, feel and behave within their relationships. For example, the beliefs that women are seeking to undermine men's power, encompassed by hostile sexism, also reflect concerns at an intimate level that relationship partners will exploit men's dependence in their relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Similarly, benevolently sexist beliefs that women have social roles and traits which complement men are epitomized by the idealization of women "on a pedestal" in relationships, and male partners being "willing to sacrifice their own wellbeing" to provide for women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This section addresses how the interactions between men and women within intimate relationships are critical to understanding the functions of sexist attitudes. Initial investigations into the relationship functions of sexism have revealed three unresolved questions of ambivalent sexism theory, which make up the chapters of this thesis. As displayed in Table 1.1., the chapters of this thesis examine (1) why men who endorse hostile sexism behave aggressively and feel dissatisfied in committed relationships, (2) how the restrictive and romantic facets of

Table 1.1. Summary of research questions and thesis chapters investigating how intimate relationships between men and women are central to understanding sexist attitudes.

Thesis Chapter	Key Points Derived from Ambivalent Sexism Theory and Associated Research
<p><i>Chapter 2. Men's Hostile Sexism and Intimate Relationships</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hostile sexism</i> is an ideology that expresses aggressive and derogatory attitudes toward women who are perceived to be challenging men's power (e.g., feminists, career women) • However, hostile sexism also has negative consequences in committed relationships—men who endorse hostile sexism behave more aggressively and feel less satisfied with their relationships • Chapter Two investigates one reason for these negative relationship outcomes: I present an article testing whether men who endorse hostile sexism have negatively biased views of their female partners by utilizing dyadic data to assess discrepancies between men's and women's perceptions of relationship behaviors
<p><i>Chapter 3. Men's Benevolent Sexism and Intimate Relationships</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Benevolent sexism</i> is an ideology that expresses romantic and idealized attitudes toward women who adopt warm and supportive roles (rather than competent and independent roles) • Research has identified two seemingly incompatible functions of benevolent sexism—maintaining gender inequalities by impeding women's competence and performance in tasks, and facilitating men's fulfillment of intimacy needs, such as by emphasizing men's capacity to be caring providers • Chapter Three takes a dyadic perspective to simultaneously examine the naturalistic support behaviors in romantic relationships that are associated with men's and women's endorsement of benevolent sexism: I present an article testing whether men who endorse benevolent sexism provide support which reduces their female partner's competence, whereas <i>women</i> who endorse benevolent sexism provide support which emphasizes affection and fulfills male partner's relational needs
<p><i>Chapter 4. Women's Benevolent Sexism and Intimate Relationships</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is critical to the maintenance of gender inequality because it fosters adherence to a relatively more dependent, vulnerable relationship position • What maintains women's endorsement of benevolent sexism in the face of these damaging consequences for women's competency and independence? • Chapter Four tests whether benevolent sexism is appealing to women because of the relationship benefits it specifically promises women, such as a revered and cared for position 'on a pedestal'. I present two articles which investigate whether women's psychological entitlement (Article 1) and perceptions of their <i>partner's</i> endorsement of benevolent sexism (Article 2) maintain women's endorsement of benevolent sexism over time.

benevolent sexism exist simultaneously, and (3) why women endorse benevolent sexism when it is so detrimental to their wellbeing.

Chapter Two: Men's Hostile Sexism in Intimate Contexts. It may seem unsurprising that men who endorse hostile sexism (aggressive and derogatory attitudes toward women) experience less successful relationships and report a greater fear of intimacy (e.g., Sibley & Becker, 2012; Yakushko, 2005). Men's hostile sexism is also a serious risk factor for domestic violence. For example, men who endorse hostile sexism report higher rates of verbal and physical aggression toward their intimate partners (Forbes et al., 2004; Forbes, Jobe, White, Bloesch, & Adams-Curtis, 2005; Glick et al., 2002; Yamawaki, Ostenson, & Brown, 2009). Nonetheless, this hostility within intimate contexts is somewhat unusual because hostile sexism primarily concerns women who challenge men's societal power, such as feminists or women who seek 'unfair' advantages in career or political domains. Indeed, the negativity expressed by hostile sexism is not elicited when men think of subgroups of women who do not challenge men's power, including stereotypes of 'housewives' (Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). Furthermore, behaving aggressively toward intimate partners undermines men's attainment of closeness and intimacy, and tends to be ineffective at gaining influence or power within the relationship (Fletcher, Simpson, Campbell & Overall, 2013). So, why is men's hostile sexism so destructive for intimate relationships?

Other relationship-focused research indicates that there are important contextual factors which heighten the negativity toward women that is linked with men's hostile sexism. For example, men's hostile sexism is linked with generally lower relationship satisfaction, but these low levels of dissatisfaction are heightened for men who endorse hostile sexism and report more severe problems in their relationships (Hammond & Overall, 2013a). Thus, the relationship difficulties experienced by men who endorse hostile sexism appear to impact their relationship evaluations much more than men who do not endorse hostile sexism.

Moderation is also found in research examining men's evaluations of non-traditional women, such as 'sexually promiscuous' women. Men who endorse hostile sexism *and* incorporate sexuality more strongly into their identities make relatively more negative evaluations of non-traditional women (Fowers & Fowers, 2010; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). As goals for sexual intimacy become much more relevant to men who endorse hostile sexism, women who could undermine and manipulate men likely appear much more threatening. Together, these studies indicate that one mechanism underpinning the aggression linked with men's hostile sexism is overestimation of threat and negativity even when it comes to female partners in intimate relationships.

As displayed in the upper section of Table 1.1, Chapter Two of this thesis investigates whether negatively biased perceptions of romantic partners are one reason why men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism behave more aggressively toward partners, feel more manipulated by women, and experience lower satisfaction in their relationships. By examining processes within intimate relationships, the studies in Chapter Two test whether bias occurs in real-world settings by utilizing dyadic data to compare intimate partners' perceptions of the behaviors in their relationships. Indeed, these findings also emphasize a key point made by ambivalent sexism theory: Hostile sexism impedes men's satisfaction and influence within their intimate relationships, and these interpersonal pitfalls generate the need for benevolent sexism—an ideology that works *in* relationships to support men's satisfaction while reducing women's power.

Chapter Three: Men's Benevolent Sexism in Intimate Contexts. Benevolent sexism arises as a critical complement to hostile sexism for men because the romantic, flattering attitudes of benevolent sexism are compatible with men's needs and goals in romantic relationships. Indeed, benevolent sexism is interwoven with prescriptions and beliefs from dating relationships to married relationships (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Viki et al., 2003) and

strongly related to romanticized relationship beliefs, such as that romantic partners are destined to be together (Hammond & Overall, 2013a; Hart, Hung, Glick, & Dinero, 2012). Benevolent sexism characterizes intimate relationships as a union in which men are chivalrous, protective providers of women, yet dependent upon women because of women's nurturing and moral qualities (Glick & Fiske, 2001). In turn, benevolent sexism positions women as sensitive and fragile, and thus dependent on men's care (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Thus, benevolent sexism should promote men's feelings that they are valued (and perhaps even heroic) relationship partners and that they are completed and fulfilled by their female partner's love.

Initial interpersonal research on the relationship experiences of men who endorse benevolent sexism indicates that they are more satisfied, caring partners. For example, men's endorsement of benevolent sexism is related to greater relationship satisfaction (Hammond & Overall, 2013a; Sibley & Becker, 2012). Men's endorsement of benevolent sexism is also related to more caring behaviors as rated by independent observers. Goh and Hall (2015) examined people's behaviors in mixed-sex stranger interactions, demonstrating that men who endorse benevolent sexism displayed relatively more friendly and warm behaviors when interacting with women. Overall et al. (2011) demonstrated that, even when romantic partners were discussing issues of disagreement, men who endorsed benevolent sexism remained relatively more friendly and open, meaning that they ultimately had more successful discussions. Thus, opposing the dissatisfaction and negativity typically found for men's hostile sexism, benevolent sexism operates to promote successful functioning of men's relationships by boosting satisfaction and facilitating cooperation in female partners.

Despite the observed behaviors linked with benevolent sexism appearing to be kind, Goh and Hall (2015) and Overall et al. (2011) suggest that this positivity may have a patronizing and insincere undertone. Indeed, research outside of the relationship domain

demonstrates that benevolently sexist offers of support are damaging rather than helpful. Several experiments have demonstrated that exposure to paternalistic offers of help from men impede women's ability. For example, an interviewer saying "don't worry, [your male co-workers] will cooperate and help you to get used to the job" increases mental intrusions about being incompetent and, in turn, impedes women's performance in tasks (e.g., Dardenne, Dumont, & Bollier, 2007; Dardenne et al., 2013; Dumont et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2014). The 'help' offered by benevolent sexism can also shape longer-term outcomes for women, including encouraging women's identification with being warm and friendly (Barreto, Ellemers, Piebinga, & Moya, 2010), and preventing women, but not men, from engaging in challenging experiences in their careers (King et al., 2014). Importantly, research on benevolent sexism in relationship interactions and in task performance suggest that it is the *same* caring, protective expressions that make men attractive, satisfied relationship partners that impede women's task performance and felt competence. So, how can men's benevolent sexism promote relationship closeness when expressions of help are detrimental to women?

The third chapter of this thesis investigates the seemingly disparate functions of benevolent sexism in interpersonal domains—facilitating men's closeness and intimacy *while* restricting women's competence and independence (see Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). A dyadic perspective on the processes of sexism is central to answering how both these functions can occur because benevolent sexism prescribes relationship behaviors for both men *and* women. The warm, supportive role benevolent sexism prescribes for women (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2010) should prompt behaviors by women that work to fulfill their male partner's relational needs. The high-status, provider role benevolent sexism prescribes for men (e.g., Viki et al., 2003) should prompt behaviors by men that work to reduce their female partner's competence (see middle section of Table 1.1). The study in Chapter Three is the first to test this component of ambivalent sexism theory by examining

the naturalistic support behaviors that men and women provide when their romantic partners are discussing personal goals. This study is a strong test of the expected gendered behaviors linked with benevolent sexism because the patronizing (rather than friendly) elements of men's benevolent sexism and the relational, warm (rather than practical) elements of women's benevolent sexism should be most prominent when intimate partners discuss goals that are personal to one another.

Chapter Four: Why Women endorse Benevolent Sexism. Sexist attitudes differ from other prejudices because of the degree to which women adopt and endorse sexist attitudes toward their own group (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). In particular, benevolent sexism presents a relatively attractive and agreeable explanation for gender inequalities by emphasizing that women have traits and roles that make men reliant on women, and accordingly, expressing that men will revere and cherish women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). A reason that benevolent sexism sounds so positive is so that it can appeal to women. As discussed above, women who more strongly endorse benevolent sexism are more accepting of societal gender inequalities (e.g., Becker & Wright, 2011; Hammond & Sibley, 2011), but also *invest* in men's power by adopting relationship-focused roles oriented toward supporting male partners instead of pursuing independent success (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Fernández et al., 2006; Moya et al., 2007; Sinclair et al., 2005). Thus, a central way that benevolent sexism functions to maintain gender inequality is through women's endorsement of benevolent sexism.

Despite the importance of women's endorsement of benevolent sexism in the maintenance of gender inequality, there has been little research investigating the reasons why women endorse benevolent sexism. One possibility underlying the appeal of benevolent sexism is the dyadic power that men accedes to women, such as by revering women's interpersonal skills and emotional qualities and characterizing women as responsible for

managing relationship, domestic and familial domains (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Thus, the dyadic power offered to women by benevolent sexism compensates for relatively less access to career power (Williams & Chen, 2014). Indeed, a large literature demonstrates that women tend to take a more proactive role in the relationship, including identifying relationship problems and seeking changes in the relationship (see Eldridge & Christensen, 2002). Moreover, research indicates that these gender differences stem from social differences in power rather than biological differences, such as by making comparisons between heterosexual and homosexual relationships (e.g., Holley, Sturm, & Levenson, 2010).

However, even though benevolent sexism may provide women security and power in relationships, the overwhelming evidence speaks to the fragility of satisfaction when women conform to traditional roles (Ickes, 1993). For example, research has linked women's adoption of traditional gender roles with greater relationship satisfaction, but *only* when traditional roles are consistent with self-identified preference for traditionality (Weiss, Freund, & Weise, 2012; Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber, 1997) and when women have access to relatively higher levels of social support (Matud, Bethencourt, & Ibáñez, 2014). Thus, women's adoption of traditional roles involves an amount of vulnerability because women must invest in a domestic- and relationship-focused role that is reliant on partners fulfilling the complementary career-focused role and providing for the relationship.

Women's adherence to benevolently sexist prescriptions is particularly fragile because investment into the traditional supportive relationship role is encouraged by promises that men will be chivalrous, caring providers. This fragility is apparent in initial research on women's benevolent sexism in romantic relationships. In observational research of couple's conflict discussions, women who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism exhibited greater levels of hostility and resistance when discussing changes they wanted in the relationship, but only when their partners did *not* endorse benevolent sexism (Overall et al.,

2011). Thus, the more that male partners strayed from a traditional, benevolent ‘provider’ role, the more destructive women were in conflict situations. Research on couples’ relationship evaluations also demonstrates that women who endorse benevolent sexism experience greater drops in satisfaction when experiencing relationship problems (Casad, Salazar, & Macina, 2014; Hammond & Overall, 2013a). Moreover, even though people’s investment of time and resources into their relationships typically protects against dissatisfaction, the drops in satisfaction were further magnified for women who endorsed benevolent sexism and were in long-term relationships (Hammond & Overall, 2013a), suggesting that women’s investment into their relationships accompanies sacrificing opportunities outside of the relationship in expectation that promises of reverence and devotion will be fulfilled.

In sum, women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism seems counterintuitive because this endorsement tends to entail women’s concession of competency and independence *alongside* investment into a relatively vulnerable relationship role, and more broadly, upholds women’s disadvantages at a societal level. So, what fosters women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism in the face of these costs? One answer is self-protection. Benevolent sexism prescribes that men should protect and care for women, which should be relatively more appealing to women than for men because women face greater discrimination and threat (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Accordingly, experimental research shows that women’s agreement with benevolent sexism can be primed by exposure to information that men hold aggressive attitudes toward women (Fischer, 2006). Across countries, women’s endorsement of benevolent ideologies rises as the level of objective gender inequality increases, an index which encompasses violence toward women (Glick et al., 2000; Napier et al., 2010). In the countries with the greatest levels of gender inequality, and thus the greatest

threat toward women, the average level of women's endorsement of benevolent sexism surpasses men's endorsement of benevolent sexism (Glick et al., 2000).

The promises of protection are only one of the appealing components of benevolent sexism, which also expresses reverence of women's interpersonal qualities and prescribes that men should work to provide women a cherished position 'on a pedestal'. However, no research has investigated whether these promised benefits are one reason that women endorse benevolent sexism. One study suggests that women endorse benevolent sexism more when it is personally relevant. Women's agreement with the items that measure benevolent sexism is higher when items were rephrased to concern women personally (e.g., "In a disaster, *I* ought to be rescued before men") compared to when those same attitudes were phrased to benefit women in general (e.g., "In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men; Becker, 2010). This research provides suggestive evidence that women's benevolent sexism can be fostered by the promised benefits that benevolent sexism expresses to women who adopt traditional relationship roles. Moreover, the romantic promises may be particularly important for understanding women's endorsement of benevolent sexism in relatively egalitarian countries, such as New Zealand, which express greater intolerance of violence toward women and provide women greater legal and social protection from violence (see World Health Organization, 2009). Indeed, longitudinal research utilizing a student sample in New Zealand demonstrated that changes in women's endorsement of benevolent sexism were unrelated to their perceptions of the prevalence of hostile sexism in society (Sibley et al., 2009).

The fourth chapter of this thesis investigates whether the availability of the promises of benevolent sexism, such as being cherished by a devoted provider, is a reason that women endorse benevolent sexism. Chapter Four presents two articles testing this hypothesis, both of which examine predictors of longitudinal change in women's and men's endorsement of benevolent sexism (see bottom section of Table 1.1). The first article uses a nationally

representative sample to test whether psychological entitlement, a personality trait encompassing the drive to hold more status, esteem and resources than others, is related to changes in women's (but not men's) endorsement of benevolent sexism. The second article extends this initial investigation by exploring one primary context of the promised benefits of benevolent sexism—intimate relationships. Specifically, the degree to which women perceive their male partner endorses benevolent sexism should be the most relevant and accessible indication of the availability of the benefits it promises, such as men being devoted, caring partners who will provide for the relationship even to the extent of sacrificing their own wellbeing (see Glick & Fiske, 1996). Two longitudinal studies of couples are the first test of whether women's perceptions of their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism maintain their *own* endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. Emphasizing the strengths of dyadic analyses, these studies track *both* partners' attitudes over time, which allows for the comparisons between men and women while ruling out several alternative possibilities, including assessing the statistical influence of *perceptions* controlling for the actual benevolent attitudes endorsed by intimate partners. I then follow up these longitudinal studies with a series of experimental studies to provide stronger causal evidence of the links between women's perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism and changes in their own endorsement of benevolent sexism.

Summary

Ambivalent sexism theory states that two forms of sexism arise to justify and maintain gender inequality, concerning both the intergroup *competition* between men and women and the interdependent *cooperation* that predominantly occurs in intimate relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996). However, little research has investigated the processes of sexism in intimate relationships, which are central to understanding the consequences and sources of sexist attitudes. This thesis makes a novel contribution to the literature on sexism

by exploring three unresolved questions derived from ambivalent sexism theory shown in Table 1.1. First, the aggressive behavior toward women associated with men's endorsement of hostile sexism should partly be explained by negatively biased perceptions. Chapter Two assesses bias by examining and comparing *both* partners' experiences in their relationships. Understanding how the negativity of hostile sexism emerges, particularly when directed toward romantic partners, is an important reason why benevolent forms of sexism exist. Chapter Three examines how benevolent sexism functions to suppress women's competence and influence, while also facilitating men's intimacy and closeness. Chapter Three incorporates dyadic modeling to examine the behaviors exhibited by both men and women who endorse benevolent sexism as they support their partner's goals, capturing *both* the restrictive and romantic aspects of benevolent sexism. Finally, Chapter Four focuses on the reasons underlying women's endorsement of benevolent sexism by testing whether the promised benefits of benevolent sexism, particularly in intimate relationships, maintain women's sexist attitudes toward women over time. Thus, this thesis advances an understanding of the functions and sources of sexist attitudes by simultaneously examining men's *and* women's thoughts, feelings and behaviors in their intimate relationships.

CHAPTER TWO: MEN'S HOSTILE SEXISM IN INTIMATE CONTEXTS

Hostile sexism derogates and threatens women who adopt non-traditional roles, such as career women or feminists, and is reflective of the competitive and dominant attitudes apparent in most forms of intergroup prejudice (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Unlike other prejudices, men's endorsement of these hostile intergroup attitudes is undermined by the fundamental need to be close and intimate with women. In particular, the motivation for the male ingroup to hold more status and power than women is in opposition to men's interpersonal motivations to be interdependent with women, thus prompting greater attitudinal ambivalence for men who hold more sexist attitudes (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism and benevolent sexism negotiate the conflicting attitudes toward women by subtyping women into 'disliked' and 'liked' groups (Glick et al., 1997). For example, feminists and career women are perceived as challenging men's power and so men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism make more negative evaluations of those groups (Gaunt, 2013; Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). In career domains, these forms of discrimination can function to maintain men's power by disadvantaging women (e.g., Masser & Abrams, 2004). In contrast, *benevolent sexism* is elicited in response to subtypes of women who embody qualities of warmth and support, such as 'housewives' and 'mothers' (Gaunt, 2013; Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). Importantly, this literature demonstrates that only *one* sexist ideology is elicited by exposure to these subtypes: Hostile sexism is unrelated to evaluations of 'housewives' and benevolent sexism is unrelated to evaluations made of 'career women' (e.g., Glick et al., 1997).

The cognitive separation of 'liked' and 'disliked' subgroups of women helps to resolve the discomfort with holding simultaneously positive and negative evaluations of women (Glick et al., 1997). However, this cognitive separation also suggests that men who

endorse hostile sexism may be able to separate their antagonistic views of ‘women’ as a group from their evaluations of intimate partners. Yet, this is inconsistent with existing findings that men’s hostile sexism is detrimental to relationships and thus why benevolent sexism exists alongside hostile sexism. Indeed, a wide literature demonstrates the destructive relationship functioning linked with men’s hostile sexism. Men who endorse hostile sexism tend to be less satisfied, more afraid of intimacy and behave more negatively and aggressively toward partners (e.g., Forbes, Adams-Curtis, & White, 2004; Sibley & Becker, 2012; Yakushko, 2009). Indeed, the types of aggressive and derogative tactics linked with hostile sexism that can sustain men’s influence in career domains are actually *less* influential in interdependent relationships (e.g., Overall & Sibley, 2010; Overall & Simpson, 2013). For example, observational research has found that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are less open and express more hostility when discussing changes they want in the relationship, leading to greater resistance in their female partners and lower discussion success (Overall et al., 2011).

Thus, research demonstrates that men’s hostile sexism is repeatedly linked with negativity toward women, even in relatively committed relationships, and in spite of these behaviors being ineffective at securing men’s satisfaction or influencing women. These findings suggest that men’s hostilely sexist view of non-traditional ‘career’ or feminist women cannot be separated from men’s views of their partners, which is addressed in this chapter. In particular, I present evidence that men’s biased perceptions of their partner’s behavior is one mechanism that links men’s endorsement of hostile sexism with lower satisfaction and negativity. This predicted mediation model resolves the existing inconsistencies between the contexts which do *not* elicit hostile sexism (e.g., evaluating ‘housewives’) and those that *do* elicit hostile sexism (e.g., evaluations of relationships) by linking men’s endorsement of hostile sexism with biased perceptions of intimate partner’s

behavior. This model examines whether the realities of interdependent relationships mean that men cannot easily categorize intimate partners into a particular subgroup, and moreover, *because* men cannot separate these hostile stereotypes of women from intimate partners they report more negative relationship behavior and lower satisfaction. If this is the case, then men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism should perceive their intimate partner's behavior as more negative than their partner's intend because these perceptions are imbued with hostilely sexist characterizations that women threaten and challenge men's power. In turn, via these more negative perceptions of their partner's behavior, men who endorse hostile sexism should behave more negatively toward their partners, feel less satisfied in their relationships, and feel more manipulated by their partners.

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Abstract

Hostile sexism expresses attitudes which characterize women who challenge men's power as manipulative and subversive (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Does endorsing hostile sexism negatively bias perceptions of women's behavior and, in turn, create animosity within intimate relationships? Committed heterosexual couples reported on their own behavior and perceptions of their partner's behavior five times across a year (Study 1) and daily for 3 weeks (Study 2). Men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism perceived their partner's behavior as more negative than was justified by their partner's reports. Furthermore, more negative perceptions of the partner's behavior mediated the links between men's hostile sexism and feeling more manipulated by their partners, behaving more negatively toward their partners, and lower relationship quality. This indicates that men who endorse hostile sexism behave more negatively toward intimate partners and experience lower relationship satisfaction because their antagonistic attitudes toward women in general permeate the way they perceive those partners.

Men's hostile sexism and biased perceptions of intimate partners: Fostering dissatisfaction and negative behavior in close relationships

Hostile sexism is an ideology which describes women as competing for men's power and willing to use underhanded tactics to do so. For example, hostile sexism is indexed by agreement that women pursue power "by getting control over men" and use the "guise of equality" to get ahead of men (Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Thus, at the heart of hostile sexism are aggressive and threatening attitudes toward women who hold the potential to challenge men's power. Accordingly, hostile sexism tends to target women who challenge men's societal dominance. For example, men who endorse hostile sexism evaluate feminists and career women more negatively, but do not view homemakers more negatively (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997). However, research has also shown that men who endorse hostile sexism are relatively more accepting of aggression within close relationships (e.g., Forbes, Adams-Curtis, & White, 2004; Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira, & Aguiar de Souza, 2002) and exhibit more hostile behavior toward intimate partners (e.g., Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011). These findings indicate that men who endorse hostile sexism also view intimate relationships as a context of competition for power and control, consistent with fears that women will exploit men's relational dependence to subvert men's power (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

In the current research, we tested whether endorsing hostile sexism biases perceptions of women's behavior within intimate relationships. We predicted that men who endorsed hostile sexism would perceive their (female) partner's behavior more negatively than was justified. We also tested whether such biased perceptions are a key reason why men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with more hostile behavior toward intimate partners as well as feeling more manipulated and dissatisfied within relationships. We outline the theoretical basis and novelty of our predictions below, and then present two studies which

make several methodological advances by assessing how hostile sexism influences perceptions of actual (rather than hypothetical or described) women, testing the veracity of those perceptions by comparing perceptions to the behavior reported by the partner, and examining how hostile sexism shapes cognition and behavior as relationships progress across 1 year (Study 1) and daily over a three-week period (Study 2).

Ambivalent Sexism and Intimate Relationships

The intergroup relations between men and women differ markedly from the relationship between men and women within intimate contexts. Men typically have more direct access to status and resources than women, affording them more societal-level power. In contrast, within intimate (heterosexual) contexts men and women experience more equal power because men and women depend on each other for intimacy, support and reproduction. According to Ambivalent Sexism Theory, the tension between men's societal dominance and the interdependence required for intimate relationships produces two forms of sexist ideologies (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The first, *hostile sexism*, comprises attitudes commonly identified as 'sexist'. Hostile sexism asserts men's societal advantages by expressing hostile and aggressive attitudes toward women who challenge men's power, such as feminists or career women. However, hostile attitudes toward women impede men's ability to fulfill their relational needs and do little to promote women's adoption of traditional roles. The second set of attitudes, *benevolent sexism*, addresses these needs by expressing subjectively positive attitudes toward women who fulfill conventional roles in the home. Benevolent sexism reveres women's interpersonal strengths but also casts women as needing protection, perpetuating assumptions of women's inferiority outside of domestic domains.

Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism work in tandem to maintain gender inequality by shaping the structure of heterosexual relationships and limiting the degree to which women can gain societal power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The role of hostile sexism is perhaps

the most obvious and straightforward: punishing women who challenge men's dominance limits women's social power, such as through derogating and discriminating against career women (Glick et al., 1997; Masser & Abrams, 2004). The effect of benevolent sexism is more subtle. Revering women as relationship partners helps men achieve satisfying intimate relationships but also preserves men's dominance by rewarding women for adopting traditional roles. For example, men who endorse benevolent sexism behave in more caring ways in relationships (Overall et al., 2011) and these benefits foster *women's* acceptance of benevolent sexism attitudes. In turn, however, endorsement and expression of benevolent sexism reduces women's career aspirations, work-related performance and confidence to adopt independent roles outside the home (e.g., Dardenne, Dumont, & Bollier, 2007; Rudman & Heppen, 2003).

Thus, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism operate as a system: hostile sexism threatens power-challenging women outside the relationship domain whereas benevolent sexism is directed toward supportive women within intimate relationships. Glick et al. (1997; Study 2) found that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism expressed more negative evaluations of career women, but hostile sexism was not associated with evaluations of homemakers. In contrast, men who endorsed benevolent sexism expressed more positive evaluations of homemakers, but benevolent sexism was not associated with evaluations of career women. Other research also supports that non-traditional subtypes ('sexual temptresses') elicit hostile attitudes whereas traditional subtypes (homemakers) trigger benevolent attitudes (e.g., Sibley & Wilson, 2004). According to Glick et al. (1997), categorizing women as competitive 'women out there' versus supportive 'relationship partners' helps men avoid feeling conflicted about women and fulfil the drive to preserve societal dominance while maintaining the wellbeing of intimate relationships.

Yet, research indicates that the endorsement of hostile sexism also influences how men evaluate and react to romantic partners. For example, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are more accepting of violent behavior and verbal aggression toward intimate partners (Forbes et al., 2004; Forbes, Jobe, White, Bloesch, & Adams-Curtis, 2005; Glick et al., 2002; Yamawaki, Ostenson, & Brown, 2009), particularly when those partners are seen to be challenging men's authority (e.g., partners who "do not behave well should be treated severely", Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009, p. 771). Moreover, men who strongly endorse hostile sexism exhibit greater hostility during conflict with their partner (Overall et al., 2011), experience heightened dissatisfaction when facing problems (Hammond & Overall, 2013), and are more afraid of intimacy (Yakushko, 2005). These findings indicate that the power concerns associated with hostile sexism are not restricted to maintaining dominance outside the home. Indeed, the power which women hold within relationships should be particularly threatening for men who endorse hostile sexism. For example, men's endorsement of hostile sexism encompasses beliefs that women want to control men, that relationship dependence leaves men exposed to being manipulated (e.g., being put "on a tight leash"; Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1996), and that men are shamed if they lose dominance in the relationship (Chen et al., 2009). Thus, the attitudes which hostile sexism expresses toward women in general should be readily applied to romantic partners. We tested this proposition by investigating whether hostile sexism is associated with negative perceptual biases in close relationships and, in turn, more negative relationship evaluations and behavior.

Hostile Sexism and Biased Perceptions

What is it about men's endorsement of hostile sexism that should bias their perception of women? Hostile sexism encompasses beliefs that men must compete for power over women, which stem from goals for group-centered dominance and the belief that outgroups are competitive (Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007). However, because hostile sexism also

recognizes the power women hold at the interpersonal level via women's responsibility for managing the domestic domain and ability to act as 'gatekeepers' of sex, hostile sexism attitudes also encompass concerns that women will use their interpersonal capability 'unfairly' in order to undermine men's power. For example, hostile sexism warns that women will use their sexuality to manipulate men and exploit intimate relationships to undermine men's power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Thus, echoing the broader competitive conceptualization of gender relations, men who endorse hostile sexism likely see relationships as a competition for control in which men's power will be usurped unless aggressively safeguarded.

If the antagonistic views which hostile sexism expresses toward women in general also apply within romantic relationships then endorsing hostile sexism should color men's perceptions of their intimate partners. Consistent with several models of social perception, individuals interpret the behavior of others in line with their existing beliefs about the world (for reviews see Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Noller & Ruzzene, 1991). For example, individuals who are more sensitive to rejection interpret others' behavior as more rejecting and negative than is warranted (e.g., Downey & Feldman, 1996). Similarly, extensive literature illustrates that the stereotypes individuals hold shapes perceptions of others' behavior. For example, people imbue the ambiguous behavior of an African American target with more hostility and threat when holding the stereotype that African Americans are dangerous (Devine, 1989; Lepore & Brown, 1997). Thus, the concerns expressed by hostile sexism about women in general should bias men's perceptions of their intimate partner's behavior. In particular, men who endorse hostile sexism are likely to be more cautious and untrusting of the intentions underlying their partner's behavior. Seen in the light that women seek to exploit men's relationship dependence, common relationship behaviors, such as criticism and affection, are likely to be perceived more negatively (i.e., even more critical and insulting or less affectionate and supportive than they actually are).

We did not expect men's endorsement of benevolent sexism would show the same pattern of bias. Although benevolent sexism works to maintain the same gender hierarchies as hostile sexism, benevolent sexism supports and reveres women's relationship power and capacity for intimacy, praising women for their loyalty and morality rather than warning about the dangers of manipulative and power-challenging women (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001). Accordingly, men who endorse benevolent sexism behave with more openness and care toward their partners (Overall et al., 2011) and report greater relationship satisfaction (Sibley & Becker, 2012). Benevolent sexism is also related to romanticized views of relationships (Hart, Hung, Glick, & Dinero, 2012), which may promote perceiving partners in an idealized and positive biased light (e.g., Murray et al., 2011). On the other hand, benevolent sexism is linked with negative evaluations of women who are portrayed as disloyal (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003), so such idealization may be attenuated when judging behaviors which have important implications for their relationship (see Fletcher & Kerr, 2010).

To test the links between sexist attitudes and biased perceptions, in the present research we asked both members of committed heterosexual couples to report on (1) their own and (2) their perceptions of their partner's behavior multiple times across a year (Study 1) and daily over a three-week period (Study 2). We assessed common behaviors that impact the functioning of intimate relationships, including negative (e.g., being critical or insulting) and positive (e.g., being support or affectionate) behaviors. To assess bias, we compared the perceptions of the partner's behavior to the behavior actually reported by the partner. We predicted that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism would perceive the behavior of their intimate partners as more negative than warranted based on their partner's reports. We also predicted that these negatively biased perceptions would have important consequences for men's relationship behavior and evaluations.

Consequences of Biased Perceptions

A bulk of research has shown negative biases are damaging for relationships. The more individuals possess negatively biased perceptions of their partner, the less able they are to maintain satisfaction, commitment and regard for their partner (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Miller & Rempel, 2004; Murray et al., 2011). In particular, perceiving negative or hurtful partner behavior undermines trust and satisfaction, and elicits retaliatory hostility and defensiveness (Gottman, 1994; Wieselquist, Rusbult, Foster, & Agnew, 1999). Accordingly, the negatively biased perceptions we expected to be associated with men's hostile sexism should produce relationship dissatisfaction and more negative behavior toward intimate partners.

These potential outcomes are particularly important given the existing links between men's hostile sexism and aggressive behavior toward intimate partners (e.g., Forbes et al., 2004; Overall et al., 2011) and lower relationship satisfaction (e.g., Sibley & Becker, 2012). The current research extends prior research by testing whether men's hostile sexism is associated with more hostility and dissatisfaction within relationships because they hold more negatively biased perceptions of their partner's behavior. Figure 2.1 outlines our predictions. We propose that the beliefs within hostile sexism that women are competitive and vying for control are applied to intimate partners. These expectations should color men's perceptions such that they overestimate the negativity of their partner's behavior. In turn, these negatively biased perceptions should be associated with more negative relationship evaluations and more hostile behavior toward partners. Thus, we predicted that negatively biased perceptions of the partner's behavior would mediate the links between men's hostile sexism and relationship evaluations and behavior.

We also predicted that a central outcome of negatively biased perceptions of the partner would be feeling manipulated. Men's endorsement of hostile sexism should be

associated with feeling more manipulated by their partner because of beliefs that men are vulnerable to being undermined or humiliated by women who are seen as “manipulative temptresses” (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 494). Importantly, the extent to which men who endorse hostile sexism feel manipulated by their partners should be a function of their more negative perceptions of their partner’s behavior. This test captures a key element of Ambivalent Sexism Theory that men who endorse hostile sexism resent more critical and unsupportive behavior because they see this behavior as partners using an ‘unfair’ relationship position to purposefully undermine their power.

Current Research

The current research represents the first test of whether hostile sexism influences actual evaluations of women and whether these evaluations are biased. Prior research has focused on the links between hostile sexism and ratings of described categories of women (e.g., career women vs. homemaker; Glick et al., 1997), vignettes of hypothetical women (e.g., Masser & Abrams, 2004; Sibley & Wilson, 2004), or attitudes toward potential relationship partners (e.g., Chen et al., 2009). In contrast, we assessed perceptions of current romantic partners multiple times across a year (Study 1) and daily across a three-week period (Study 2). Moreover, by gathering data from both couple members, we assessed the degree to which perceptions of the partner’s behavior were biased by comparing perceptions with the partner’s reports of that behavior.

As summarized in Figure 2.1, we expected that: (1) men’s hostile sexism would be associated with more negatively biased perceptions of the partner’s behavior, (2) such negatively biased perceptions would predict feeling more manipulated by the partner, reduced relationship evaluations, and increased negative behavior toward the partner, and (3) more negative perceptions of the partner’s behavior would mediate the links between men’s hostile sexism and feeling more manipulated, lower relationship evaluations, and more hostile

behavior toward the partner. Thus, in addition to representing the first examination of how hostile sexism shapes cognition and behavior as relationships develop over time, the current studies are the first to test a central reason underlying the link between hostile sexism and aggressive behavior toward women: men who endorse hostile sexism perceive their female partner's behavior more negatively than it actually is.

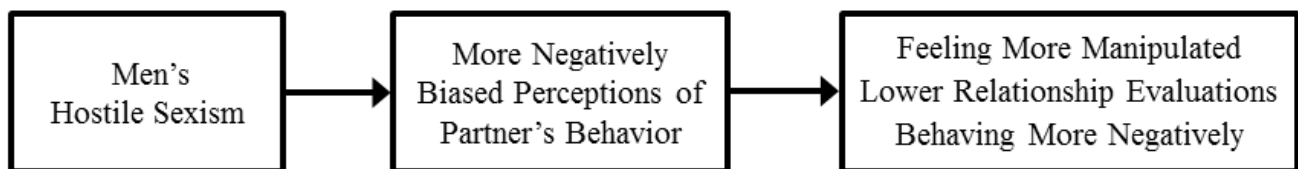


Figure 2.1. The hypothesized links between men's hostile sexism, biased perceptions of the partner's behavior, and relationship

STUDY 1

Method

Participants

Eighty-six heterosexual couples replied to recruitment advertisements posted around a New Zealand university. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 45 ($M=21.86$, $SD=4.08$) and they were involved in long-term, committed relationships with a mean length of 2.58 years ($SD=1.70$). Participants reported their relationship status as married (11.6%), cohabitating (43%), serious (39.5%) or steady (5.8%).

Procedure

Couples completed five questionnaires across a 1-year period. The first questionnaire was completed as part of an initial laboratory session. Participants were then mailed a separate set of questionnaires four times over the following year at three month intervals. Fifteen couples from the initial sample did not complete at least one follow up questionnaire (required for the current analyses) leaving the sample described above. Over the year, some couples did not complete all questionnaires either because they chose not to or because the relationship dissolved (Subsequent N s across each 3-month phase: 82, 68, 66, 57). On average, individuals who remained across the study perceived their partner's behavior to be relatively less negative at the initial session ($M_{Diff} = -0.37$, $SE = 0.19$, $df = 169$, $t = 1.96$, $p = .05$), highlighting the importance of perceptions of the partner's behavior. Importantly, our analytic approach accounts for sample attrition by weighting the estimates according to how many measurements exist for each couple.

Measures

Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism. At the initial session, participants completed a short-form version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). hostile sexism was indexed by the average of six items, such as "Women seek to gain power by

getting control over men” and “Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash” ($-3 = \textit{strongly disagree}$, $3 = \textit{strongly agree}$; $\alpha = .68$). Six items also assessed benevolent sexism (e.g., “Women should be cherished and protected by men”; $\alpha = .63$). These short-form scales demonstrate strong correlations ($r_s > .90$) with the full scales, good across-time reliability (Sibley & Perry, 2010), and predict observed relationship behavior (Overall et al., 2011).

Own and Perceptions of Partner’s Relationship Behavior. At all five measurement phases, participants reported on their own and their partner’s conflict behavior over the prior three months (i.e., the time since the prior measurement phase). Participants were asked to think about times in the prior three months when their partner behaved in ways that caused relationship problems or conflict, and rated items assessing the communication strategies they used to change their partner’s behavior. Six items assessed negative strategies (e.g., “I insulted or put down my partner to make him/her change”) and six items assessed positive strategies (e.g., “I encouraged my partner to express their thoughts and feelings about what I wanted changed”). Positive items were reverse-scored and all items were averaged so that higher scores indicated more negative behavior (average α across the five measurement phases = .83). Participants completed analogue items which assessed perceptions of the partner’s behavior over the prior three months, such as “My partner insulted or put me down to make me change”, “My partner encouraged me to express my thoughts and feelings about what he/she wanted changed” (average $\alpha = .83$).

Relationship Quality. At each phase participants also completed the 7-item Perceived Relationship Quality Components (PRQC) inventory (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000), which assesses *satisfaction, commitment, closeness, trust, passion, love, and romance* (e.g., “How close is your relationship?”; $1 = \textit{not at all}$, $7 = \textit{extremely}$; average $\alpha = .88$).

Table 2.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Measures at the Initial Session (Study 1).

	Men	Women	Gender Diff.					
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	<i>t</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Hostile Sexism	0.13 (1.16)	-0.49 (1.05)	3.68*	.23*	.28*	-.01	-.11	-.00
2. Benevolent Sexism	0.51 (1.02)	0.30 (1.09)	1.29	.30*	.12	-.03	.12	.02
3. Negative Behavior	3.01 (0.80)	3.16 (1.04)	-1.06	.32*	.10	.43*	.59*	-.48*
4. Perceptions of Partner's Negative Behavior	3.39 (1.06)	3.41 (1.30)	-0.83	.28*	.16	.54*	.44*	-.54*
5. Relationship Quality	6.07 (0.57)	6.04 (0.69)	0.08	.06	.15	-.26*	-.38*	.46*

Note. Possible scores range from -3 to 3 for Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism, and 1-7 for all other scales. Bold correlations on the diagonal represent correlations across partners. Correlations above the diagonal are for women; correlations below the diagonal are for men. * $p < .05$.

Results

Hostile Sexism and Biased Perceptions

Descriptive statistics and correlations for measures at the initial session are presented in Table 2.1. As predicted, men who endorsed hostile sexism possessed more negative perceptions of their partner's behavior. To assess whether these perceptions were biased, however, requires comparing the perceptions of the partner's negative behavior with the partner's actual reported behavior, the standard benchmark for assessing bias within intimate relationships (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Gagné & Lydon, 2004; West & Kenny, 2011). We employed the analytic strategy for assessing bias developed by West and Kenny (2011) using the measures across all five time points. The basic multilevel model is as follows:

$$P_{ij} = b_{0j} + b_{1j}(\text{partner's reported negative behavior at time } i) + e_{ij} \quad (1)$$

In this equation, perceptions of the partner's negative behavior (P) by person j at a particular time point (i) is a function of an intercept (b_0 for person j), the partner's self-reported negative behavior (b_1) for that time point (i for person j), and an error term (e_{ij}). As specified by West and Kenny (2011), perceptions of the partner's behavior (the outcome variable) were centered on the partner's reports of his/her behavior by subtracting the grand mean of partner-reported behavior from individuals' perceptions of their partner's behavior. This centering strategy means that the intercept represents the difference between the partner's reported behavior and perceptions of that behavior or *bias*. A positive intercept indicates that perceivers generally overestimated the negativity of their partner's behavior.

To test whether bias was greater for men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism, we entered hostile sexism (grand-mean centered) as a predictor of the level 1 intercept (which modeled bias). Consistent with prior research, and because hostile sexism and benevolent sexism are positively associated (see Table 2.1), we also entered benevolent sexism as a simultaneous predictor of bias (see Equation 2).

$$b_{0j} = B_{00} + B_{01}(\text{hostile sexism}) + B_{02}(\text{benevolent sexism}) + u_{0j} \quad (2)$$

Our key research question concerning whether men's hostile sexism produced more biased perceptions is tested by Equation 2. However, in addition to modeling bias, the effect of the partner's reported negative behavior (b_1 in Equation 1) assesses tracking accuracy. This represents the degree to which perceptions of the partner's negative behavior correspond to changes in the partner's self-reported behavior across time points (see West & Kenny, 2011). We expected that all participants would demonstrate high levels of tracking accuracy, indicating perceptions were capturing how behavior varied across time in their relationships. In addition, although we hypothesized that men who endorsed hostile sexism would perceive their partner's behavior to be more negative, we expected this bias to be applied within the context of accurate recognition of high versus low levels of negative behavior enacted by the partner. Thus, we did not expect that hostile sexism would be associated with differences in tracking accuracy. Nonetheless, to be complete we also added hostile sexism and benevolent sexism as simultaneous predictors of tracking accuracy (see Equation 3).

$$b_{1j} = B_{00} + B_{11}(\text{hostile sexism}) + B_{12}(\text{benevolent sexism}) + u_{0j} \quad (3)$$

All analyses were conducted using the MIXED procedure in SPSS 20. Following multilevel modelling procedures for repeated measures data within dyads (Kenny, Kashy & Cook, 2006), we used a no-intercept model to simultaneously estimate model parameters for men and women separately. Models allowed the error variances to differ for men and women and allowed errors for a given time to be correlated. Both models also allowed directional bias (b_{0j}) and tracking accuracy (b_{1j}) to vary by male and female perceivers for each dyad (i.e., be random variables) and these effects to covary within and across dyad members. See Overall, Fletcher and Kenny (2012) for associated SPSS syntax.

The results are shown in Table 2.2. The intercept assessing bias was positive and significant indicating that both men and women generally overestimated the negativity of

their partner's behavior across the year, but also accurately tracked changes in their partner's behavior across the year. Examining the effects of sexist attitudes, as predicted (and shown in bold), men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were more biased – they perceived more negative behavior than was reported by their partners. In contrast, men's benevolent sexism and women's sexism were not associated with bias (see Table 2.2). There were also no significant associations between sexist attitudes and tracking accuracy. Thus, men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism recognized when their partner was behaving more versus less negatively, but consistently perceived their partner's behavior more negatively than their partner's reports indicated was justified.

Alternative Explanations. We ran a series of additional analyses to rule out several alternative explanations, including whether the bias associated with men's hostile sexism was due to individual's own negative behavior being projected onto partners (i.e., assumed similarity; see Gagné & Lydon, 2004; Kenny, & Acitelli, 2001) or due to individual differences such as general aggressiveness or dissatisfaction. Although own negative behavior ($B = .41, t = 6.33, p < .001$) and more negative relationship evaluations ($B = -.29, t = -3.88, p < .001$) predicted more negative perceptions of the partner's behavior, the bias associated with men's hostile sexism was not reduced when controlling for these variables ($B = .15, t = 2.34, p = .02$ and $B = .21, t = 2.91, p = .01$ respectively) and hostile sexism was not moderated by these variables ($B = -.01, t = -0.17, p = .87$ and $B = .06, t = 0.98, p = .33$). These additional analyses provide good evidence that the bias associated with men's hostile sexism is specific to the beliefs hostile sexism encompasses rather than the result of more global negativity or general aggressiveness toward partners.¹

¹ We reran all analyses across both studies including an additional interaction term which tested whether the effects of hostile sexism on bias and relationship outcomes was moderated by levels of benevolent sexism. No significant interactions emerged, and the addition of the interaction term did not alter any of the effects reported.

Table 2.2 The Effects of Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism on Directional Bias and Tracking Accuracy of Perceptions of the Partner's Negative Behavior (Study 1).

	Men's Perceptions of Partner's Negative Behavior			Women's Perceptions of Partner's Negative Behavior			Gender Differences in Bias and Accuracy		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Directional bias	.29	.08	3.46**	.32	.12	2.78**	-.02	.07	-0.24
Tracking accuracy	.27	.07	3.86**	.17	.08	1.97*	.05	.05	0.99
<i>Effect of Hostile Sexism</i>									
Directional bias	.20	.07	2.63*	-.10	.11	-0.92	.15	.07	2.24*
Tracking accuracy	-.08	.05	-1.41	.09	.09	0.98	-.08	.05	-1.60
<i>Effect of Benevolent Sexism</i>									
Directional bias	-.05	.08	-0.64	.08	.11	0.80	-.07	.07	-1.02
Tracking accuracy	-.00	.06	-0.04	-.14	.07	-1.84	.07	.05	1.38

Note. The first two columns present results from models simultaneously calculating all effects for men and women accounting for the dependence across couple members. Predicted effects are presented in bold. The final column presents tests of whether the effects differed across gender. ** $p < .01$. * $p \leq .05$.

Consequences of Biased Perceptions

We predicted that biased perceptions would lead to lower relationship quality and greater negative behavior toward the partner (see Figure 2.1). We ran two sets of models to examine these consequences, simultaneously calculating model parameters separately for men and women using procedures for modeling repeated measures dyadic data (Kenny et al., 2006). The first set of models regressed relationship quality and negative behavior toward the partner on hostile sexism and benevolent sexism to assess whether men's hostile sexism was directly associated with relationship quality and negative behavior toward the partner. The second set of models tested whether hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, and perceptions of the partner's behavior predicted residual change in (1) relationship quality and (2) negative behavior toward the partner (described further below) to assess whether more negative perceptions of the partner's behavior (controlling for hostile sexism and benevolent sexism) were associated with the predicted negative consequences. Third, we calculated indirect effects to test whether men's endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with lower relationship quality and more negative behavior via more negative perceptions of the partner's negative behavior. Predictor variables were grand-mean centered.

Direct Effects of Men's Hostile Sexism. The direct effects of men's endorsement of hostile sexism and benevolent sexism are presented in the upper section of Table 2.3. Men's endorsement of hostile sexism predicted greater negative behavior toward partners over the year but, unexpectedly, was not directly related to relationship quality. However, a non-significant direct effect does not rule out the possibility that hostile sexism is associated with relationship quality via perceptions of the partner's behavior (see Rucker, Preacher, Tormala, & Petty, 2011), which is tested in the following models. There were no significant effects for women's endorsement of hostile sexism or benevolent sexism ($ts = -0.84$ to 1.86).

Effects of Perceiving More Negative Behavior. Next we examined whether more negative perceptions of the partner's behavior predicted (1) lower relationship quality and (2) more negative behavior toward partners (controlling for hostile sexism and benevolent sexism). To illustrate, relationship quality of individual j at time i was modeled as a function of (a) relationship quality measured at time $i-1$ so any significant effects represent prediction of *residual change* in relationship quality over the three-month phase; (b) perceptions of the partner's negative behavior over the prior three months; (c) the partner's reported negative behavior so that any effects of perceptions were over and above actual levels of the partner's behavior (i.e., represented bias); (d) hostile sexism and (e) benevolent sexism. Similar models were run to assess own negative behavior as the outcome, but because participants reported on their negative behavior over the previous three months (compared to current relationship quality), these models predicted own negative behavior at time $i+1$ from perceptions of the partner's behavior at time i , controlling for own and partner-reported negative behavior at phase i . The focal results from both models are presented in the lower section of Table 2.3. As predicted, more negative perceptions of the partner's behavior predicted reductions in relationship quality and subsequent increases in own negative behavior toward the partner.

Indirect Effects of Men's Hostile Sexism. The indirect effects and associated confidence intervals testing whether men's hostile sexism was associated with (1) lower relationship quality and (2) greater negative behavior toward the partner via more negative perceptions of that partner's behavior are shown in the upper section of Table 2.4. The confidence intervals did not overlap zero, indicating that men who strongly endorse hostile sexism experienced poorer relationship quality and behaved more negatively toward partners because they possessed more negative perceptions of their partner's behavior.

Table 2.3 Analyses examining the effects of Hostile Sexism, Benevolent Sexism and Perceptions of the Partner's Negative Behavior on Relationship Quality and Own Negative Behavior Directed toward the Partner (Study 1).

	Relationship Quality			Own Negative Behavior toward the Partner		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
<i>Model 1</i>						
Men's Hostile Sexism	-.02	.03	-0.78	.15	.06	2.46*
Men's Benevolent Sexism	.08	.03	2.42*	.01	.07	0.12
<i>Model 2</i>						
Men's Hostile Sexism	-.03	.03	-0.88	.03	.03	0.94
Men's Benevolent Sexism	.03	.04	0.91	-.01	.04	0.45
Perceptions of Partner's Negative Behavior	-.12	.04	3.01*	.14	.05	3.18**
Partner's Self-Reported Negative Behavior	-.08	.04	-1.82	.00	.04	0.05

Note. These effects were calculated using dyadic models that simultaneously calculated effects for women and men accounting for the dependence across couple members. The table presents the results for men only. There were no significant effects of women's hostile sexism or benevolent sexism. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 2.4 Indirect effects between Men's Hostile Sexism and relationship outcomes mediated by (more negative) perceptions of the partner's behavior as shown in Figure 2.1 (Study 1 and 2).

Indirect Effect Tested	Indirect Effect	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower Limit	Upper Limit
<i>Study 1</i>			
Men's Hostile Sexism → Perceptions of Negativity → Relationship Quality	-.023	-.051	-.005
Men's Hostile Sexism → Perceptions of Negativity → Negative Behavior	.028	.005	.061
<i>Study 2</i>			
Men's Hostile Sexism → Perceptions of Negativity → Daily Felt Manipulated	.087	.044	.144
Men's Hostile Sexism → Perceptions of Negativity → Daily Relationship Satisfaction	-.117	-.189	-.044
Men's Hostile Sexism → Perceptions of Negativity → Daily Negative Behavior	.114	.043	.182

Note. Estimates for paths between variables (indicated by →) are displayed in Tables 2 and 3 (Study 1) and Tables 6 and 7 (Study 2).

Asymmetric Confidence intervals were calculated following Mackinnon, Fritz, Williams and Lockwood (2007). Confidence intervals which do not overlap '0' can be considered significant.

Discussion

In Study 1, both members of heterosexual couples reported on the frequency of their own, and their partner's, negative versus positive behavior five times across a year. Individuals tended to overestimate the extent to which their partner had behaved negatively when compared to the level of negative behavior their partner reported. As predicted, this negative bias was stronger the more men endorsed hostile sexism and, in turn, these more negative perceptions predicted lower relationship quality and more negative behavior (see Figure 2.1).

STUDY 2

The longitudinal design of Study 1 allowed us to examine perceptions over one year in ongoing relationships. However, the measures relied on participants to recall their own and their partner's behavior over the prior three months. This introduces error because (1) people's recollections tend to attribute positive events to themselves and emphasize the role of others in negative events (Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde, & Hankin, 2004), and (2) people are more likely to attend and react to their partners' negativity relative to positive behavior, and so negative behavior may have had more influence on perceptions (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). Thus, in Study 2 we reduced recall bias by asking couples to report on their own and their perceptions of their partner's behavior at the end of every day for three-weeks. Using the analytic method presented in Study 1, we tested whether men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism overestimated the negativity of their partner's behavior by comparing perceptions of the partner's behavior to the partner's self-reported behavior. We also measured daily outcomes to test whether more negatively biased perceptions were associated with feeling more manipulated by the partner, experiencing lower relationship satisfaction, and behaving more negatively toward the partner.

Method

Participants

Seventy-eight heterosexual couples replied to recruitment advertisements posted around a NZ university. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 48 years ($M=22.44$, $SD=4.82$) and they were involved in long-term committed relationships, with a mean length of 2.58 years ($SD=1.99$). Participants' relationships were characterized as married (10.3%), cohabitating (34.6%), serious (48.7%) or steady (6.4%).

Procedure

Demographic information and assessment of sexist attitudes were gathered during an initial session. Participants received detailed instructions regarding the web-based diary they were asked to complete at the end of each day for the following three weeks. Participants were reimbursed \$90 NZD for completing all study components.

Materials

Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism. Participants completed the full version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) which comprised 11 items for each scale ($-3 = strongly disagree$; $3 = strongly agree$). Items were averaged to construct overall scores for hostile sexism ($\alpha=.85$) and benevolent sexism ($\alpha = .79$).

Relationship Quality. Participants completed the 7-item PRQC described in Study 1 ($\alpha = .81$).

Daily Questionnaires

Participants completed an average of 19.3 entries (92%). Items asked participants to report on their own and their partner's behavior each day, feelings of being manipulated by the partner, relationship satisfaction and conflict. All items were presented on a scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 7 (*Very Much*).

Relationship Behavior. Participants rated five items that captured similar behaviors assessed in Study 1 and have been previously validated to assess important daily behaviors

which shape relationship outcomes (see Overall & Sibley, 2010): “I acted in a way that could be hurtful to my partner”, “I was critical or unpleasant toward my partner”, “I shared and discussed my feelings and opinions with my partner”, “I was affectionate and loving toward my partner” and “I was supportive to my partner”. Positively-valenced items were reverse-scored and then items were averaged so that higher scores indicated more negative behavior that day ($\alpha = .76$). The same items were reworded to assess perceptions of the partner’s behavior (e.g., “My partner was critical or unpleasant toward me”; $\alpha = .83$).²

Feeling Manipulated, Relationship Satisfaction and Conflict were assessed each day by single items: “I felt manipulated by my partner”, “I was satisfied with our relationship”, and “I experienced conflict or disagreement with my partner”.

Results

Hostile Sexism and Biased Perceptions

Table 2.5 presents the descriptive statistics for both the initial questionnaire and daily measures. The structure of our data and analyses were the same as in Study 1. Measures of perceived behavior over the 21 days were nested within dyad and so we used the multilevel modeling procedures outlined by West and Kenny (2011) to test whether men’s endorsement of hostile sexism predicted more biased perceptions of their partner’s negative behavior. The resulting model was equivalent to Equations 1-3 (Study 1), with time points (*i*) representing the daily measures across the three-week diary period. As before, we simultaneously estimated model parameters for men and women controlling for the dependence across couple members.

² The behaviors assessed in Study 1 and 2 were designed to capture the range of behaviors outlined by Rusbult and colleagues (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991; Wieselquist et al., 1999) as important for relationship functioning. Consistent with this work and prior research examining the impact of behavior and perceptions in close relationships (e.g., Overall et al., 2011; Overall & Hammond, 2013; Overall & Sibley, 2010), we combined positive and negative behaviors into one index. However, analyzing our results for positive and negative behaviors separately revealed that the bias associated with hostile sexism (and the links between behaviors and relationship outcomes) were stronger for negative behaviors than positive behaviors, consistent with the sensitivity to negativity typically shown in relationships (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2001; Gottman, 1998).

Table 2.5 Descriptive Statistics for Questionnaire and Daily Diary Measures (Study 2).

	Men	Women	Gender Diff.	Correlations between Questionnaire Measures		
				Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	<i>t</i>
<i>Questionnaire Measures</i>						
1. Hostile Sexism	.09 (1.14)	-.06 (1.19)	0.76	.44*	.14	.12
2. Benevolent Sexism	.32 (0.99)	-.19 (1.01)	3.19*	.39*	.25*	.13
3. Relationship Quality	6.12 (0.63)	6.12 (0.61)	-0.02	-.07	.15	.24*
<i>Daily Measures</i>						
Negative Behavior	2.27 (1.05)	2.37 (1.10)				
Perceptions of Partner's Negative Behavior	2.29 (1.16)	2.32 (1.23)				
Relationship Satisfaction	5.87 (1.44)	5.88 (1.50)				
Relationship Conflict	2.47 (1.84)	2.54 (1.90)				

Note. Possible scores range from -3 to 3 for Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism and 1-7 for all other measures.

Bold correlations on the diagonal represent correlations across partners. Correlations above the diagonal are for women; correlations below the diagonal are for men. * $p < .05$.

The results from the analysis assessing bias and accuracy are presented in Table 2.6. The intercept assessing bias did not significantly differ from zero, indicating that on average participants did not under- or overestimate the degree to which their partner behaved negatively. Both men and women were also very accurate at tracking changes in their partner's negative behavior across days.

Examining the effects of sexist attitudes, as predicted (and shown in bold), men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism overestimated the degree to which their partner behaved negatively on a daily basis. Also consistent with Study 1, hostile sexism was not significantly associated with tracking accuracy, indicating that men who endorsed hostile sexism demonstrated consistent negative bias across both high and low levels of their partner's actual negative behavior. Unlike Study 1, men who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism underestimated the degree to which their partners behaved negatively. There were no significant effects of women's hostile sexism or benevolent sexism.

Alternative Explanations. As in Study 1, we tested whether the negative bias associated with men's hostile sexism was simply due to assumed similarity or more global negativity by controlling for men's own negative behavior and relationship evaluations. The more men behaved negatively, the more they exhibited greater bias ($B = .63, t = 17.49, p < .001$), but men's own negative behavior did not account for ($B = .09, t = 2.53, p = .01$) or moderate ($B = .00, t = 0.07, p = .95$) the link between men's hostile sexism and bias. The bias linked with hostile sexism also remained when controlling for daily relationship satisfaction, feeling manipulated, or initial relationship quality ($Bs > .16, ts > 2.66, ps < .01$). Similarly, although greater daily conflict was associated with greater bias ($B = .20, t = 15.14, p < .001$), conflict did not moderate ($B = .02, t = 1.43, p = .15$) or account for ($B = .23, t = 3.50, p < .001$) the bias linked with hostile sexism. The positive bias associated with benevolent sexism was not as robust, and was eliminated when controlling for men's own

Table 2.6 The Effects of Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism on Directional Bias and Tracking Accuracy of Perceptions of the Partner's Daily Negative Behavior (Study 2).

	Men's Perceptions of Partner's Negative Behavior			Women's Perceptions of Partner's Negative Behavior			Gender Differences in Bias and Accuracy		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Directional bias	-.02	.08	-0.32	.00	.08	0.03	-.01	.02	-0.63
Tracking accuracy	.63	.04	15.55**	.74	.05	16.55**	-.02	.02	-0.97
<i>Effect of Hostile Sexism</i>									
Directional bias	.19	.06	3.21**	-.05	.05	-0.93	.12	.02	5.29*
Tracking accuracy	.04	.04	1.07	-.00	.04	-0.04	.03	.02	1.43
<i>Effect of Benevolent Sexism</i>									
Directional bias	-.20	.06	-3.05**	.10	.06	1.59	-.07	.03	-2.30*
Tracking accuracy	-.05	.04	-1.18	.05	.04	1.20	-.02	.03	-0.79

Note. The first two columns present results from models simultaneously calculating all effects for men and women accounting for the dependence across couple members. Predicted effects are presented in bold. The final column presents tests of whether the effects differed across gender. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

behavior ($B = -.06, t = -1.56, p = .12$) suggesting this may be due to projecting one's own positive behavior onto the partner (Kenny, & Acitelli, 2001).³

Consequences of Biased Perceptions

We next tested whether the negatively biased perceptions of men who endorsed hostile sexism were associated with feeling more manipulated, less satisfied, and behaving more negatively toward the partner. As in Study 1, we examined this in three steps by (1) running a first set of models examining whether hostile sexism (and benevolent sexism) were directly associated with each of these daily outcomes, (2) running a second set of models testing whether perceptions of the partner's negative behavior predicted these daily outcomes controlling for hostile sexism (and benevolent sexism), and then (3) calculating indirect effects to test whether men's endorsement of hostile sexism was linked with these negative daily outcomes via more negatively biased perceptions of their partner's behavior.

Direct Effects of Men's Hostile Sexism. The direct effects of men's endorsement of hostile sexism and benevolent sexism are presented in the upper section of Table 2.7. As expected, men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism felt more manipulated by their partners, were less satisfied in their relationships, and behaved more negatively toward their partners on a daily basis. There were no significant effects for women's endorsement of hostile sexism or benevolent sexism ($ts = -0.89$ to 1.35).

Effects of Perceiving Greater Negative Behavior. Using the same analytic strategy reported in Study 1, we next examined whether more negative perceptions of the partner's behavior predicted residual increases in daily feelings of being manipulated, reductions in daily satisfaction, and increased negative behavior toward the partner (controlling for hostile sexism, benevolent sexism and the partner's level of self-reported negative behavior). The

³ In Study 2, we also assessed depressive symptoms which also predict more negative perceptions of partner's daily behavior (Overall & Hammond, 2013). Controlling for depressive symptoms did not reduce the links between men's hostile sexism and biased perceptions ($B = .18, t = 3.00, p < .01$).

focal results are presented in the lower section of Table 2.7. As predicted, greater perceptions of a partner's negative behavior on a given day was associated with significant increases in feeling manipulated, decreases in satisfaction, and greater negative behavior toward that partner that day.

Indirect Effects of Men's Hostile Sexism. The lower section of Table 2.4 presents the indirect effects between men's hostile sexism and feeling manipulated, relationship satisfaction and own negative behavior *via* perceptions of the partner's negative behavior. The confidence intervals did not overlap zero indicating that men who endorsed hostile sexism felt more manipulated, experienced lower satisfaction, and behaved more negatively because they perceived more negative behavior from the partner. Moreover, the effect of men's hostile sexism on these daily outcomes was no longer significant when controlling for perceptions of the partner's behavior (see lower section of Table 2.7), providing evidence that negatively biased perceptions of the partner's behavior fully mediated these links.

Table 2.7 Analyses examining the effects of Hostile Sexism, Benevolent Sexism and Daily Perceptions of the Partner's Negative Behavior on Feeling Manipulated by the Partner, Relationship Satisfaction, and Own Negative Behavior Directed toward the Partner (Study 2)

	Feeling Manipulated by the Partner			Relationship Satisfaction			Own Negative Behavior toward the Partner		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
<i>Model 1</i>									
Men's Hostile Sexism	.24	.08	3.03**	-.18	.08	-2.14*	.19	.07	2.69**
Men's Benevolent Sexism	-.22	.09	-2.49*	.03	.09	0.35	-.15	.08	-1.82
<i>Model 2</i>									
Men's Hostile Sexism	.10	.06	1.62	.01	.05	0.12	.04	.03	1.26
Men's Benevolent Sexism	-.15	.07	-2.17*	-.06	.06	-1.06	-.04	.04	-0.97
Perceptions of Partner's Negative Behavior	.46	.03	13.64**	-.61	.03	-19.31**	.59	.02	31.54**
Partner's Self-Reported Negative Behavior	.09	.03	2.63**	-.13	.03	-4.36**	.13	.02	6.97**

Note. These effects were calculated using dyadic models that simultaneously calculated effects for women and men accounting for the dependence across couple members. The table presents the results for men only. There were no significant effects of women's hostile sexism or benevolent sexism. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Discussion

Study 2 replicated and extended the findings from Study 1 by showing men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism overestimated the negativity of their partner's daily behavior. In turn, more negatively biased perceptions were associated with feeling more manipulated by the partner, lower relationship satisfaction, and greater negative behavior toward the partner (see Figure 2.1). These effects were generally stronger than in Study 1 probably because the daily diary method reduced error in assessing both the partners' behavior and perceptions of that behavior, and also tested more immediate daily outcomes of perceived behavior. Finally, unlike Study 1, men's benevolent sexism predicted more positive perceptions of the partner's behavior, although this bias was eliminated when controlling for men's own relationship behavior indicating this effect might be due to projection or assumed similarity rather than being specific to more benign interpretations of the partner's behavior.

General Discussion

Hostile sexism expresses animosity toward women who challenge men's power and encompasses expectations that women will try to control men by exploiting their relational dependence (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The current studies tested whether these antagonistic beliefs about women bias men's perceptions of their intimate (female) partner's behavior, and whether such negatively biased perceptions account, at least in part, for the dissatisfaction and aggressive behavior linked with men's endorsement of hostile sexism in close relationships. Both members of committed heterosexual couples reported on their own and their partner's behavior five times across a 1-year period (Study 1) and every day for a three-week period (Study 2). As hypothesized, men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism perceived their partner's behavior as more negative than was justified by their partner's reports. In turn, these more negative perceptions meant that men who endorsed hostile sexism felt more manipulated by their partner, behaved more negatively toward their partner, and

experienced lower relationship satisfaction (over and above the negativity reported by those partners). These results highlight that the negative characterization of women contained within hostile sexism is not restricted to women outside the relationship domain who challenge men's societal power, but also color perceptions of intimate partners. The findings also suggest that more negatively biased perceptions of intimate partner's behavior foster negative behavior and dissatisfaction within close relationships, limiting the degree to which men who endorse hostile sexism will experience fulfilling, rewarding relationships.

Hostile Sexism and Biased Perceptions of Intimate Partners

The current research is the first to show that endorsement of hostile sexism biases men's perceptions of women's behavior. Prior research has shown that men who endorse hostile sexism evaluate descriptions of feminists and career women more negatively (e.g., Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). In the current studies, we repeatedly assessed perceptions of actual women who men repeatedly interacted with across time. Moreover, by comparing men's perceptions to the partner's reports, we assessed not just whether perceptions were more negative but more biased. As predicted, men who endorsed hostile sexism consistently perceived women's behavior more negatively than was justified. Moreover, these negatively biased perceptions occurred within the context of committed heterosexual relationships revealing that the attitudes expressed by hostile sexism are not restricted to women who subvert men's societal dominance. Although prior theory and research has focused on how men's hostile sexism asserts their societal power (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001), the power concerns associated with men's hostile sexism should also arise within intimate contexts. In no other context are men's desires and goals so dependent on women (and vice versa). Furthermore, such relational dependence leaves intimate partners vulnerable to exploitation, and men who endorse hostile sexism believe women will exploit their dependence to undermine their power. As our data reveal, such concerns mean men who

endorse hostile sexism will be more likely to see common relationship behaviors, such as being critical or supportive, as more negative and underhanded than their partners intended.

Our results also demonstrate that the negatively biased perceptions of men who endorse hostile sexism will limit the degree to which they (and their partners) can experience fulfilling and rewarding relationships. A wealth of research has shown that relationships thrive when partners perceive one another more positively (e.g., Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Murray et al., 2011). In contrast, perceiving the partner more negatively damages trust and feelings of security and tends to trigger retaliatory behavior toward the partner (Gottman, 1994; Murray et al., 2003). We also expected that, given their fears regarding women's motivation to use relationships to control men, men who endorse hostile sexism would feel more manipulated when perceiving negativity. Accordingly, in the current studies, the negatively biased perceptions associated with men's hostile sexism were associated with feeling more manipulated, reduced relationship satisfaction, and increased negative behavior toward the partner.

These outcomes are consistent with prior research showing that endorsing hostile sexism attitudes is associated with more accepting attitudes of aggression toward intimate partners, greater hostile behavior when encountering relationship conflict, and lower relationship satisfaction (e.g., Forbes et al., 2004; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall et al., 2011). The current studies extend this prior work by showing that (1) men's endorsement of hostile sexism predicts more negative behavior and evaluations as relationships progress across time, and that (2) these aggressive reactions arise, at least in part, because men possess more negatively biased perceptions of their partner's behavior. Prior research has suggested that men's aggressive attitudes and behavior in relationship contexts represent coercive strategies focused on retaining power and personal autonomy (Forbes et al., 2004; 2005; Hart et al., 2012; Overall et al., 2012). However, no research has demonstrated that men

intentionally engage in hostility in order to dominate women. Regardless, the perceptual biases shown in the current research should play an important role in understanding the use of power-maintaining strategies because biased perceptions accentuate the degree to which relationship interactions are negative, competitive and challenging.

Finally, our research adds to the distinction between hostile versus benevolent sexist attitudes. A central tenet of Ambivalent Sexism Theory is that men's endorsement of benevolent sexism should promote men's relationship wellbeing. Accordingly, men's benevolent sexism predicted greater relationship quality (Study 1) and feeling less manipulated by partners (Study 2), and was associated with underestimating the negativity of the partners' behavior (Study 2). This positive bias may have occurred because men who endorse benevolent sexism possess romanticized views of relationships, such as believing in 'true love' (Hart et al., 2012) and that they are 'completed' and 'fulfilled' by intimate partners (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001). However, the effects of benevolent sexism were inconsistent across studies, and the positive bias only emerged in Study 2. Perhaps the behaviors assessed in Study 1 circumvented idealization because these behaviors concerned changing problematic partner behavior – a context which likely disrupts positive biases (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Overall et al., 2012) and directly opposes the image of a warm and loyal caretaker (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003). Isolating the relationship contexts in which benevolent sexism fosters positivity versus negative reactance is an important direction for future research.

Strengths, Caveats and Future Directions

The negative bias and associated interpersonal consequences associated with men's hostile sexism was replicated across two studies that repeatedly assessed both couple members' perceptions and behavior across a 1-year (Study 1) and three-week (Study 2) period. Assessing the reports of both couple members provides the means to test bias by

contrasting perceptions with the reported behavior of the partner. Using partner-reports as the benchmark is the typical way to assess bias within relationships (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Gagné & Lydon, 2004), and this measure of bias predicts important outcomes, such as declines in relationship quality and increases in conflict (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Miller & Rempel, 2004; Murray et al., 2011). In the current research, we also demonstrated that biased perceptions assessed in this way predict increased negative behavior and dissatisfaction.

Nonetheless, using the partner's reports of their own behavior as the benchmark to test the veracity of perceptions of that behavior has limitations. For example, perhaps the more aggressive behavior associated with men's hostile sexism results in partners protectively under-reporting or engaging in less negative behavior and this produces the greater bias associated with men's hostile sexism. Additional analyses showed this was not the case: there were no significant links between men's hostile sexism and their partner's self-reported negative behavior. Nonetheless, self-serving biases could mean that all partners, regardless of levels of hostile sexism, generally understated their negative behavior. Accordingly, individuals generally overestimated their partner's negative behavior in Study 1. This could be due to partner's recalling more positive self-relevant behavior, perceiver's recalling more negative other-relevant information, or both (Baumeister et al., 2001; Mezulis et al., 2004). When retrospective biases were minimized in Study 2, however, there was no bias evident at the sample level. Critically, across both studies, men's hostile sexism was associated with greater overestimation of the partner's negative behavior regardless of the average sample-level bias. Thus, even if self-serving biases influenced levels of bias, men's hostile sexism predicted meaningful increases in negative bias which were associated with important relationship outcomes over and above the negative effects of the partner's reported behavior.

Future investigations could extend these findings using alternative benchmarks, such as gathering ratings of behavior from third-parties (e.g., friends or family) or trained observers. These methods have similar challenges because other raters may protect their own relationship by devaluing others, misconstrue the meaning of behavior based on their own experiences, and lack knowledge of the wider relationship context which influences the meaning of behavior (Gagné & Lydon, 2004). Moreover, utilizing reports from within the relationship means we captured participants' relationship experiences within naturally-occurring interactions and as relationship progressed across time. Experimental tasks which assess biased perceptions are also unable to test the veracity of people's perceptions as they occur in real life or reveal how these shape ongoing relationships over time. Nonetheless, we expect that utilizing alternative methods will provide converging evidence – a good endeavor for future research.

By examining perceptions of common behaviors which frequently occur across couples' relationships and daily life, our results also offer a powerful demonstration of the pervasive impact of men's hostile sexism on relationships. In particular, men perceived their partner's behavior in a more negative light regardless of how positive or negative the partner actually behaved (shown by the null interaction between hostile sexism and tracking accuracy; see Overall et al., 2012; Overall & Hammond, 2013) or how much general negativity was occurring in the relationship, as indexed by men's own negative behavior and levels of conflict. These latter tests illustrate that men's hostile sexism produces bias across relationship contexts and is therefore not simply driven by a heightened reactivity to conflict or a negative interpersonal orientation. As argued above, we think this bias occurs because the interdependence inherent in all relationship interactions clashes with hostile sexism-related expectations that women seek to exploit such dependence, fostering chronic biases of the partner's behavior. Nonetheless, it is likely that such negative biases are further amplified

in very threatening contexts, such as dealing with suspected infidelity or when it seems their partner is no longer committed to the relationship. The low frequency of these behaviors in the committed couples we sampled mean it is unlikely that such events were captured by our studies, but investigation of these critical events is an important direction for future research.

Despite the significant strength of assessing perceptions across the course of couples' relationships, the correlational nature of the current studies prevents causal conclusions. There is little known about whether relationship perceptions or experiences shape the extent to which people agree with sexist ideologies. It is possible, for example, that men who perceive their romantic partners more negatively and/or have hurtful relationship experiences develop more hostile attitudes toward women (see Hart et al., 2012). However, relationship satisfaction should be a primary marker of such experiences, but relationship satisfaction (or feeling manipulated and own negative behavior) did not account for the biases associated with hostile sexism. Nonetheless, these links are likely reciprocal. For example, feeling manipulated by partners will likely strengthen beliefs that women exploit intimate contexts to control men. Identifying whether negatively biased perceptions, and its associated outcomes, bolster agreement with hostile sexism over time is an important goal for future investigations.

Finally, our samples represented a fairly conservative test of the effect of sexist attitudes because they were gathered in New Zealand, a country with relatively high levels of gender equality and relatively low endorsement of sexist attitudes (Brandt, 2011). Although endorsement of sexist attitudes differs across nations, the *effects* of benevolent sexism and hostile sexism are typically similar, including their contribution to maintaining gender inequality (Brandt, 2011) and justification of domestic violence (Glick et al., 2002; Yamawaki et al., 2009). Thus, hostile sexism should be associated with more negatively biased perceptions of intimate partner's behavior across nations. However, the effects of hostile sexism are likely to be more pronounced when negative stereotypes of women are

more salient and when women's relatively lower opportunity to gain power in career, legal or governmental domains may prompt fears that women will instead seek power within relationships.

Conclusions

The current research is the first to test whether men's endorsement of hostile sexism predicts biased perceptions of women's behavior. The results from two longitudinal studies of couples in ongoing, committed relationships illustrated that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism perceived their partner's behavior as more critical and less supportive than was merited based on their partner's reports of that behavior. In turn, these more negatively biased perceptions were detrimental for relationships, including feeling more manipulated by partners, experiencing lower relationship satisfaction, and behaving more negatively toward partners. These findings show that the antagonistic attitudes contained within hostile sexism extend to intimate contexts and shape men's interpretation of their female partners' behavior. Moreover, the results highlight that the negativity they read into their relationships is one key reason why men who endorse hostile sexism are dissatisfied and behave more negatively toward intimate partners.

Chapter Conclusion

Hostile sexism expresses aggressive and competitive views of women that provide men advantages over women in career and political domains. This chapter tested whether hostile sexism is simultaneously detrimental for men's relationships because the same hostility is brought into intimate relationships and biases views of intimate partners' behavior. Results across two studies indicate that men could not separate hostilely sexist views of women from their intimate partners—men who endorsed hostile sexism perceived their partner's behavior more negatively and so felt more manipulated, less satisfied, and behaved more aggressively. This research extends existing understanding of the stereotype processes linked with hostile sexism by demonstrating that intimate contexts *do* elicit negativity toward women—negativity that is not seen when assessing the evaluations elicited in response to stereotypical descriptions of groups (e.g., Glick et al., 1997), and is one reason why existing research has linked aggression with men's hostile sexism even in relatively committed romantic relationships (e.g., Forbes et al., 2004; Herrera, Expósito, & Moya, 2012; Overall et al., 2011).

The destructive behaviors and dissatisfaction linked with hostile sexism are an important part of ambivalent sexism theory because these pitfalls are one reason why sexism is ambivalent. The failures of hostile sexism in intimate domains works *against* men's advantages as a group by (1) impeding heterosexual men's fulfillment of fundamental needs for closeness and intimacy, and (2) prompting women to resist, rather than support, men's influence and power. Benevolent sexism arises to address these failures by romanticizing men as chivalrous and caring relationship partners, and more broadly, focusing on the benefits delivered to women by male partners to appeal for women's support of men's societal advantages (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Indeed, although not the focus of the current chapter, these studies were also consistent with the premise that benevolent

sexism functions to foster men's wellbeing in their intimate relationships. Men who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism tended to be more satisfied in their relationships and, moreover, perceived their partner's daily behaviors as *more* positive and caring than those partners' reports indicated. These results indicate that one pathway through which benevolent sexism facilitates men's fulfillment of intimacy needs is through idyllic relationship beliefs about being 'completed' by intimate partners that is more positive than reality. However, as I discuss next, benevolent sexism *also* functions from within intimate contexts to reinforce men's advantaged societal power.

CHAPTER THREE: MEN'S BENEVOLENT SEXISM IN INTIMATE CONTEXTS

Benevolent sexism is the component of ambivalent sexism that praises women's interpersonal qualities and prescribes that men ought to protect and care for women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism acknowledges heterosexual men's dependence on women for the fulfillment of needs for intimacy, emotional support and reproduction, and functions to facilitate men's satisfaction within intimate contexts by making men appear to be strong, reliable relationship partners (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998). Benevolent sexism paints a picture of intimate relationships in which men and women are mutually benefited by one another: Men are 'completed' by cherishing and protecting female partners who, in turn, receive this provision and happily adopt the role of warm, supportive caregivers. However, the subjectively positive appearance of benevolent attitudes means that benevolent sexism functions from within romantic, intimate contexts to maintain men's power, such as by justifying men's adoption of high-status roles and duties (e.g., Viki et al., 2003), providing men influence over career decisions that could affect the relationship (e.g., Moya et al., 2007), and encouraging women's beliefs in adopting of a relationship role focused on supporting their male partner's career rather than their own (e.g., Chen et al., 2009). Thus, as outlined in Table 1.1, a key principle of ambivalent sexism theory is that the subjectively romantic aspects of benevolent sexism within intimate relationships encourage gendered differences that perpetuate men's societal advantages (e.g., prompting women's reliance on their male partners having successful careers).

The subjectively caring aspects of benevolent sexism are also effective at reinforcing men's societal-level advantages because they impede women's opportunities to feel competent and undermine women's independence. For example, men's offers of help directed toward women can carry the benevolently sexist undertone that women *require*

men's assistance, meaning that these subjectively positive offers of assistance also impede women's opportunities to feel independent and capable. Indeed, experimental research in interview scenarios demonstrates that women who are exposed to benevolently sexist offers of help feel greater levels of self-doubt and incompetence, reducing the extent to which they perform well in task-based situations (e.g., Dardenne et al., 2007; Dardenne et al., 2013; Dumont et al., 2010). Thus, even though benevolent sexism has the subjectively positive appearance of care for women, these offers of care are actually detrimental for women because they reduce women's confidence and ability for independent achievement.

The literature on benevolent sexism has demonstrated two important but seemingly disparate functions of benevolent sexism: facilitating men's satisfaction and intimacy within relationships, and reducing women's competence and independence. However, the majority of research has investigated these functions by examining hypothetical beliefs about relationships or assessing the outcomes of experimental manipulations. It is currently unclear whether the spontaneous behaviors associated with benevolent sexism (i.e., behaviors associated with endorsing benevolent sexism in *actual* relationship interactions) foster men's satisfaction and reduce women's competence. Next, I present an observational study examining the associations between men's and women's endorsement of benevolent sexism and the naturalistic support behaviors men and women provide when discussing their romantic partner's personal goal. By utilizing a dyadic perspective and capturing real support interactions in relationships, this study is able to simultaneously examine the behaviors enacted by both male and female support providers *and* the outcomes for both male and female support recipients. Consistent with the existing experimental and hypothetical research, men's endorsement of benevolent sexism should foster support that takes over their partner's goal and ignores their partner's abilities to achieve goals independently, which should lead to those partners feeling relatively less competent. In contrast, women's

endorsement of benevolent sexism should foster warm and empathetic support that emphasizes the strength of the relationship as a base for their partner's successful goal pursuit, which in turn should foster their male partner's feelings of closeness and regard.

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Abstract

The current research demonstrates how benevolent sexism functions to undermine women's competence while facilitating men's access to heterosexual intimacy by prompting different support behaviors by men and women. Objective coders rated the support provision exhibited during heterosexual couples' ($N=100$) video-recorded discussions of each other's personal goals. Men who endorsed benevolent sexism provided more *dependency-oriented* support, including directly providing plans and solutions and neglecting the recipient's own abilities, which led to their female partners feeling less competent and less positively regarded. In contrast, women who endorsed benevolent sexism provided greater *relationship-oriented* support, characterized by affection and emphasizing the positive relationship outcomes associated with their partner's goals, which led their male partners to perceive greater regard and intimacy in their relationship. This study is the first to investigate how benevolent sexism prompts naturalistic support behaviors which can impede women's capacity for independent success while simultaneously supporting the fulfillment of men's intimacy needs.

Benevolent sexism and support of romantic partner's goals:**Undermining women's competence while fulfilling men's intimacy needs**

Benevolent sexism is a subtle form of prejudice toward women which functions to maintain men's societal dominance (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism works through expression of affection rather than aggression, including characterizing men's social power as a chivalrous agreement to care for and cherish women. In doing so, benevolent sexism facilitates intimacy between men and women by romanticizing and encouraging caring behavior in men (e.g., Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011; Viki, Abrams, & Hutchinson, 2003). However, benevolent sexism also prompts interpersonal behaviors which reduce women's independence, autonomy and competence (e.g., Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009; Dardenne, Dumont, & Bollier, 2007), and thus contributes to the maintenance of gender inequality.

How does benevolent sexism both facilitate men's access to intimacy and constrict women's personal competencies? We propose that a central answer to this question lies in the specific roles benevolent sexism prescribes for men and women in heterosexual relationships that should give rise to different types of support of intimate partner's goals. Men's role as protector and provider should promote support that takes over and plans their partner's goal pursuits, which in turn should undermine their female partner's goal-related competence. In contrast, women's prescribed role as caregiver should prompt relationship-oriented support that emphasizes the relationship as a secure base for goal pursuit and, in turn, fulfills their male partner's intimacy needs. We first describe the foundation and importance of this predicted pattern, and then present a behavioral observation study that tested these predictions by examining the support provision behaviors enacted during couples' discussions of each other's most important personal goal.

Benevolent Sexism Fosters Intimacy and Undermines Women's Competence

Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) describes how the unique intergroup and interpersonal relationships between men and women produce two distinct ideologies. The first set of attitudes—*hostile sexism*—functions to reinforce men’s advantaged societal status through antagonistic characterizations of women, such as portraying women who do not conform to traditional gender roles as intentionally trying to usurp men’s power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Although hostile attitudes bolster men’s societal advantages by deterring women from seeking independent career roles, hostile attitudes also have negative repercussions for men, such as fostering a fear of being manipulated by women in intimate contexts (Yakushko, 2005). Hostile attitudes are also recognized as ‘sexist’, and are resisted and rejected by women (e.g., Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Bosson, Pinel, & Vandello, 2010; Glick et al., 2000). Thus, a second set of attitudes—*benevolent sexism*—complement hostile sexism to promote the fulfillment of men’s needs for heterosexual intimacy while also encouraging women to support the societal status quo, thereby maintaining gender inequalities (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Benevolent sexism fosters women’s acceptance of social inequalities by presenting an idyllic version of traditional heterosexual relationships in which men hold the role as provider and protector and women adopt a caring role managing the relationship and domestic domains. Benevolent sexism prescribes that men should gallantly provide for and protect women and is thus closely tied to dating scripts that encourage men to be chivalrous and paternalistic (Viki et al., 2003) and beliefs that men’s role within relationships is to care for their partners (Chen et al., 2009; Lee, Fiske, Glick, & Chen, 2010). Not surprisingly, this chivalrous role appeals to women and therefore helps foster men’s attainment of heterosexual intimacy. Women rate men who are portrayed as endorsing benevolent sexism as relatively attractive relationship partners (Bohner, Ahlborn, & Steiner, 2010; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998; Montañés, de Lemus, Moya, Bohner, & Megías, 2013). Moreover, men who endorse

benevolent sexism tend to be more open and caring toward their partners during conflict (Overall et al., 2011), are more patient and friendly in mixed-sex interactions (Goh & Hall, 2015), and generally report greater relationship satisfaction (Hammond & Overall, 2013; Sibley & Becker, 2012). These findings provide evidence that benevolent sexism does foster more positive interpersonal interactions for men.

However, in addition to promoting relationship intimacy, benevolent sexism operates to maintain men's societal power by undermining women's personal competence and efficacy. Prior research has illustrated these competence-impeding effects by experimentally manipulating women's exposure to benevolent sexism, such as telling participants in a job application scenario that co-workers agreed to give "time and help" to new employees who they knew "could be a woman" (Dardenne et al., 2007). Exposing women to benevolent sexism produces mental intrusions and concerns of incompetence, increases the accessibility of memories of being incompetent, and disrupts performance on cognitive tasks (Dardenne et al., 2007; Dumont, Sarlet, & Dardenne, 2010). Similarly, exposure to benevolent sexism increases the extent to which undergraduate women define their worth through interpersonal warmth-based qualities rather than through academic performance (Barreto, Ellemers, Piebinga, & Moya, 2010). Critically, across these experiments, exposure to benevolent sexism was expressed as support, such as male co-workers being particularly willing to cooperate (Dardenne et al., 2007) or as a male participant stating he was happy to have helped women with difficult tasks (Barreto et al., 2010). Thus, offers of help and guidance which are presented as stemming from benevolently sexist motives undermine women's feelings of competence and efficacy, and consequently, the extent to which women identify with and pursue independent goals.

Prior research testing the competence-suppressing function of benevolent sexism has relied on experimentally manipulated expressions of sexism. No prior studies have

investigated whether men who actually endorse benevolent sexism provide help in ways that influence women's competence. In the current research, we directly tested whether men's endorsement of benevolent sexism predicts the support behaviors they spontaneously enact and whether this support behavior undermines women's competence. Moreover, we also tested whether the competence-suppressing function of benevolent sexism simultaneously operates with the intimacy-promoting function of benevolent sexism by prompting forms of support by *women* that facilitate men's access to intimacy. In the following sections, we describe how benevolent sexism should (1) undermine women's competence while (2) fulfilling men's intimacy needs by shaping the ways in which men and women support their intimate partner's goal pursuits.

Men's Benevolent Sexism Prompts Dependency-Oriented Support

A wealth of research has demonstrated that support within intimate relationships has a large impact in facilitating or impeding goal achievement. People's acknowledgement, encouragement, and support of their partner's personal goals (the *recipients* of support) predicts more successful goal achievement as well as boosts in recipients' self-esteem, relationship satisfaction, and life satisfaction (e.g., Feeney, 2004; Knee, Hadden, Porter, & Rodriguez, 2013; Knee, Porter, & Rodriguez, 2014; Overall, Fletcher, & Simpson, 2010). However, support is not always beneficial. For example, direct and explicit support can signal that recipients do not have the capability to cope and achieve on their own, and thus reduce recipients' goal-related confidence and efficacy (Bolger, Zuckerman, & Kessler, 2000; Girme, Overall, & Simpson, 2013; Howland & Simpson, 2010). Thus, even well-intentioned support can impede fulfillment of recipients' needs for autonomy (authentic self-direction and free volition) and competence (confidence and ability to achieve; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Prior research has not assessed the factors that contribute to these types of ineffective support in intimate relationship interactions. Benevolent ideologies should be particularly

important in this regard. Men who endorse benevolent sexism, encompassing beliefs that their partner *requires* protection and provision, should respond to partner's goal strivings by taking charge and attempting to solve issues for their partners, thereby actively demonstrating they are taking care of their partners. Benevolent beliefs that women are wonderful, but less capable of independent success and therefore in need of direct help, should also motivate 'overhelping'.

Theoretical and empirical work outside of the intimate relationship domain provides evidence that men's benevolent sexism will foster support behaviors which dismiss their female partner's abilities and instead take over their goal pursuits. First, the stereotype content model describes how people's judgments of the *status* and *cooperative motives* of groups influence how they behave toward members of those groups (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Men who endorse benevolent sexism hold a 'wonderful but delicate' stereotype of women, which elicits paternalistic sympathy toward women in need (Cuddy et al., 2007). Feeling responsible for others is proposed to initiate patronizing forms of help which ignore the recipients' competence, such as preventing women from carrying heavy boxes (Cuddy et al., 2007). Second, recent experimental research by Nadler and Chernyak-Hai (2014) has demonstrated that people tend to provide *dependency-oriented support* when they encounter seemingly low-status people in need of help by providing solutions and plans for recipients rather than working alongside recipients to help build the 'tools' needed to reach a solution (Nadler & Chernyak-Hai, 2014). Similarly, Vescio, Gervais, Snyder and Hoover (2005) found that men (but not women) who were placed in 'supervisor' roles assigned female (but not male) employees less opportunity to succeed if directed to focus on employee weaknesses, but did not disadvantage women if told to focus on employee strengths. Thus, because benevolent sexism positions men as holding higher status and being more competent than women, men's endorsement of benevolent sexism should prompt dependency-oriented

support toward women, particularly when men are providing support to their intimate partners.

Table 3.1 outlines how dependency-oriented support is likely to manifest in couples' support-relevant interactions and the likely outcomes for recipients of this type of support. Self-determination theory specifies why dependency-oriented support should be harmful, even if the provider supplies plans or solutions which would genuinely help the recipient achieve their goal (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Taking over discussions by telling recipients how the goal should be achieved reduces the degree to which recipients can experience personal volition over their goal or use their own abilities to approach and overcome challenges. Accordingly, dependency-oriented support should result in recipients feeling less competent with regard to their goal. Although these destructive effects have not been demonstrated in intimate contexts, academic-based research demonstrates that directive guidance is associated with students feeling less competent and efficacious, and in turn, performing more poorly (Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006; Overall, Deane, & Peterson, 2011; Ratelle, Guay, Vallerand, Larose, & Senécal, 2007; Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999). Thus, as outlined in Table 3.1, dependency-oriented support should lead to recipients feeling less able to achieve their goal on their own (lower goal-related competence).

Women's Benevolent Sexism Prompts Relationship-Oriented Support

Although dependency-oriented support should help maintain men's identity as a chivalrous provider, the suppression of female partner's capabilities is likely to be detrimental to relationship intimacy. Indeed, dependency-oriented support may have the unintended side-effect of reducing women's feelings of being positively regarded and understood by their partner, therefore impeding closeness within the relationship (La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000; Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000). How then does benevolent sexism function to fulfill men's intimacy needs? Understanding

Table 3.1. Definitions, example behaviors, and expected outcomes for dependency-oriented and relationship-oriented support

provided during couples' discussions of recipients' personal goals.

Support Typology	Definition	Observed Behaviors enacted by Support Providers	Primary Outcomes Expected for Support Recipients
Dependency-Oriented Support	Directing or dictating the discussion and the recipient's goal-related plans; neglecting the recipient's own abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing solutions or plans for support recipients (e.g., "Just go to the gym every day before work"). • Telling the support recipient what they <i>should</i> or <i>ought to do</i> (e.g., "You should look up dieting plans online"). • Invalidating or ignoring the support recipient's skills, efforts and successes (e.g., Reverse-coded: "Last year you were able to lose weight, you can do it again!"). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling less competent regarding their goal.
Relationship-Oriented Support	Communicating that the relationship is a secure and stable base for the recipient to pursue his/her goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating commitment, intimacy and positive regard for the support recipient (e.g., reaching out to hold hands, saying "I love you"). • Expressing that the recipient's goal will have positive effects for the relationship (e.g., "If you get fit, we will be able to play tennis together"). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceiving more positive regard and intimacy.

the dual functions of benevolent sexism requires a dyadic perspective—that is, examining both the support provision benevolent sexism promotes in men as well as considering the support provision benevolent sexism fosters in women. In addition to prescriptions for men providing for partners, benevolent sexism encompasses stringent prescriptions for women's caregiving relationship role, such as being affectionate, warm, and putting their partner's success above their own (Glick & Fiske, 1996), including embodying traditional beliefs about being the woman behind the successful man (e.g., Pavalko & Elder, 1993). Thus, a central way that benevolent sexism functions to foster men's access to intimacy is through *women's* support of men's personal endeavors in ways that enhance relationship intimacy.

Table 3.1 describes the type of relationship-oriented support that should be enacted by women who endorse benevolent sexism and should enhance the degree to which recipients feel positively regarded and experience relationship intimacy. Benevolent sexism only values and praises women who adopt traditionally feminine traits and behaviors (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and thus women who endorse benevolent sexism tend to internalize sensitive, caring attributes and have greater desires to adopt domestic roles rather than pursuing educational or career goals (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Fernández, Castro, Otero, Foltz, & Lorenzo, 2006; Guimond, Chatard, Martinot, Crisp, & Redersdorff, 2006; Lee et al., 2010). Accordingly, when women endorse benevolent sexism, their support behaviors are founded in beliefs that women have a unique capacity, and responsibility, to ensure that the relationship is a stable, secure and emotionally supportive base for their male partners to attain success. The resulting support behaviors should therefore be *relationship-oriented*, including being warm and affectionate, conveying commitment and regard, and focusing the discussion on the benefits their partner's goal has for the relationship (and vice versa; see Table 3.1).

The evidence verifying the dependency-oriented support we predict will arise for men's benevolent sexism also corroborates the relationship-oriented support we predict will

arise from women's endorsement of benevolent sexism. First, as described above, benevolent sexism encompasses stereotypes about the interpersonally-focused, warm role of women relative to the high-status, provider role of men (Fiske et al., 2002). The stereotype content model predicts that groups who are stereotypically liked but not respected (i.e., housewives) should provide support which actively demonstrates the usefulness of their cooperation toward high-status men who adopt 'provider' roles (Cuddy et al., 2007). Second, examining non-intimate interpersonal dynamics, Nadler and Chernyak-Hai (2014) found that individuals tended to work *alongside* high-status (versus low-status) recipients by discussing the recipients' means to solve problems rather than providing outright solutions. This prior theory and research affirms that women who endorse benevolent sexism should prioritize their male partner's capacity to plan and achieve goals, and so—in a romantic support context—focus on emphasizing their usefulness to be drawn upon as a source of emotional support and affection.

As outlined in Table 3.1, the principal recipient outcomes associated with relationship-oriented support should be enhancing *recipients'* perceived regard and intimacy. Prior research on related forms of emotional support illustrates that expressing warmth, affection and availability during support discussions generates feelings of regard and fosters greater closeness and satisfaction (e.g., Cutrona & Suhr, 1992; Feeney & Collins, 2014; Girme et al., 2013; Overall et al., 2010; Pasch, Bradbury, & Sullivan, 2007). Moreover, an important source of feeling regarded and secure in relationships stems from partners demonstrating they are a reliable source of understanding and reassurance when faced with personal challenges or when striving for personal goals (Feeney & Collins, 2014; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). Accordingly, recipients who feel their relationship is a secure base in which to pursue life tasks and personal goals experience greater satisfaction and fulfillment of their relatedness needs (also see Knee et al., 2013). Thus, the relationship-oriented support

we expected to be exhibited by women who endorse benevolent sexism should result in their male partners perceiving greater regard and intimacy.

We also expected that relationship-oriented support would foster feelings of perceived regard but be unrelated to recipients' goal-related competence. The fulfillment of relatedness needs, such as experiencing close, loving connections, is distinct from the fulfillment of the needs for competence and autonomy, which concern individuals feeling efficacious and free to choose how to pursue personal goals (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000). Accordingly, support behaviors that emphasize the closeness of the relationship do not target recipients' goal-related abilities, efforts, plans or strategies, and therefore likely have little direct impact on outcomes such as goal-related competence. Indeed, relationship-oriented support provided by academic supervisors fosters greater student satisfaction, but does not predict greater feelings of competence and efficacy (Overall et al., 2010).

Current Research

The current research was designed to directly test the dual functions of benevolent sexism by investigating how benevolent sexism influences actual support interactions within close relationships. As displayed in Figure 3.1, we expected that benevolent sexism operates to (1) suppress women's competence through men's dependency-oriented support and (2) fulfill men's access to intimacy through women's relationship-oriented support. Thus, assessing both functions of benevolent sexism requires examining the degree to which *both* men and women follow the prescriptions of benevolent sexism, which portrays heterosexual relationships as a complementary 'team' of men as the competent provider and women as the relationship-focused caregiver.

We tested our predictions by video-recording couples having two discussions about each partner's most important ongoing personal goal. Coders independently rated the degree to which partners exhibited (1) dependency-oriented support and (2) relationship-oriented

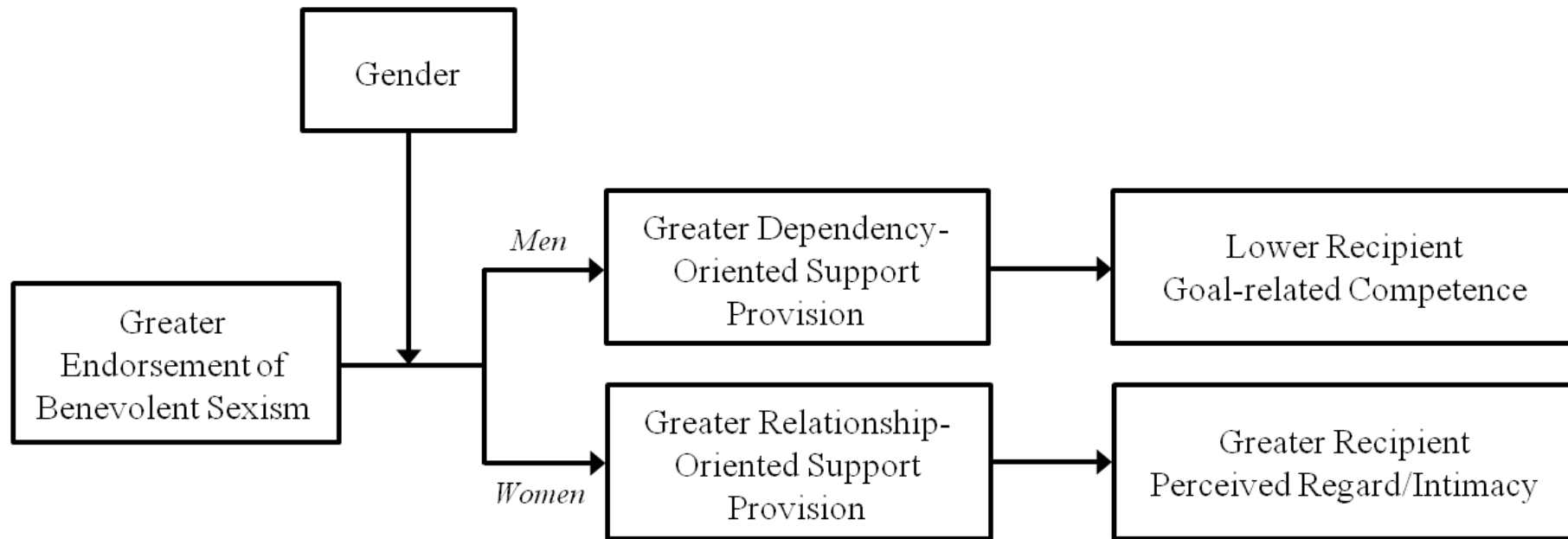


Figure 3.1. The proposed model in which endorsement of benevolent sexism predicts gender differences in support behaviors during discussions of partner's (support recipient's) personal goals: Men who endorse benevolent sexism should provide dependency-oriented support which predicts recipients experiencing lower goal-related competence. Women who endorse benevolent sexism should provide relationship-oriented support which predicts recipients perceiving greater regard/intimacy.

support (see Table 3.1). To test the proposed outcomes of these support behaviors, immediately following each discussion we gathered assessments of support recipients' goal-related competence and perceived regard/intimacy.

Our predictions are displayed in Figure 3.1. Endorsement of benevolent sexism should be associated with different types of support by men and women (i.e., gender should moderate the links between benevolent sexism and support provision behaviors). Men who more strongly endorse benevolent sexism should exhibit greater levels of dependency-oriented support provision, including providing directions and solutions rather than encouraging the recipients' own abilities (see Table 3.1). Greater dependency-oriented support should, in turn, predict support recipients feeling less competent and able to achieve their goal (see top pathway of Figure 3.1). In contrast, women who more strongly endorse benevolent sexism should provide greater relationship-oriented support, including expressing warmth, affection and confirmation that the partner's goal is good for the relationship (see Table 3.1). Receiving greater relationship-oriented support should, in turn, lead to recipients feeling more positive regard and intimacy (see bottom pathway in Figure 3.1).

We also conducted analyses to rule out important alternative explanations. First, to demonstrate that these predicted effects were specifically produced by benevolent rather than other forms of sexism, we measured and controlled for participants' endorsement of hostile sexism. In contrast to benevolent sexism, hostile sexism does not hold prescriptions for relationship roles and instead expresses aggression toward women who could challenge men's power (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall et al., 2011).¹ Second, we wanted to make sure that the effects were not due to

¹ This is likely to be the case for our university-based sample from a highly egalitarian country. In less egalitarian contexts, the antagonism expressed by hostile sexism (and more punitive aspects of benevolent sexism; e.g., Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Böhner, 2003) should be more overt in support interactions, particularly when women's personal goals are perceived to be outside the scope of traditional relationship roles. This highlights the critical role of benevolent sexism in

differences in recipients' support seeking so examined in supplemental analyses the links between benevolent sexism and *support recipients'* (1) requests for support (coded by independent observers), and (2) desires for warmth and advice (as reported by recipients).

METHOD

Participants

One hundred heterosexual couples responded to e-mail and notice-board advertisements posted across the campus of a New Zealand university. Fifty percent of the sample were living together or married, and the mean length of relationships was 3.25 years ($SD = 2$ years). Female participants' ages ($M = 21.97$, $SD = 5.65$) did not differ from male participants' age ($M = 23.31$, $SD = 7.24$; $t_{Diff} = -1.46$, $p = .15$). Couples received NZ\$90 for completing the session described below.

Procedure

Participants were first provided with information about the research procedures, including being informed that they would be video-recorded discussing an important personal goal with their partner. Participants were asked to identify, and rank in order of importance, three current, ongoing personal goals that were independent of their relationship. After completing questionnaires assessing demographic information, sexist attitudes and relationship quality (described below) and a 5-minute 'warm-up' discussion about events of the week, couples were video-recorded having two discussions about their personal goals. The highest-ranked goal of each partner was selected for discussion unless both identified the same goal, in which case the next highest ranked goal was selected. In one discussion, couples discussed the woman's personal goal, and in a second discussion couples discussed the man's personal goal (order counter-balanced for gender). Thus, each participant was the support recipient in one discussion (when discussing their own goal) and a support provider

suppressing women's independent abilities in egalitarian nations, where hostile sexism is ineffective at gaining compliance from female partners (e.g., Overall et al., 2011).

in the other (when discussing their partner's goal). After each discussion, support recipients completed questionnaires assessing goal-related competence and perceived regard/intimacy.

Questionnaire Measures

Benevolent Sexism and Hostile Sexism. Participants completed the 22-item Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), assessing endorsement of benevolent sexism (e.g., “Women should be cherished and protected by men”) and hostile sexism (e.g., “Women seek to gain power by getting control over men”); -3 = *strongly disagree*; 3 = *strongly agree*). Items were averaged to construct overall scores for benevolent sexism ($\alpha = .79$) and hostile sexism ($\alpha = .85$).

Relationship Quality. Participants completed the short-form Perceived Relationship Quality Components inventory (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000), which assesses *satisfaction, commitment, closeness, trust, passion, love, and romance* (e.g., “How close is your relationship?”; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*; $\alpha = .78$).

Post-Discussion Measures

Goal-Related Competence. Immediately following the discussion, recipients rated four items adapted from La Guardia et al. (2000): “to what extent do you feel the following in regard to your goal”: “capable and effective”, “like a competent person”, “confident I can achieve my goal”, and “inadequate or incompetent” (reverse-coded; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). Items were averaged to index goal-related competence ($\alpha = .88$).

Perceived Regard/Intimacy. Participants also rated three items assessing principal elements of relatedness, including feeling positively regarded, close and intimate. Recipients reported the extent to which they felt “close /intimate”, “understood/validated” and “accepted/valued” during the discussion ($\alpha = .81$).

Desired Support. To ensure the predicted effects were not due to recipients desiring different levels of support, recipients also completed two single-item measures asking to what

extent they wanted their partner to “offer suggestions and advice about how to achieve my goal” and “be warm and affectionate toward me.”

Coding Procedure

Following detailed descriptions of dependency-oriented support and relationship-oriented support behaviors, three trained coders independently rated the degree to which support providers exhibited dependency-oriented and relationship-oriented support (see Table 3.1). Prior research has not examined these forms of support in dyadic interactions, and so we generated a new coding schedule by drawing upon existing coding schemes and associated established coding procedures, as well as foundational theoretical frameworks (see the verbatim methodology file for full details). We drew upon self-determination theory (see Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) to differentiate support behaviors according to whether they *facilitate* versus *impede* recipients’ autonomy (freedom to express and follow one’s own ideas and plans), competence (capability and efficacy), and relatedness (loving, close relationships) needs. *Dependency-oriented support* is relevant to the coded behaviors that concern the first two needs—autonomy and competence—because it incorporates taking over and solving issues *for* recipients.

Coders rated the frequency, intensity and duration of autonomy-inhibiting behaviors (1 = *low*, 7 = *high*), including the degree to which support providers (a) invalidated the recipient’s ideas and plans by defining the goal/problem/idea, (b) were dominant or manipulative to enforce a point of view, and (c) stated what the partner should/ought to achieve” (Intra-Class Correlation [ICC] = .91). Coders also rated the presence of competence-facilitating behaviors, including (a) communicating confidence in the recipient’s abilities and praising their abilities, and (b) discussing the goal by focusing on how the *recipient* is able to use assistance, information or strategies to achieve his/her goal (ICC = .91). Coders’ ratings were averaged to assess each type of support. Similar to other coding measures (see Kerig &

Baucom, 2004), the across-coder rating for competence-facilitating behaviors was then reverse-scored and averaged with the across-coder rating for autonomy-inhibiting behaviors ($r = .20, p < .05$) to index dependency-oriented support.² Thus, as displayed in Table 3.1, the dependency-oriented support measure tapped the degree to which partners' support behaviors prevented the recipient from freely discussing their ideas, detracted from the recipient's ability to achieve the goal, and provided plans and solutions for the recipient rather than encouraging his/her own goal strivings.

Relationship-oriented support captured support behaviors that facilitated relatedness needs, including partners communicating interpersonal warmth and emphasizing that the relationship is a secure and stable base from which the recipient can pursue his/her goal. Coders were instructed to consider the extent to which support providers (a) expressed affection and love toward the recipient (irrespective of the recipient's input to the discussion or his/her abilities), (b) listened and communicated understanding of the recipient's feelings, and (c) emphasized that the relationship was a secure base from which the recipient's goals could be pursued, such as by discussing the positive relationship outcomes linked with the recipient's goal ($ICC = .91$). More detail regarding the foundation, development and use of the coding schedule can be found in the verbatim methodology file and is available from the authors.

To address the alternative explanation that support recipients requested more help from providers who endorsed benevolent sexism, in a separate wave of coding independent

² We did not expect these groups of support behaviors to be strongly related given that autonomy and competence are distinct needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000), but dependency-oriented support does concern both of these domains. Prior research has also shown that this combination is particularly important. For example, academic efficacy is highest when receiving both competence and autonomy support despite these forms of support not being strongly related (see Overall et al., 2011). Thus, combining both autonomy- and competence-based support behaviors identifies support providers who were *both* taking over the discussion (undermining autonomy needs) and dismissing their partner's capabilities (failing to facilitate competence). Nonetheless, additional analyses demonstrated the predicted patterns for benevolent sexism when modeling these components of dependency-oriented support separately.

coders rated recipients' *support-seeking*, including the extent to which recipients directly sought help, advice and opinions regarding how to achieve their goal ($ICC = .89$).

RESULTS

Table 3.2 presents descriptive statistics and correlations across the primary measures. However, to appropriately model the dependencies in dyadic data, and test whether any associations significantly differ across men and women, we followed guidelines by Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006) using the MIXED procedure in SPSS 20. We first tested whether the effects of benevolent sexism significantly differed across men and women by running dyadic models that pooled effects across men and women and modeled the main and interactions effects of gender while accounting for the dependence across couple members. If gender differences were found, as we predicted, we then ran equivalent *two-intercept* models which simultaneously estimate model parameters separately for men and women while continuing to account for dyadic dependence (see Kenny et al., 2006). Consistent with prior research, and because benevolent sexism and hostile sexism are positively associated (see Table 3.2), we included hostile sexism as a predictor in these analyses, which ensured that any significant effects were unique to benevolent sexism rather than general prejudicial attitudes toward women.³

Benevolent Sexism and Dependency-Oriented Support Provision

Our first analyses refer to the top pathway of Figure 3.1. The initial dyadic models examined whether endorsement of sexist attitudes was associated with dependency-oriented support provision. As shown in the left side of Table 3.3, there was a significant gender difference in the association between benevolent sexism and dependency-oriented support. The more that men ($B = 0.28$, $t = 2.40$, $p = .02$, 95% CI = .05 to .52, $r = .23$), but not women

³ Hypothesized effects remained significant when conducting equivalent analyses without controlling for hostile sexism.

Table 3.2. Descriptive statistics and correlations for primary measures.

	<i>Means (SD)</i>		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>						
1. Benevolent Sexism	-0.13 (1.01)	0.11 (1.06)	-	.46*	-.14	.19	.06	.09
2. Hostile Sexism	-0.14 (1.16)	-0.21 (1.01)	.37*	-	-.13	.07	-.04	.09
3. Dependency-Oriented Support Provision	3.86 (1.21)	3.84 (1.21)	.23*	.06	-	-.48*	-.18	-.31*
4. Relationship-Oriented Support Provision	3.67 (1.32)	3.58 (1.14)	-.19	-.07	-.55*	-	.08	.28*
5. Recipient's Goal-related Competence	5.48 (1.13)	5.31 (1.11)	.01	.02	-.24*	.16	-	.58*
6. Recipient's Perceived Regard/Intimacy	5.57 (1.27)	5.67 (1.02)	-.02	-.16	-.12	.10	.43*	-

Note. Benevolent sexism and hostile sexism were assessed on scales with a midpoint of 0 (-3 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*); all other measures had a midpoint of 4 (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). Correlations above the diagonal are for women; correlations below the diagonal are for men. * $p < .05$.

Table 3.3. The effects of endorsement of sexist attitudes on dependency-oriented and relationship-oriented support provision exhibited during couples' discussions of support recipients' personal goals.

Predictor Variables	Dependency-Oriented Support Provision						Relationship-Oriented Support Provision					
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% <i>CI</i>		<i>r</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% <i>CI</i>		<i>r</i>
				<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>					<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	
Gender	-0.00	.07	-0.06	-.15	.14	.01	-.05	.07	-0.65	-.19	.10	.07
Benevolent Sexism	.09	.09	0.93	-.09	.27	.07	.04	.09	0.39	-.15	.22	.03
Hostile Sexism	-.07	.09	-0.80	-.24	.10	.06	-.01	.09	-0.10	-.18	.16	.01
Gender \times Benevolent Sexism	.20	.08	2.33*	.03	.36	.19	-.26	.08	-3.12**	-.43	-.10	.26
Gender \times Hostile Sexism	.02	.08	0.22	-.14	.18	.02	.04	.08	0.45	-.12	.19	.04

Note. Gender was coded -1 = *Women*, 1 = *Men*. Predicted effects are shown in bold. Approximate effect sizes (*r*) were computed using Rosenthal and Rosnow's (2007) formula: $r = \sqrt{(t^2 / t^2 + df)}$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

($B = -0.11$, $t = -0.85$, $p = .40$, 95% CI = $-.37$ to $.15$, $r = .09$), endorsed benevolent sexism, the more they provided dependency-oriented support.

The next set of analyses examined the effects of dependency-oriented support on recipient outcomes (see top pathway in Figure 3.1). As displayed in the upper section of Table 3.4, support recipients who received relatively greater levels of dependency-oriented support reported lower levels of goal-related competence immediately after discussing their goal with their partner. In addition, provision of dependency-oriented support was associated with recipients feeling less regarded and intimate in their relationship.

These results provide strong evidence for the process presented in Figure 3.1 (see top pathway). Men who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism were more likely to exhibit dependency-oriented support that took over support discussions by providing solutions and plans while neglecting recipients' own solutions, plans and desires. Dependency-oriented support, in turn, was associated with recipients feeling less goal-related competence as well as lower regard and intimacy. To offer additional evidence, we calculated the indirect effect linking men's endorsement of benevolent sexism with recipients' goal-related competence via dependency-oriented support. We used the PRODCLIN utility which calculates confidence intervals for the indirect effects accounting for the asymmetric distributions of the product of standard errors (Mackinnon, Fritz, Williams, & Lockwood, 2007). The results are displayed in the top half of Table 3.5 and support the pathway depicted in Figure 3.1: Men's endorsement of benevolent sexism led to their female partner feeling less competent following a discussion of her personal goal because they provided greater dependency-oriented support. Indirect effects also demonstrated that men's benevolent sexism was also detrimental for their female partner's perceived regard/intimacy, via dependency-oriented support.

Table 3.4. The effects of dependency-oriented support provision (upper section) and relationship-oriented support provision (lower section) on recipient's goal-related competence (left) and perceived regard/intimacy (right) following couples' discussion of recipients' personal goals.

Predictor Variables	Recipients' Goal-related Competence					Recipients' Perceived Regard/Intimacy						
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% <i>CI</i>		<i>r</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	95% <i>CI</i>		<i>r</i>
				<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>					<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	
<i>Dependency-Oriented Support</i>												
Gender	-.08	.07	-1.20	-.05	.21	.12	-.06	.07	-0.77	-.09	.20	.08
Dependency-Oriented Support	-.18	.06	-2.82**	-.31	-.06	.20	-.20	.07	-3.04**	-.33	-.07	.22
Gender x Dependency-Oriented Support	.01	.06	0.14	-.13	.11	.01	-.11	.06	-1.76	-.01	.24	.14
<i>Relationship-Oriented Support</i>												
Gender	-.08	.07	-1.23	-.05	.22	.12	-.06	.07	-0.84	-.08	.20	.08
Relationship-Oriented Support	.09	.06	1.43	-.03	.22	.10	.16	.07	2.47**	.03	.29	.17
Gender x Relationship-Oriented Support	-.04	.06	-0.69	-.08	.16	.06	.10	.06	1.57	-.22	.02	.12

Note. Gender was coded -1 = *Women*, 1 = *Men*. Approximate effect sizes (*r*) were computed using Rosenthal and Rosnow's (2007) formula: $r = \sqrt{t^2 / (t^2 + df)}$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Benevolent Sexism and Relationship-Oriented Support Provision

Our second set of dyadic analyses tested the bottom pathway shown in Figure 3.1, which involves the associations between benevolent sexism and relationship-oriented support. As displayed in the right side of Table 3.3, the link between benevolent sexism and relationship-oriented support significantly differed across men and women. Women who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism exhibited greater relationship-oriented support ($B = 0.30, t = 2.14, p = .03, 95\% \text{ CI} = .03 \text{ to } .58, r = .21$). In contrast, men who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism provided *lower* levels of relationship-oriented support ($B = -0.23, t = -2.06, p = .04, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.44 \text{ to } -.01, r = .20$). The next set of dyadic analyses tested whether relationship-oriented support provision was related to recipients perceiving greater regard/intimacy during the discussion. As displayed in the lower section of Table 3.4, and as expected, greater relationship-oriented support was associated with recipients reporting greater perceived regard/intimacy but not associated with recipients' goal-related competence.

As shown in the bottom section of Table 3.5, we calculated indirect effects testing whether women's endorsement of benevolent sexism predicted male partners' greater regard/intimacy via women's greater provision of relationship-oriented support. The significant indirect effects provide strong support for the pathway shown in the bottom of Figure 3.1. Women who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism provided greater relationship-oriented support, involving expressing affection, commitment, and reassurance that the goal would be positive for their relationship, which in turn, was associated with recipients perceiving greater positive regard and intimacy.

Finally, although we did not predict *a priori* that men who endorsed benevolent sexism would exhibit lower relationship-oriented support, significant indirect effects also supported that men's benevolent sexism was associated with female recipients perceiving less

Table 3.5. Indirect effects testing the paths between men’s and women’s benevolent sexism, dependency-oriented and relationship-oriented support provision, and recipients’ outcomes.

Indirect Pathway Tested	Indirect Effect	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower Limit	Upper Limit
<i>Men</i>			
Men’s Benevolent Sexism → Dependency-Oriented Support → Recipient’s Goal-related Competence	-.055	-.124	-.007
Men’s Benevolent Sexism → Dependency-Oriented Support → Recipient’s Perceived Regard/Intimacy	-.058	-.130	-.007
<i>Women</i>			
Women’s Benevolent Sexism → Relationship-Oriented Support → Recipient’s Perceived Regard/Intimacy	.056	.002	.133

Note. Bias-corrected confidence intervals were calculated following Mackinnon, Fritz, Williams and Lockwood (2007). Confidence intervals which do not overlap ‘0’ can be considered significant.

regard/intimacy (point estimate = $-.049$, 95% CI = $-.151$ to $-.002$) via relatively *lower* levels of relationship-oriented support. Thus, in addition to greater dependency-oriented support, men's benevolent sexism was also related to more negative outcomes for female support recipients because their partners did *not* communicate warmth or convey that their goals would have positive ramifications for the relationship.

Alternative Explanations

Hostile Sexism. Hostile sexism was unrelated to dependency-oriented support (Table 3.3), corroborating that dependency-oriented support stems from relationship-specific prescriptions that are embedded in benevolent sexism rather than simply motivated by aggressive or dominant beliefs about women. Similarly, hostile sexism was unrelated to relationship-oriented support behaviors, reiterating the importance of examining benevolent sexism to understand how sexist attitudes manifest in gender interactions that involve interdependence, such as partners' supporting one another's goals, rather than competing over status or power.⁴

⁴ We also assessed participants' endorsement of sexist attitudes toward *men*, which represent counterpart attitudes to sexism toward *women* and similarly function to justify traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1999). As in prior research, benevolent sexism toward men was strongly associated with benevolent sexism toward women ($r = .76$ for women, $r = .71$ for men). Indeed, benevolent sexism toward *men* also captures prescriptions that men have a complementary role to women as protectors and providers (e.g., "Men are more willing to put themselves in danger to protect others"; "Women are incomplete without men"). Additional analyses demonstrated that benevolent sexism toward men was unrelated to men's dependency-oriented support ($B = .16$, $SE = .13$, $t = 1.22$, $p = .23$), but women's endorsement of benevolent sexism toward men predicted greater relationship-oriented support ($B = .39$, $SE = .12$, $t = 3.17$, $p < .01$). In analyses which regressed dependency-oriented support on all four measures of sexism, the interaction between benevolent sexism toward women and gender remained significant ($B = .29$, $SE = .12$, $t = 2.46$, $p = .02$), consistent with our explanation that men's benevolently sexism toward women prompts 'overhelping' forms of support because it represents women as dependent on men as providers and protectors (benevolent sexism toward women) rather than beliefs about what women should do for men (benevolent sexism toward men). In models predicting relationship-oriented support, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism toward *women* ($B = -.20$, $SE = .12$, $t = -1.66$, $p < .10$) and benevolent sexism toward *men* ($B = -.19$, $SE = .12$, $t = -1.67$, $p < .10$) predicted greater relationship-oriented support. Although multicollinearity reduced the accuracy of these effects, the results are consistent with benevolent sexism toward women *and* men both emphasizing *women's* adoption of supportive, intimacy-promoting relationship roles. Hostile sexism toward men did not significantly predict men's or women's support behaviors.

Recipients' Support Seeking. An alternative explanation of the results is that, rather than guiding specific type of support behavior, benevolent sexism guides responsiveness to particular types of support seeking behaviors, such as men who strongly endorse benevolent sexism responding to women's requests or desires for help, solutions and advice. Indeed, the sample displayed moderate levels of observer-coded support seeking behaviors ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.01$) and reported desiring both advice ($M = 5.61$, $SD = 1.46$) and affection ($M = 6.09$, $SD = 1.22$) from providers. However, support providers' endorsement of benevolent sexism was unrelated to the degree to which recipients exhibited help-seeking behaviors ($B = .07$, $SE = .08$, $t = 0.91$, $p = .36$), desired suggestions/advice about their goal ($B = .09$, $SE = .11$, $t = 0.81$, $p = .42$), or desired warmth/affection ($B = .13$, $SE = .09$, $t = 1.41$, $p = .16$). Furthermore, the predicted links between benevolent sexism and support behaviors were not altered when controlling for each of these variables in additional analyses.⁵

Relationship Length, Status and Age. We reran models including the main and interaction effects of (1) relationship length, (2) relationship status (cohabiting/married versus dating), and (3) participants' age (in separate analyses) to test whether the effects reported above were accounted for, or moderated, by these variables. None of the significant effects reported above were altered when including these additional variables, revealing that these effects were not due to any of these variables. In addition, out of 16 possible interactions, only one interaction effect emerged; dependency-oriented support predicted increasingly greater drops in competence for older individuals relative to younger individuals ($B = -.03$, $t = -2.09$, $p = .04$). This may indicate that older individuals' goal-related competence is more affected by dependency-oriented support, perhaps because older participants are more likely

⁵ We also tested whether dependency-oriented support was perceived by recipients as being helpful and supportive. As expected, results from models predicting recipients' evaluations of being helped and supported were identical to models which predicted recipients' perceived regard/intimacy ($p < .05$). Thus, in addition to recipients not *requesting* dependency-oriented support behaviors, dependency-oriented support was not evaluated by recipients as helpful or supportive.

to be at a life stage where they depend more on partners (e.g., making decisions about careers or children).

Relationship Quality. Because both men ($M = 6.09$, $SD = 0.71$) and women ($M = 6.11$, $SD = 0.61$) generally reported positive relationship evaluations, we also wanted to ensure that the results did not simply stem from satisfying versus dissatisfying relationships. Greater relationship quality was associated with recipients' feelings of regard/ intimacy ($r = .29$ and $.38$, $ps < .01$ for men and women), but rerunning the models described above including relationship quality as an additional predictor did not alter the direct and indirect effects of benevolent sexism.

DISCUSSION

The current research investigated a fundamental premise of ambivalent sexism theory: men's endorsement of benevolent sexism functions to (1) suppress women's competence, while (2) fulfilling men's intimacy needs. By investigating the links between benevolent sexism and the support provided to intimate partners during couples' discussions of personal goals, this study provides the first demonstration of how these dual functions of benevolent sexism operate in intimate contexts via *both* men's *and* women's endorsement of sexist attitudes and the relationship behaviors these attitudes promote. Demonstrating the competence-suppressing function of benevolent sexism (depicted in the top pathway of Figure 3.1), *men* who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism provided greater dependency-oriented support, which involved telling recipients how to pursue their goal, taking over responsibility to plan recipients' goal pursuits, and discounting recipients' own abilities to pursue their goal. In turn, dependency-oriented support was associated with recipients (i.e., female partners) experiencing lower goal-related competence. In contrast, demonstrating the intimacy-promoting function of benevolent sexism (depicted in the bottom pathway of Figure 3.1), *women* who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism provided greater relationship-oriented

support, including emphasizing the quality and security of the relationship as a stable base for their partner's goal pursuit. In turn, relationship-oriented support was associated with recipients (i.e., male partners) perceiving greater positive regard and intimacy. Taken together, these dual pathways demonstrate that the support roles prescribed by benevolent sexism do function to undermine women's competence while fostering men's relatedness needs.

A Dyadic Understanding of the Functions of Benevolent Sexism

The current results advance prior research in several important ways. Prior research has shown that experimentally-manipulated exposure to benevolent sexism can reduce women's felt and enacted competence (e.g., Dardenne et al., 2007), but the current study is the first to demonstrate that men who endorse benevolent sexism spontaneously deliver support behaviors that lead their intimate partners to perceive they are less able to achieve their personal goals. Prior research relying on self-reports has also indicated that men and women who endorse benevolent sexism hold stronger beliefs concerning complementary relationship roles (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2010), but the current study is the first to demonstrate that women who endorse benevolent sexism do embody more sensitive, emotionally supportive caregiving roles as they naturally interact with their intimate partners, and that such caregiving leads to their partners experiencing greater perceived regard and intimacy. Thus, by assessing both men's and women's endorsement of benevolent sexism and associated support provision within naturalistic interactions, this study offers the most definitive evidence to date of the central premise that benevolent sexism operates to reduce women's power and independence while simultaneously fostering men's access to intimacy, and does so within the context of interdependent relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994).

The study design and results also demonstrate the importance of applying and modeling dyadic processes to understand the functions of benevolent sexism. It is clear that men's efforts to maintain power in the social domain via hostile sexism are detrimental to their ability to maintain intimate relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Jackman, 1994; Yakushko, 2005), but even benevolent sexism may impede heterosexual intimacy if its chivalrous prescriptions prioritize men's needs over women's needs. We demonstrated that the dependency-oriented support enacted by men who endorsed benevolent sexism did not just undermine women's competence but also reduced the degree to which their female partners felt regarded and intimate in their relationships. These interpersonal costs appear counter to the typical role benevolent sexism plays in offsetting the costs of hostile sexism to men's relationship needs. However, the present results highlight the importance of *both* men and women endorsing, and enacting the support behaviors prescribed by, benevolent sexism. That is, it is through *women's* endorsement of benevolent sexism, and the accompanying provision of relationship-oriented support by women, that facilitates men's fulfillment of intimacy needs.

Adopting this dyadic perspective also demonstrates that dyadic interactions at the interpersonal level conform to broader group-based theories, such as the stereotype content model, which ascribes behaviors to *intergroup* interactions between men and women (Fiske et al., 2002; Cuddy et al., 2007). Indeed, benevolent sexism is distinctive because of its origins in heterosexual interdependency, and thus the interpersonal support behaviors benevolent sexism prompts are particularly important in understanding the content of sexist attitudes. For example, benevolent sexism emphasizes that men's and women's traits and societal roles are complementary: men are competent providers and women are warm caregivers. This is not simply a justification for gender differences. Instead, as our results illustrate, the fulfillment of these roles are critical to the functions of benevolent sexism, and

both men and women in the same relationship need to endorse benevolent sexism for the functions of benevolent sexism to be fully realized. Indeed, mismatches in partners' traditional beliefs predict relationship dissatisfaction (e.g., Aube & Koestner, 1995; Young, Moss-Racusin, & Sanchez, 2014). In addition, women exhibit greater hostility during conflict if partners do not share their endorsement of benevolent sexism (Overall et al., 2011), and both men and women who endorse benevolent sexism become more dissatisfied if their partner does not meet relationship ideals (Hammond & Overall, 2014). Similarly, dissatisfaction and dissent are likely to occur when women and men do not conform to their prescribed support roles, even when the expectation that male partners adopt the 'protector and provider' role has personal costs for women. Thus, the expectations across partners are also likely to reciprocally sustain the support roles prescribed by benevolent sexism.

The Personal and Societal Implications of the Support Prompted by Benevolent Sexism

The patterns of support behaviors linked with benevolent sexism also have implications for the wellbeing of recipients and their relationships. By impeding recipients' goal-related competence, dependency-oriented support is likely to thwart the successful completion of recipients' personal goals. The continued motivation to pursue goals, and the ability to sustain a high level of subjective wellbeing, partly relies upon feeling competent, including feeling personally effective and able to cope with challenges (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Accordingly, prior research in academic domains has demonstrated that support which impedes competence needs predicts lower levels of achievement and less satisfaction with academic goals and performance (e.g., Black & Deci, 2000; Legault et al., 2006; Overall, et al., 2011; Reeve et al., 1999). Conversely, the greater perceived regard stemming from receiving relationship-oriented support means that recipients will feel more satisfied and secure in their relationship (e.g., Feeney, 2004; Feeney & Collins, 2014; La

Guardia et al., 2000; Overall et al., 2010). Altogether, the patterns of support behaviors prompted by benevolent sexism, and their immediate outcomes, will likely be directly beneficial for men's wellbeing, while undermining women's goal strivings and ultimate success in their personal endeavors.

These outcomes illustrate how the support process we identified are likely to help sustain gender inequality by undermining women's personal competence and confidence in pursuing independent goals. Importantly, the current results also affirm that benevolent sexism does this in covert ways. The support patterns which arise from benevolent sexism place men in a high-status role and women in a relationship-focused dependent role, and do so without these outcomes being necessarily intended by providers. Given that this sample comprised long-term, relatively satisfied and committed couples, it is likely that men's and women's support behaviors were intended to help their partner's goal. Nevertheless, even well-intended efforts to assist other's goals are damaging if they carry the connotation that the recipient *requires* help from the provider (Bolger et al., 2000; Girme et al., 2013), and by thwarting competence needs this help can foster overreliance on others and disengagement from personal goals (Elliot, 2005). Similarly, for women who endorse benevolent sexism, genuine expressions of affection and regard for partners feed into notions that women's role is to manage the relationship domain rather than be independently successful (Fernández et al., 2006; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Thus, because benevolent sexism can work to sustain gender inequalities via well-intentioned behaviors, its expressions are not only difficult to identify as 'sexist' by targets but the person expressing benevolent sexism is unlikely to notice the potential detrimental effects and fail to modify his/her behaviors.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions

A key strength of this study was gathering more objective behavioral observation measures of support provision, which enabled access to the negative effects of benevolent

sexism that are typically difficult to identify because of its subjectively positive guise. Examining interpersonal dynamics across both dyad members also provides a window into the damaging effects of seemingly caring behaviors by examining the outcomes for the targets of those behaviors. Support interactions are particularly likely to isolate benevolently sexist behaviors because benevolent sexism specifically concerns intimacy and interdependence between men and women (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994), similar to other interpersonal contexts in which the influence of benevolent sexism subtly promotes men's power, such as 'chivalrous' acts in dating interactions (Viki et al., 2003) or prioritizing men's decisions in relationship discussions about career choices (Moya, Glick, Expósito, de Lemus, & Hart, 2007).

One central caveat to our findings is that our sample was from an egalitarian country and consisted of primarily young, relatively educated romantic couples. Thus, the average endorsement of sexist attitudes was slightly lower than the New Zealand average (Sibley & Becker, 2012), and relatively low compared to other countries (e.g., Brandt, 2011). These findings highlight that, even within relatively egalitarian contexts and in samples involving women with strong educational and career aspirations, benevolent sexism can operate to undermine women's competence. Indeed, the effects might be even more pronounced in contexts in which women face more serious societal-level barriers to pursue their own goals outside of their close relationships. Thus, we expect that the links between benevolent sexism, support behaviors and recipient outcomes will be relevant across countries, particularly given the general similarities in the links between sexism and relationship-role expectations found in the United States and China (Chen et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2010), but there may be additional, important effects in other contexts. For example, in less egalitarian contexts, men's access to status and control over relationship resources may legitimize overtly domineering behaviors in support contexts, such as telling partners what goals they

can or cannot pursue (see Moya et al., 2007; Vogler & Pahl, 1994). Future research should examine whether the effects we demonstrated in the current study are stronger, and potentially more damaging, within less egalitarian contexts and samples.

Finally, our results were cross-sectional and thus do not allow for causal conclusions. Our model is based upon founding theoretical principles that benevolent sexism should influence relationship-related behaviors and expectations (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Lee et al., 2010; Overall et al., 2011), and associated experimental research demonstrating that exposure to benevolent sexism can reduce women's perceived competence (e.g., Dardenne et al., 2007). Moreover, our analyses ruled out important alternative explanations; the support provision associated with benevolent sexism was not simply due to any gender-relevant attitudes (i.e., hostile sexism) or due to people who endorsed benevolent sexism providing support as a function of the recipients' desires for solutions or affection. Nonetheless, future longitudinal research should explore the possibility of reverse and reciprocal causal pathways, such as individuals with domineering or empathetic interpersonal orientations being attracted to particular sexist ideologies. For example, men who tend to be domineering or instrumental in their interactions with others, or women who seek greater closeness and interdependence, may be more likely to endorse benevolent sexism and/or be attracted to partners who endorse benevolent sexism because it idealizes the adoption of traditional gender roles.

Conclusion

Benevolent sexism prescribes that men should protect and cherish women, and is proposed to have two key functions: reducing women's ability to challenge men's power while also facilitating men's access to close, intimate relationships with women. The current study demonstrated how these two functions are realized in intimate relationships via the types of support men *and* women provide in the context of their partners' personal goal

pursuits. Men who endorsed benevolent sexism provided more *dependency-oriented* support, including directly providing plans and solutions and neglecting the recipient's own abilities, which led to their female partner to feel less competent. In contrast, women who endorsed benevolent sexism provided greater *relationship-oriented* support, characterized by affection and emphasizing the positive relationship outcomes that the recipients' goals will have, which led their male partner to perceive greater positive regard and intimacy in their relationship. This research provides the first demonstration that, even within intimate contexts, benevolent sexism functions to undermine the support women receive for their own independent pursuits while encouraging the fulfillment of men's intimacy needs.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter examined one way in which benevolent sexism can have the seemingly disparate effects of (1) facilitating men's fulfillment of needs for intimacy and closeness, and (2) reducing women's competence and capability for independent success. Emphasizing the need for an understanding of the *dyadic* functions of sexism, the results of a dyadic behavioral observation study demonstrated that men's endorsement of benevolent sexism prompts support behaviors which take over their female partner's personal goals and ignore the partner's own abilities. In turn, dependency-oriented behaviors are linked with female partners feeling lower competence as well as simultaneously reducing their feelings of closeness and being a valued relationship partner. The extent to which benevolent sexism functions to bolster men's intimacy was through the support behaviors prompted in *women* rather than men: Women's endorsement of benevolent sexism was linked with greater levels of behaviors which expressed affection, warmth and emphasized the strength of the relationship when supporting their male partners. Thus, in total, benevolent sexism prompts behaviors in men *and* women that reinforce men's access to intimacy and the 'provider' role in heterosexual relationships.

The research presented in Chapter Three also extended ambivalent sexism theory by emphasizing that prescriptions for *women's* behavior are a key component of how benevolent sexism supports and upholds men's power. A key reason that benevolent sexism arises is to appeal for women's support of men's advantaged societal power, such as by presenting an idealized picture of relationships and gender relations (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). For example, benevolent sexism prescribes that women should have a 'cherished' position in their relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996), which masks the loss of personal competencies and relatively more vulnerable self-esteem that is detrimental to women's success *outside* the relationship domain (e.g., Barreto et al., 2010; Franzoi, 2001) and prompts women's support

of men's societal advantages (e.g., Becker & Wright, 2011; Hammond & Sibley, 2011). However, as demonstrated in the current chapter, benevolent sexism is also detrimental for women's competence and satisfaction *in* their relationships (also see Hammond & Overall, 2013a), contributing further findings to the ways that benevolent sexism is costly for women and advantageous to men. Despite the disadvantages for women that are associated with benevolent sexism, little research has investigated why women endorse benevolent sexism. In the following chapter, I present two studies which test the individual and interpersonal factors underlying why *women* endorse benevolent sexism toward women.

CHAPTER FOUR: WHY WOMEN ENDORSE BENEVOLENT SEXISM

Benevolent sexism plays an important role in the maintenance of gender inequalities because it justifies gender relations in a relatively agreeable way, expressing that both men and women have complementary societal and relationship roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The benevolently sexist message that women are empathetic, sensitive and skilled caregivers is proposed to be an effective means of maintaining gender inequality because it is more easily internalized by *women*; women endorse benevolent sexism and, in turn, are less resistant to the discrepancies between men and women in societal power (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). However, research has demonstrated that benevolent sexism has several costs for women. For example, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is linked with beliefs that they should invest in their relationships and support their partner's career (e.g., Chen et al., 2009), which not only accompanies relatively lower investment into women's independent goals (e.g., Fernández et al., 2007), but also unrealistically high relationship expectations that leave women more vulnerable to relationship problems (e.g., Hammond & Overall, 2013a). Moreover, women's and men's endorsement of benevolent sexism contributes to setting constraints on acceptable roles and behavior for women, such as by prompting negative and harsh evaluations of women who do not follow traditional roles (e.g., Viki, Massey, & Masser, 2005). Thus, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is one key aspect of how benevolent sexism maintains men's societal advantages, but research consistently demonstrates that this endorsement is detrimental to women. Why then do women endorse benevolent sexism?

The seemingly counterintuitive prediction that women adopt sexist attitudes toward women is addressed by several theories of intergroup relations. Individuals' adoption of

prejudice, even prejudice directed toward their own group, is motivated by the drive to rationalize societal inequalities (Jost & Banaji, 1994), the drive to preserve traditional and hierarchical differences between groups (e.g., Altemeyer, 1981; North & Fiske, 2014; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001), and the drive to hold congruent attitudes with individuals in the ingroup (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Consistent with these perspectives, research has demonstrated that women endorse benevolent sexism most strongly in countries in which women are *most* disadvantaged in society, such as in representation in career roles, political power, and healthcare (Glick et al., 2000; Napier et al., 2010). In turn, endorsing benevolent sexism provides a ‘palliative’ function in the face of inequality, prompting greater satisfaction with life by characterizing men’s and women’s traditional roles as complementary and equally able to attain success in society (Connelly & Heesacker, 2012; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; Napier et al., 2010). Thus, one reason benevolent sexism is appealing to women is because its portrayal of gender differences—a union in which men protect and provide for women—provides a sense of fairness and security in the face of potential aggression and hostility between men and women.

Existing theories on why benevolent sexism appeals to women concentrate on its subjectively positive characterization and justification of the *group* differences between men and women. However, benevolent sexism is unique amongst prejudice because it promises women a revered and cherished position within relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Thus, the security benevolent sexism provides regarding fairness of gender roles in society is intertwined with the attractiveness of the *way* that benevolent sexism presents this rationalization—men’s adoption of career roles and advantaged societal status is characterized as beneficial to women because men are prescribed to protect, cherish and provide for their romantic partners. Thus, an important yet unexplored reason that women endorse benevolent

sexism focuses on its romantic portrayal of romantic relationships, in which women are prescribed to have a revered place on a pedestal.

In this chapter, I present two articles which test the thesis that one reason that women endorse benevolent sexism are its promised personal benefits such as provision, reverence and care. The first article examines individual differences in psychological entitlement, a dispositional drive to gain resources and status, in a nationally representative sample. If benevolent sexism specifically appeals to *women* because of the benefits it promises, then women higher in psychological entitlement should more strongly endorse benevolent sexism over time. The second article more closely examines the relational context of the promised benefits of benevolent sexism: The benefits of benevolent sexism to women are primarily delivered via their *male partner's* endorsement of benevolent sexism, such as men 'sacrificing their wellbeing' to provide for their female partners and being 'completed' by their female partners (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The second article tests whether women's endorsement of benevolent sexism depends on the extent to which they perceive their partner endorses benevolent sexism. If benevolent sexism is particularly appealing to women because of the revered position and benefits that it offers *in relationships*, then women who perceive that their partners endorse benevolent sexism should more strongly endorse benevolent sexism over time.

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Hammond, M. D., Sibley, C. G., & Overall, N. C. (2014). The allure of sexism: Psychological entitlement fosters women's endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5, 421-428. DOI: 10.1177/1948550613506124

Abstract

Benevolent sexism functions to uphold gender inequality by expressing caring and reverent attitudes exclusively toward women. Do these subjective benefits lure women to endorse benevolent sexism? We tested this by examining whether women's psychological entitlement was associated with concurrent levels of benevolent sexism and longitudinal changes in benevolent sexism over one year in a national panel sample ($N=4421$ New Zealanders). As predicted, latent variable interaction analyses indicated that women higher in psychological entitlement more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism and increasingly endorsed benevolent sexism over the year. Men's psychological entitlement was more weakly associated with benevolent sexism concurrently and unrelated to changes in benevolent sexism across time. These findings provide the first evidence that the benefits of benevolent sexism are central to women's adoption and endorsement of sexist attitudes toward their own gender—attitudes which contribute more broadly to the maintenance of gender inequality.

The Allure of Sexism: Psychological Entitlement Fosters Women’s Endorsement of Benevolent Sexism over Time

Women’s agreement with sexist attitudes toward their own gender is central to the legitimization of men’s advantaged access to power, status and resources (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Benevolent sexism is a relatively agreeable form of sexism because it is subjectively positive and does not appear ‘sexist’; benevolent sexism expresses reverence and care toward women, and promises women will be protected and provided for by men (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Indeed, research has shown that these attitudes can benefit women. Men who express agreement with benevolent sexism are more caring, satisfied and positive relationship partners (e.g., Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011; Sibley & Becker, 2012). The current research examines whether women endorse benevolent sexism because of the personal benefits this ideology offers. Utilizing a nationally representative panel sample we tested whether psychological entitlement—a central facet of narcissism encompassing feelings of superiority and deservingness—was linked with increasing endorsement of benevolent sexism for women (but not men) across time.

The Costs and Benefits of Benevolent Sexism

Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) describes two related sexist ideologies which uphold men’s power: *hostile sexism* expresses aggressive attitudes toward women who challenge men’s power while *benevolent sexism* expresses subjectively positive, reverent attitudes toward women who support men’s power. Across countries, these ideologies operate in tandem to uphold men’s advantages in society (Glick et al., 2000). Hostile sexism works to suppress direct challenges to men’s power by threatening women who take on career roles or seek political reform (e.g., depicting feminists as seeking power over men). Benevolent sexism

incentivizes women's adoption of supportive relationship-focused roles by promising benefits to women within intimate domains (e.g., portraying housewives as special and deserving protection and care). Together, these ideologies allow men to secure societal power while fulfilling needs for heterosexual intimacy by expressing hostile attitudes toward 'power-challenging' women and benevolent attitudes toward women within intimate relationships (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997; Glick & Fiske, 2001).

The key way in which benevolent sexism inhibits women's access to societal power is through *women's* adoption and endorsement of its reverent yet patriarchal attitudes (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jackman, 1994). Women's agreement with benevolently sexist beliefs involves adopting supportive relationship roles and cultivating interpersonal qualities of warmth rather than competence, which allows men to take on competence-focused roles which have higher societal power and status. Women who endorse benevolent sexism hold less personal ambition for educational or career goals (Fernández, Castro, Otero, Foltz, & Lorenzo, 2006; Rudman & Heppen, 2003), defer to their male partners when it comes to making career decisions (Moya, Glick, Expósito, de Lemus, & Hart, 2007) and believe that the role of women is to assist their partners' authority and career (Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009; Lee, Fiske, Glick, & Chen, 2010). Furthermore, women exposed to benevolently sexist attitudes perform more poorly at tasks and feel lower competence (Dardenne, Dumont, & Bollier, 2007; Dumont, Sarlet, & Dardenne, 2010), more strongly believe that men and women have an equal chance of success in society (Jost & Kay, 2005) and express less intention to support gender-based collective action (Becker & Wright, 2011).

So why do women endorse benevolent sexism? Benevolent sexism offers several benefits which mask the way in which it is restrictive and harmful to women. Benevolent sexism praises

women's interpersonal qualities, promises that men will protect and provide for women, and portrays intimate relationships as women 'completing' men with their love (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Accordingly, benevolent sexism is perceived by women as chivalry and intimacy rather than 'sexist' (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Sarlet, Dumont, Delacollette, & Dardenne, 2012; Viki, Abrams, & Hutchinson, 2003) and men portrayed as embodying benevolently sexist qualities are seen as more attractive (Bohner, Ahlborn, & Steiner, 2010; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998). Furthermore, benevolent sexism provides actual, not just perceived, benefits in intimate relationships. Men who endorse benevolent sexism behave more positively and are more open to influence (Overall et al., 2011) and are generally more satisfied partners (Hammond & Overall, 2013; Sibley & Becker, 2011). Finally, benevolent sexism justifies wider gender inequality by emphasizing women's interpersonal superiority over men and men's societal advantages as a responsibility to care for women, which fosters greater life satisfaction in women (Connelly & Heesacker, 2012; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; Jost & Kay, 2005).

These benefits for women are why benevolent sexism plays such a powerful and insidious role in sustaining women's subordinate social position: The advantages offered by benevolent sexism reduce women's resistance to wider gender inequality. Indeed, these benefits are critical to how benevolent sexism functions because they provide women power within interpersonal domains and supply women indirect access to resources – meaning that women have something to lose if the status quo of gender relations is disrupted (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001; Jackman, 1994). However, despite the key role the benefits of benevolent sexism are hypothesized to play, no research has tested whether these benefits *encourage* women to adopt and endorse benevolent sexism. In the current research we provide a novel test of this central premise by examining whether women who strongly desire to be special and feel deserving of

power, status and resources—women who are high in psychological entitlement —are particularly attracted to benevolent sexism.

Why Should Benevolent Sexism’s Benefits Appeal to Women Higher in Entitlement?

If women endorse benevolent sexism because of the individual-level benefits it offers then women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism should vary depending on dispositional differences in psychological entitlement. Psychological entitlement is a core facet of narcissism which encompasses feelings that the self deserves nice things, social status and praise, and beliefs of the self as superior, highly intelligent and attractive (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline & Bushman, 2004; Campbell, Brunell, & Finkel, 2006; Emmons, 1987; Miller & Campbell, 2010; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). The model of narcissistic self-regulation characterizes psychological entitlement as manifesting in efforts to gain esteem, status and resources (Campbell & Foster, 2007; Campbell et al., 2006; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). Such efforts include adopting a superficially charming, confident and energetic approach to social interactions (Foster, Shrira, & Campbell, 2006; Paulhus, 1998), taking personal responsibility for successes and attributing failures to external sources (Chowning & Campbell, 2009; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998), and acting selfishly to secure material gains even when it means exploiting others (Campbell et al., 2004; Campbell, Bush, Brunell, & Shelton, 2005; Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001).

The characteristics of psychological entitlement which drive these types of resource-attainment and self-enhancement strategies are the same qualities which, for women, should promote the adoption of benevolent sexism. First, benevolent sexism facilitates the capacity to gain material resources and complements feelings of deservingness by promoting a structure of intimate relationships in which men use their access to social power and status to provide for

women (Chen et al., 2009). Second, benevolent sexism reinforces beliefs of superiority by expressing praise and reverence of women, emphasizing qualities of purity, morality and culture which make women the ‘fairer sex’. Indeed, identifying with these kinds of gender-related beliefs (e.g., women are warm) fosters a more positive self-concept (Rudman, Greenwald, & McGhee, 2001).

Moreover, for women higher in psychological entitlement, benevolent sexism *legitimizes* a self-centric approach to relationships by emphasizing women’s special status within the intimate domain and men’s responsibilities of providing and caring for women. Such care involves everyday chivalrous behaviors, such as paying on a first date and opening doors for women (Sarlet et al., 2012; Viki et al., 2003), to more overarching prescriptions for men’s behavior toward women, such as being “willing to sacrifice their own wellbeing” to provide for women and to ensure women’s happiness by placing her “on a pedestal” (Ambivalent Sexism Inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Thus, women higher in psychological entitlement should be particularly enticed by benevolent sexism because it justifies provision and praise from men as expected paternalistic behavior, and does not require women to reciprocate the reverence or material gains which men provide.

In contrast to the overt benefits which benevolent sexism promises women, men’s endorsement of benevolent sexism reflects making sacrifices for women by relinquishing power in the relationship domain and providing for and protecting their partners (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Moreover, although benevolent sexism portrays men as ‘gallant protectors’ (Glick & Fiske, 2001), it does not emphasize men’s superiority over women or cast men as deserving of praise and provision. Thus, benevolent sexism does not promise men direct benefits, but provides men benefits indirectly through maintaining men’s societal access to power, status and resources

(Glick & Fiske, 1996). Accordingly, we expected psychological entitlement to be more weakly associated with endorsement of benevolent sexism for men compared to women.

Current Research

Our study examines the presumed benefits and undermining nature of benevolent ideologies by investigating whether women's endorsement of benevolent sexism arises, at least in part, because benevolent sexism offers women benefits of praise and provision. We tested whether women who are high in psychological entitlement expressed stronger endorsement of benevolent sexism and increasingly endorsed benevolent sexism over time. We utilized a nationally representative panel sample in which 2723 women and 1698 men completed measures of psychological entitlement and benevolent sexism at one time point and then reported their endorsement of benevolent sexism again one year later. We hypothesized that women higher in psychological entitlement would more strongly endorse benevolent sexism and show increasing endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. In contrast, we did not expect men's psychological entitlement to be as strongly associated with benevolent sexism or, more importantly, increases in benevolent sexism across time because benevolent sexism does not overtly promote men's superiority or promise material gains.

Method

Sampling Procedure

The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS) Time 1 questionnaire was posted to 40,500 participants from the publicly available version of the 2009 NZ electoral roll, with valid responses from 6,518 participants. The overall response rate (adjusting for address accuracy of the electoral roll and including anonymous responses) was 16.6%. Roughly two

thirds of the sample ($N = 4,421$) responded at Time 2 one year later and provided data for the measures here (a sample retention rate of 68.1%).

Participant Details

Of the 4,421 participants for whom matched longitudinal data were available, 2,723 were women, and 1,698 men. Participants' mean age at Time 2 was 51.00 ($SD = 15.52$).

Measures

All items were rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Psychological Entitlement. At Time 1, participants completed the three highest-loading items from the Psychological Entitlement Scale (Campbell et al., 2004): “Feel entitled to more of everything”, “Deserve more things in life”, and “Demand the best because I’m worth it” ($\alpha = .68$). Consistent with prior research (e.g., Campbell et al., 2004; Pryor, Miller, & Gaughan, 2008), average levels of psychological entitlement were slightly lower than the midpoint for men ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.27$) and women ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.26$). This measure was not included in the Time 2 survey.

Benevolent Sexism. At both time points participants completed a shortened five-item scale from Glick and Fiske's (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (items 8, 9, 12, 19, and 22; e.g., “Women should be cherished and protected by men” and “Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility”). Averaged scale scores demonstrated good internal reliability ($\alpha = .73$ at both time points) and test-retest reliability ($r = .74$, $p < .01$, across Time 1 and 2). As is typical, scale-score means were around the midpoint of the scale for Men (Time 1 $M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.12$; Time 2 $M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.08$) and Women (Time 1 $M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.21$; Time 2 $M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.19$).

Results

Consistent with predictions, psychological entitlement was more strongly associated with initial (Time 1) levels of benevolent sexism for women ($r = .41, p < .01$) compared to men ($r = .15, p < .05$). To test whether this difference was significant, we estimated a latent variable interaction between psychological entitlement (latent) and gender (manifest; coded *women* = 0, *men* = 1) predicting (latent) benevolent sexism. We first tested whether psychological entitlement and gender interacted to predict benevolent sexism at Time 1 (cross-sectional associations) and then whether psychological entitlement and gender interacted to predict benevolent sexism at Time 2 controlling for Time 1 (longitudinal associations). The longitudinal model is shown in Figure 4.1. By including Time 1 benevolent sexism, this model assessed the degree to which psychological entitlement is associated with residual changes in benevolent sexism across the year. Thus, a positive and significant longitudinal association between psychological entitlement and benevolent sexism at Time 2 would indicate that psychological entitlement was associated with increased endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. We predicted this would be the case for women but not men. Our latent variable approach, which adjusts for measurement error in psychological entitlement at Time 1 and benevolent sexism at both time points, is superior to comparable models using manifest indicators because it adjusts for the possibility that predictors at Time 1 would be related to residual change in the outcome solely due to differences in measurement reliability over time. Analyses were conducted in Mplus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) using Full Information Maximum Likelihood with numerical integration (Klein & Moosbrugger, 2000; see also Muthén & Asparouhov, 2003).¹

¹ Annotated Mplus syntax for the models tested in the paper are available in the technical materials section of the NZAVS website: <http://www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/NZAVS>

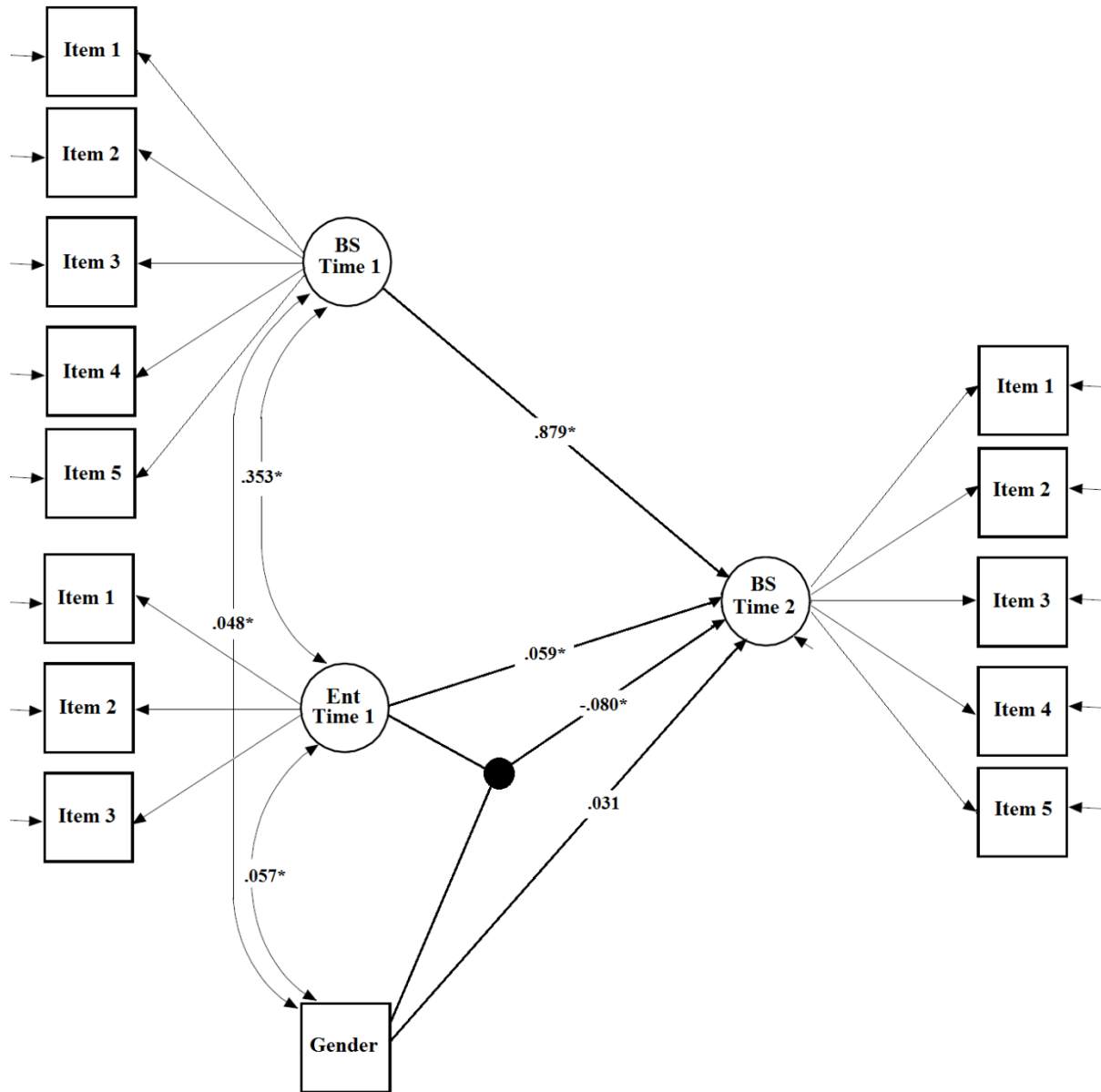


Figure 4.1. Structural Equation Model testing the longitudinal association between latent Psychological Entitlement (Ent) and latent Benevolent Sexism (BS) moderated by gender ($*p < .01$).

Cross-sectional Model

The results of the cross-sectional model testing the interaction between gender and psychological entitlement on Time 1 (concurrent) benevolent sexism provided initial support for our prediction. The latent interaction between psychological entitlement and gender predicting concurrent benevolent sexism was significant ($b = -.228$, $se = .044$, $z = -5.21$, $p < .001$). As displayed on the left side of Figure 4.2, psychological entitlement was more strongly related to benevolent sexism for women ($b = .437$, $se = .030$, $z = 14.15$, $p < .001$) relative to men ($b = .209$, $se = .034$, $z = 6.06$, $p < .001$).

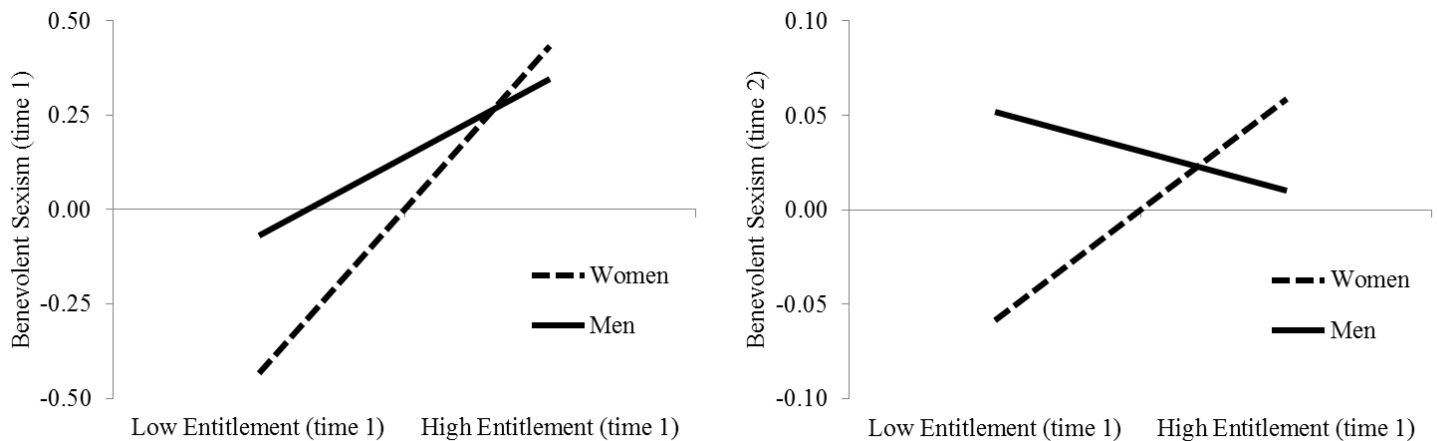


Figure 4.2. Simple slopes for the links between entitlement and benevolent sexism concurrently at time 1 (left side) and longitudinally (right side), moderated by gender. *Low* and *High* refer to one standardized unit below and above the mean of entitlement, and the y-axes reflect latent variable scores with an intercept of 0.

Longitudinal Model

The results of the longitudinal analyses are shown in Figure 4.1, and provided stronger support for our prediction. A significant interaction between psychological entitlement and

gender (represented by the solid black circle in Figure 4.1) predicting Time 2 benevolent sexism ($b = -.080$, $se = .030$, $z = -2.70$, $p = .007$) demonstrated that the longitudinal association between psychological entitlement and benevolent sexism differed for women and men. We estimated latent simple slopes for the longitudinal association between psychological entitlement and benevolent sexism for men and women by solving the effect of latent entitlement as a function of the moderating effect of manifest gender scores. As displayed in Figure 4.2 (right side), entitlement was associated with residual increases in benevolent sexism for women ($b = .059$, $se = .021$, $z = 2.87$, $p = .004$) but not for men ($b = -.021$, $se = .024$, $z = -0.87$, $p = .37$). These results indicate, as we predicted, that women higher in psychological entitlement endorse benevolent sexism more strongly across time.

Discussion

The current research investigated whether women who were higher in psychological entitlement more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism in order to provide evidence that women's adoption and endorsement of benevolent sexism occurs, at least in part, because of the benefits benevolent sexism offers women. We utilized a nationally representative panel sample to test whether individual differences in psychological entitlement were concurrently associated with benevolent sexism and longitudinally associated with residual increases in benevolent sexism over one year. As hypothesized, for women, greater psychological entitlement was concurrently associated with stronger endorsement of benevolent sexism and, more importantly, associated with increased endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. In contrast, men's psychological entitlement was only weakly correlated with benevolent sexism concurrently and *not* associated with longitudinal changes in benevolent sexism.

These novel results advance understanding of the way benevolent sexism functions by indicating that the benefits promised by benevolent sexism encourage women to endorse sexist attitudes toward their own gender. Such positive benefits are critical in supplying a subjectively positive guise to attitudes which support patriarchy (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Despite benevolent sexism promoting intimacy between men and women (Overall et al., 2011), it simultaneously works to maintain the status quo of gender relations by reducing women's ambition for independent success (Fernández et al., 2006; Rudman & Heppen, 2003) and making men's societal advantages seem more fair (Jackman, 1994; Jost & Kay, 2005). The longitudinal associations between women's psychological entitlement and endorsement of benevolent sexism provides the first evidence that the promises and potential benefits of benevolent sexism act as a lure for women's adoption and acceptance of sexist attitudes that support the gender status quo.

The current research also broadens a growing interest in the presence of narcissistic traits in the western world (e.g., Twenge, 2006) by indicating that psychological entitlement disposes women to accept benevolent sexism. Prior research has primarily examined how facets of narcissism manifest in self-serving behaviors, self-enhancing interpersonal scripts and elevated self-beliefs (e.g., Campbell et al. 2005; Campbell et al., 2000; Foster, Campbell, & Twenge, 2003). Yet, as our results suggest, individual differences in psychological entitlement also shape responses to societal attitudes because the same drives for esteem and resources facilitate the internalization of benevolent sexism. Benevolent sexism is congruent with women's psychological entitlement because its attitudes directly emphasize women's (interpersonal) superiority over men and prescribe that women should be protected and cherished by men. Moreover, because benevolent sexism portrays men's expected role as 'chivalrous providers',

these sexist attitudes may also justify a self-centric interpersonal approach which would otherwise undermine relationships (e.g., Campbell, 1999; Foster et al., 2006).

Ironically, the subjectively positive elements which give benevolent sexism its appeal also exacerbate interpersonal difficulties. Benevolent sexism builds a romanticized image of relationships which is hard for any couple to achieve in reality. Accordingly, women who endorse benevolent sexism are more hostile and resistant toward partners who do not endorse benevolent sexism (Overall et al., 2011), and experience more pronounced drops in relationship satisfaction when encountering difficulties or when partners are hurtful (Hammond & Overall, 2013). Moreover, women's agreement with benevolent sexism reduces their felt competence (Dardenne et al., 2007; Dumont et al., 2010), personal ambition (Fernández et al., 2006) and dissuades resistance to men's societal advantages (Becker & Wright, 2011; Hammond & Sibley, 2011) – covertly undermining the pursuit of agency, independence and access to status which are central to narcissistic drives (see Campbell et al., 2006). Thus, although women higher in psychological entitlement may profit in esteem and material gains, they will also likely suffer from the hidden personal and societal-level costs of benevolent sexism.

Longitudinal designs are the best way to examine how individual differences shape the development of people's attitudes across time. Our longitudinal results provide evidence that psychological entitlement fosters women's endorsement of benevolent sexism. However, the correlational nature of our data limits causal assertions. In particular, we cannot rule out the possibility (or perhaps likelihood) that reciprocal links between psychological entitlement and benevolent sexism exist. As detailed above, benevolent sexism emphasizes the special status of women in relationships and therefore may foster psychological entitlement. Moreover, because benevolent sexism undermines personal agency and exclusively delivers benefits to women who

adopt supportive and loyal relationship roles (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Glick et al., 1997; Lee et al., 2010), it may increase women's dependence on men for provision of resources thereby increasing the appeal of benevolent sexism. Investigating this type of self-perpetuating cycle is a good direction for future research.

A key implication and limitation of our findings is that the manifestation of women's psychological entitlement is shaped by social contexts. We utilized a nationally representative sample from New Zealand, a country ranked relatively high in terms of gender equality (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). In such egalitarian contexts, narcissistic and individualistic traits are more pronounced (Foster et al., 2003) and agreement with sexist attitudes is relatively low (Glick et al., 2000). In contrast, less egalitarian contexts should dampen the extent to which psychological entitlement is free to manifest; women will likely encounter hostile forms of sexism if their entitlement 'overextends' to the point of competing with men (Cikara, Lee, Fiske, & Glick, 2009). Further research is needed to understand the role of benevolent sexism under these conditions. On the one hand, benevolent sexism may allow the pursuit of esteem and access to resources without encountering resistance and hostility from men. On the other, hostile sexism also threatens women who are seen as using intimacy to manipulate men for personal gain (Hammond & Overall, in press). Thus, less egalitarian contexts involving high levels of hostile sexism may instead subdue the degree to which psychological entitlement manifests at all.

Conclusion

The present study tested whether individual differences in psychological entitlement was concurrently and longitudinally associated with benevolent sexism. As predicted, women's psychological entitlement was more strongly related to endorsement of benevolent sexism than

men's psychological entitlement. Moreover, greater psychological entitlement in women, but not men, was associated with increased endorsement of benevolent sexism over one year. These results provide novel evidence that women's agreement with benevolent sexism arises, at least in part, because benevolent sexism offers women exclusive benefits of praise, provision and care. These findings also provide the first evidence that psychological entitlement manifests in acceptance of societal attitudes which facilitate and justify feelings of superiority and desire for material gains. Ironically, however, attaining the individual-level benefits of benevolent sexism also involves agreeing with attitudes which ultimately perpetuate gender inequality.

Section Conclusion

The first article in this chapter demonstrated that women, but not men, higher in psychological entitlement increasingly endorsed benevolent sexism over time. That is, women who were personally oriented toward gaining praise, status and material resources were more attracted to benevolent sexism, whereas men who were similarly oriented toward these gains were no more or less attracted to benevolent sexism than men who were not. These results provide support for the prediction that one reason benevolent sexism appeals to *women* is the promises it specifically makes to women—that men will be caring, chivalrous providers who revere and cherish women. However, benevolent sexism functions to maintain gender inequality by being *restrictive* with these promises, only offering care to women *in relationships* when they are loyal and support their partner's careers (e.g., Viki & Abrams, 2002; Viki et al., 2005). Thus, because the benefits of benevolent sexism are not provided generally to women but are instead delivered in relationships by men who endorse benevolent sexism, the appeal of benevolent sexism to women should rest upon whether male partners are perceived to endorse benevolent sexism, and thus whether the promises of benevolent sexism are personally accessible.

The next article in this chapter examines the interpersonal context of the appeal of benevolent sexism to women, thereby extending the proposition of this thesis that dyadic processes are central to understanding the *sources* of sexism as well as the consequences of sexism that were demonstrated in Chapters One and Two. Next, I present an article which tests whether the extent to which women are attracted to and endorse benevolent sexism depends on their perceptions of their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism. Two longitudinal dyadic studies tested whether women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is fostered and maintained over time when they perceive that their partner endorses benevolent sexism. These studies were then followed-up by a series of experimental studies to provide

further support to the hypothesis that perceptions of the male partner's sexist attitudes produce change in women's endorsement of benevolent sexism.

The research article which follows is a manuscript currently under review. Please do not cite without permission from the authors.

Abstract

Why do women endorse attitudes that justify gender inequality, undermine their competence, and lower resistance to societal systems which disadvantage women? The current research demonstrated that women's adoption of benevolent sexism is influenced by their perceptions of their intimate partners' agreement with benevolent sexism. In two dyadic longitudinal studies, committed heterosexual couples reported on their own sexism and perceptions of their partner's sexism twice across nine months (Study 1) and five times across one year (Study 2). Women who perceived that their male partner more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism held greater and more stable benevolent sexism across time, whereas lower perceptions of partners' benevolent sexism predicted significant declines in women's benevolent sexism across time. Changes in men's endorsement of sexism were unrelated to perceptions of their partner's sexist attitudes. The naturalistic change in sexist attitudes shown in Studies 1 and 2 was supported by experimental evidence in Studies 3 and 4. After being led to believe that their partner's sexism was likely to be higher (versus lower) than they thought, women—but not men—reported greater benevolent sexism (Study 3) and greater perceived regard and relationship security (Study 4). Discriminant analyses and studies demonstrated that the effects for women were specific to partner's perceptions of sexism and not perceptions of societal levels of men's sexism (Studies 2-4). These findings demonstrate that women's endorsement of benevolent sexism occurs when they perceive that the reverence and relationship benefits benevolent sexism promises are personally accessible.

Internalizing sexism within close relationships: The perceived sexism of intimate partners maintains women's endorsement of benevolent sexism

Ambivalent sexism theory states that prejudicial attitudes toward women comprise two related ideologies – *hostile sexism* and *benevolent sexism* – which arise from contrasting (or ambivalent) motives and needs between intergroup and interpersonal domains (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001). Hostile sexism emerges from intergroup-level competition between men and women, such as men's desire to maintain advantaged access to status and resources, and expresses derogatory and antagonistic attitudes toward women who adopt non-traditional roles and challenge men's societal power (e.g., feminists, career women). In contrast, benevolent sexism operates at the interpersonal level to support cooperative motives between men and women, such as reproduction and heterosexual intimacy. Benevolent sexism expresses subjectively positive but patronizing attitudes toward traditional women, such as characterizing women as warm and loving but requiring men's protection and care. Together, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism operate to maintain men's societal advantages and are both related to societal gender inequality across countries (Brandt, 2011; Glick et al., 2000).

Benevolent sexism is central to the maintenance of gender inequality because its positive tone encourages women to adopt benevolent attitudes and thus accept and hold stake in men's societal power (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Benevolent sexism tends to be relatively more accepted than hostile sexism across countries (Glick et al., 2000; Napier, Thorisdottir, & Jost, 2010) and is particularly notable for reducing women's resistance to gender inequality (Becker & Wright, 2011; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; Jost & Kay, 2005; Napier et al., 2010). However, no research has examined the interpersonal factors which promote women's internalization of benevolent sexism. The current research is the first to investigate the important role close relationships play in sustaining women's endorsement of attitudes which function to uphold gender inequality. Specifically, the studies reported here

examine whether women's adoption of benevolent sexism is influenced by their perceptions of their intimate partners' agreement with benevolent sexism.

The Societal Sources and Consequences of Benevolent Sexism

Ambivalent sexism theory states that biological and societal differences between men and women generate both hostile sexism and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Men's advantaged access to power and status in society generates stereotypes that women are incompetent and seek to manipulate men to gain power, which are indexed by hostile sexism. However, hostile attitudes impede the fulfillment of men's needs for heterosexual intimacy and instead foster women's resentment of men's societal power (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Benevolent sexism captures subjectively positive, yet prejudicial, attitudes which work to temper this hostility between men and women by characterizing women who adopt traditional caregiving roles as warm, wonderful and in need of men's protection. Benevolent sexism affords women 'dyadic power' in domestic and relationship domains, praising women for the interpersonal strengths which complement traditional gender roles for men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In this way, benevolent sexism offers women and men a subjectively positive justification of societal inequality while encouraging women to *invest* in patriarchy through simultaneously depending upon and supporting their romantic partner.

A large literature demonstrates that one key source of people's adoption and endorsement of prejudicial ideologies are the normative attitudes held in society (e.g., Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Laurin, Gaucher, & Kay, 2013; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In particular, when differences exist between societal groups, people are motivated to endorse the attitudes held by the dominant group to attain security and stability (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Laurin et al., 2013). Benevolent sexism is relatively appealing, and provides this sense of security and stability, because it presents an idealized and complementary version of gender roles in which women

are ‘warm caregivers’ and men are ‘competent providers’ (e.g., Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Barreto, Ellemers, Piebinga, & Moya, 2010; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Both men’s and women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism is also higher when they perceive that benevolent sexism is normative and generally endorsed by most men (the dominant group in society; Sibley et al., 2009).

Although both men and women endorse sexist attitudes (Brandt, 2011; Glick et al., 2000), women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism plays a particularly important role in maintaining gender inequality. For example, when women more strongly endorse benevolent sexism they embrace their interpersonal rather than agentic qualities and hold relatively lower aspirations for independent success in education or career domains (Barreto et al., 2010; Dumont, Sarlet, & Dardenne, 2010; Fernández, Castro, Otero, Foltz, & Lorenzo, 2006). They also view men’s and women’s societal roles as equally fair, which predicts relatively greater life satisfaction and a lower motivation to challenge men’s higher levels of societal power (Becker & Wright, 2011; Hammond & Sibley, 2011; Jost & Kay, 2005; Napier et al., 2010). Thus, a key way benevolent sexism functions to maintain gender inequality involves *women* adopting and endorsing benevolent sexism. However, research on the origins of women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism has predominantly focused on the societal-level relationship between women and men (e.g., people accepting group norms), which does not capture a central element of benevolent sexism: Prescriptions for men to cherish and provide for women concern *intimate* relationships and the degree to which male partners endorse sexist attitudes. Accordingly, we propose that one key way women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism is fostered and sustained should be their intimate partner’s sexist beliefs.

How Close Relationships Shape Women’s Benevolent Sexism

Although women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism plays a key role in the perpetuation of men’s societal power, no research has examined the interpersonal factors

which foster and maintain women's agreement with benevolent sexism. Interpersonal factors are critical because the *appeal* of benevolent sexism, and the men who endorse benevolent sexism, relies upon its subjectively positive depiction of traditional intimate relationships, such as men being 'completed' by caring for a woman (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Accordingly, benevolent sexism tends to be identified by women as a set of protective and chivalrous attitudes (Sarlet, Dumont, Delacollette, & Dardenne, 2012; Viki, Abrams, & Hutchinson, 2003), is typically not classified by women as 'sexist' (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005), and is instead perceived as a relatively attractive quality in men (Bohner, Ahlborn, & Steiner, 2010; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998). It is the promised praise, protection and care of women by male intimate partners which make benevolent sexism attractive to women. Moreover, because these benefits are provided by male intimate partners, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism should be determined by the availability of these benefits in their close relationships.

Recent evidence illustrates that the personal benefits of reverence and care that benevolent sexism offers women does foster women's acceptance of benevolent sexism. Women agree more with benevolently sexist attitudes which are personally phrased (e.g., "In a disaster, *I* ought to be rescued before men") compared to when those same attitudes are phrased to benefit women in general (Becker, 2010). Similarly, nationally representative research in New Zealand has shown that endorsement of benevolent sexism is higher and increases over time when women (but not men) believe that they are more deserving of praise and material gains (i.e., high in psychological entitlement; Hammond, Sibley, & Overall, 2014). However, this prior research has overlooked a central element of benevolent sexism: The potential relevance and benefits of benevolent sexism primarily occur within close relationships. Benevolent sexism prescribes that women must be cherished, protected and provided for by their male partners (Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee, Fiske, Glick, & Chen, 2010). Because women are promised these benefits *within* their

relationships *by* their intimate partners, the appeal of benevolent sexism to women should depend on the extent to which their *partners* endorse benevolent sexism.

In contrast, men's perceptions of their female partner's benevolent sexism do not signal relationship benefits of special reverence, care or provision. Rather than promising benefits to men in relationships, benevolent sexism functions to provide men actual societal-level benefits. For example, characterizing men as competent and gallant protectors and providers justifies men's access to power, status and resources (Brandt, 2011; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Accordingly, research indicates that men are not attracted to benevolent sexism because of special access to reverence and care. For example, unlike women high in psychological entitlement, men who believe they are entitled to special treatment and praise are *not* more likely to endorse benevolent sexism (Hammond et al., 2014). Instead, men's endorsement of sexism stems from societal-level concerns for men to have an advantaged and secure access to societal power (Sibley et al., 2007) as well as the normative influence of most men's attitudes (Sibley et al., 2009).

Alternative Explanations for Internalizing Benevolent Sexism within Relationships

The central hypothesis guiding the current studies is that women's—but not men's—endorsement of benevolent sexism should depend on their perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism because these perceptions signal that the relationship benefits benevolent sexism promises women are personally relevant and accessible. However, across the studies we present below testing this important source of women's benevolent sexism, we considered and attempted to rule out several alternative explanations. In particular, we wanted to ensure that the effects of perceived partner's benevolent sexism on women's (but not men's) endorsement of benevolent sexism were *not* because (1) women's attitudes are exclusively shaped by perceptions that benevolent sexism is normative in society, (2) men who endorse

sexism convince or persuade female partners to hold their sexist attitudes, or (3) both male and female intimate partners generally adopt one another's sexist attitudes.

Normativity of Sexist Attitudes. One alternative explanation is that any effects of perceptions of the partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism are instead due to perceptions that benevolent sexism is relatively normative in society. Indeed, Sibley et al. (2009) found that New Zealand women's and men's endorsement of benevolent sexism increased when they perceived that most men in New Zealand generally endorsed benevolent sexism. These results are consistent with the established finding that individuals follow the norm set by the dominant group (in this case 'men'), but overlaps with our hypothesis that the degree to which women adopt benevolent sexism will be dependent on the degree to which its promised relationship-level benefits are viable and accessible given that 'most men' includes actual and potential male partners. In the current research, we wanted to demonstrate the unique importance of intimate relationships to *women's* endorsement of benevolent sexism alongside people's general tendency to conform to normative beliefs. Thus, in the studies we present below, we contrast the effects of perceptions of the partner's sexist attitudes with the effects of perceptions of societal attitudes on women's and men's own endorsement of benevolent sexism.

Direct Transmission of Men's Sexist Attitudes. Another alternative is that men persuade female partners to hold their beliefs (e.g., Davis & Rusbult, 2001), rather than changes in endorsement of benevolent sexism occurring as a function of women's *perceptions* of their partner's benevolent sexism. Benevolent sexism is subtle, indirect and masks its negative effects by appearing protective and romantic (e.g., Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Jackman, 1994; Sarlet et al., 2012; Viki et al., 2003). Benevolent sexism also seeks to *appeal* rather than intimidate by offering women relationship-related power and praise (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Hammond et al., 2014) and withdrawing those benefits when women do not

conform to traditional roles (e.g., Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003). Thus, benevolent sexism should not be transmitted via men persuading or pressuring female partners to adopt their (men's) attitudes because this would only incite resistance and undermine the capacity for benevolent sexism to facilitate heterosexual intimacy (a key function of benevolent sexism). Accordingly, we expected that: (1) women's *perceptions* of their partner's benevolent sexism would shape their own endorsement of sexist attitudes rather than male partner's actual sexist attitudes directly predicting changes in women's sexist attitudes, and (2) that men's actual (or perceived) endorsement of *hostile sexism* would not predict changes in women's sexist attitudes. Thus, in the current research, we contrast the effects of perceptions of partners' sexist attitudes with the effects of partners' actual attitudes.

General Adoption of Partners' Attitudes. Finally, perhaps women endorse benevolent sexism simply because people shift their beliefs to align with close others. Indeed, shared reality theory highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships in the transmission of prejudicial attitudes because people's need for closeness motivates them to hold similar beliefs as those held by close others (Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008). Accordingly, people's opinions and beliefs tend to shift to be closer to their intimate partners' beliefs after discussing those beliefs with the partner (Davis & Rusbult, 2001) and as part of a process of mutual alignment over time (Kalmijn, 2005). If this alternative is the case for transmission of sexist attitudes, then both women's and men's benevolent and hostile sexism should simply align together across time. However, the attitude alignment that occurs in relationships is not necessarily equal across partners. For example, people's attitudes and beliefs become more similar to their partners' when the content of those attitudes and beliefs are perceived to be relevant to their relationship and central to the self (Davis & Rusbult, 2001; Jost et al., 2008; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Thus, when attitudes are more central and relevant to the self for one partner compared to another, there

will be an imbalance in the degree to which one partner's attitudes shifts within the relationship. Such an unequal alignment of attitudes should occur with regard to benevolent sexism because benevolent sexism arises specifically to appeal to *women* to attain women's intimate cooperation with men's power (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994), and therefore women's attitudes should be more influenced by perceptions of their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism than vice versa, and women's attitudes should be influenced by perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism and not perceptions of their partner's hostile sexism. Accordingly, in the current research we also contrast the effects of perceived partner benevolent sexism to the effects of perceived hostile sexism on both women's and men's endorsement of sexist attitudes.

Current Research

The current research was designed to demonstrate the importance of intimate heterosexual relationships for women's internalization of benevolent sexism. The personal reverence and care promised by benevolent sexism should only (or predominantly) be enticing if women perceive their male partner endorses benevolent sexism and will therefore provide the cherishing, revered relationship position which benevolent sexism offers women. Accordingly, we predicted that when women perceive their intimate partner to endorse benevolent sexism, they should endorse benevolent sexism more strongly and maintain stronger endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. In contrast, when women perceive that their partner disagrees with benevolent sexism, the promised benefits of benevolent sexism are less relevant and accessible, and so women should reject benevolent sexism over time.

In Study 1 and 2, we tested this hypothesis by examining changes in sexist attitudes in two longitudinal samples of heterosexual couples. In Study 1 we examined whether perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism predicted residual increases in women's own endorsement of benevolent sexism assessed nine months later. In Study 2 we tested whether

perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism was associated with women maintaining greater endorsement of benevolent sexism assessed repeatedly over a year. In both studies, we predicted that the more women perceived their partner to endorse benevolent sexism, the more they would endorse and maintain endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. In contrast, we expected that the more women perceived their intimate partners to disagree with benevolent sexism, the less that women would endorse benevolent sexism over time. Because benevolent sexism promises relationship benefits to women specifically, we did not expect that *men's* perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism would be associated with changes in men's own endorsement of benevolent sexism across time.

To supplement the naturalistic change in sexist attitudes assessed in Studies 1 and 2, Study 3A was designed to experimentally test the influence of perceptions of intimate partner's benevolent sexism on women's endorsement of benevolent sexism. We did this by leading participants to believe that their partner's benevolent sexism was likely higher or lower than they initially thought and then collecting measures of people's own endorsement of these attitudes. We expected that women's own post-manipulation endorsement of benevolent sexism would be higher when led to think that their partner's benevolent sexism was likely to be higher versus lower than they originally thought. In contrast, we expected that this manipulation would not have any influence on men's subsequent endorsement of benevolent sexism.

In Study 4A we aimed to provide evidence for our underlying argument about why perceptions of partner's sexist attitudes should influence women's, but not men's, own endorsement of benevolent sexism—perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism signals that the relationship benefits benevolent sexism promises women (but not men) are accessible and available. We did this by experimentally manipulating perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism as in Study 3, but this time gathered post-manipulation measures of

participants' perceived regard (e.g., feeling loved and cared for) and felt security (e.g., feeling confident that the relationship is stable and will remain so in the future). We expected that women's perceived regard and felt security would be higher when they were led to think that their partner's benevolent sexism was likely to be higher versus lower than they originally thought. In contrast, we did not expect that men's perceived regard or felt security would be different following a manipulation of their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism.

We also attempted to rule out alternative explanations for the effect of perceptions of partner's benevolent sexism on women's, but not men's, sexist attitudes. First, we wanted to demonstrate that the predicted effects of perceptions of their *partner's* sexism were distinct from the effects of perceiving sexism to be generally endorsed by men in society (i.e., following the normative influence of the dominant group). In Study 2, we measured and compared the effects of perceptions of partner's benevolent sexism to perceptions of most men's endorsement of benevolent sexism. We expected that women's perceptions of their male partner's benevolent sexism would be related to their own benevolent sexism over and above any effect of perceived societal levels of sexism. We also conducted additional experiments identical to Studies 3A and 4A described above but instead manipulated participants' perceptions of *most men's* endorsement of sexism rather than perceptions of participants' intimate partner's sexist attitudes. We expected that manipulating perceptions of societal levels of men's sexism would not produce the same effects as perceptions of partners' sexist attitudes. Rather, we predicted that manipulating societal levels of sexist attitudes would produce similar responses in both women's *and* men's endorsement of benevolent sexism (Study 3B) and would not be related to either men's or women's perceived regard and felt security (Study 4B).

We also tested the alternative possibilities that (1) men persuade or convince female partners to share their endorsement of sexist attitudes or (2) people endorse any sexist

ideology endorsed by their partner. In Study 1 and 2 we had several methods to rule these possibilities out. First, we tested the effects of the partner's actual (self-reported) endorsement of sexist attitudes. If men were persuading partners to endorse benevolent sexism, then changes in women's benevolent sexism should occur as a function of men's actual benevolent sexism rather than women's perceptions. Although men's actual endorsement of benevolent sexism will signal the availability of promised benefits to female partners, any effects should nevertheless occur via women's perceptions of benevolent sexism (i.e., women need to perceive that these benefits are available and accessible). Moreover, we also tested the effects of partners' and perceptions of partners' *hostile sexism* on people's own endorsement of hostile sexism. If women simply adopt their partners' sexist attitudes, then their partners' hostile sexism or perceptions of their partners' hostile sexism should also produce change in their own sexist attitudes.¹ In addition, if people (both men and women) simply adopt their partner's attitudes, then we should see significant changes in both women's *and* men's benevolent sexism *and* hostile sexism, rather than the specific gender difference in the adoption of benevolent sexism we hypothesize.

STUDY 1

In Study 1, both partners of heterosexual couples completed measures of their own and their perceptions of their partner's sexist attitudes at two time points, nine months apart. We predicted that greater perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism would predict residual increases in women's, but not men's, own endorsement of benevolent sexism assessed nine months later.

Method

¹ Women's endorsement of benevolent sexism can be prompted through a 'self-protective' response to men's hostile sexism (e.g., Fischer, 2006; Glick et al., 2000). However, we expected this would not be the case for the longitudinal samples investigated in the current research given the normative intolerance of violence toward women in New Zealand and because prior research has shown that New Zealand women's benevolent sexism is unrelated to the perceived prevalence of hostile sexism in society (Sibley et al., 2009).

Participants

Participants were 122 eligible partners (64 women and 58 men) from 91 heterosexual couples who replied to electronic and paper advertisements posted across a New Zealand university (eligibility criteria described below). Across all studies, people involved in heterosexual couples were required because sexist attitudes specifically concern beliefs regarding heterosexual complementarity and traditional gender roles, and thus have only been validated in heterosexual samples. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 48 years ($M = 23.05$, $SD = 5.15$), and they were involved in long-term (average length = 2.62 years, $SD = 2.03$, range = 0.5 to 10.25 years) relationships; 51% were married/cohabitating, 46% reported 'serious' relationships, and 3% reported 'steady' relationships.

Procedure

Participants completed questionnaires assessing their sexist attitudes and perceptions of their partner's endorsement of sexist attitudes in an initial session (Time 1) and then again nine months later (Time 2). To be eligible for these analyses, participants needed to complete both questionnaires. At Time 2, 17 relationships ($n = 34$ participants) had dissolved and 26 people did not respond, leaving the sample of 122 participants described above. There were no differences in endorsement of benevolent sexism or perceptions of the partner's sexism between participants who did complete and those who did not complete the second questionnaire, but those who completed the second questionnaire expressed relatively lower agreement with hostile sexism ($M_{Diff} = -0.45$, $t = -2.71$, $p < .01$). Participants were reimbursed \$40 NZD for completing both questionnaires.²

Materials

² Data collected at Time 1 has been used in prior research that examined the links between sexist attitudes and daily relationship perceptions and behavior (Hammond & Overall, 2013a, 2013b). The current study uses the same measure of sexism assessed at Time 1 as these prior studies, but the research questions, measures of perceptions of partner's sexism, and longitudinal change in own sexist attitudes reported in the current study have not been previously examined.

Benevolent and Hostile Sexism. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) assessed participants' attitudes toward women. Benevolent sexism (e.g. 'Women should be cherished and protected by men') and hostile sexism (e.g. 'Women seek to gain power by getting control over men') were each assessed by 11 items rated on a scale from -3 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*). Items were averaged so that higher scores indicated stronger endorsement of benevolent and hostile sexism.

Perceptions of the Partner's Sexism. Participants were then asked to consider their partner's attitudes toward women. Participants rated the same items from the ASI rating the extent to which they thought their partners would agree or disagree with the items, regardless of their own opinions, which were averaged to create scale scores for perceptions of the partner's endorsement of sexism.

Results

Table 4.1 presents descriptive statistics, scale reliabilities and correlations across variables. At both time points, endorsement of benevolent sexism was positively associated with perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism. However, we predicted that perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism would be linked with relative increases in women's, but not men's, endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. To test this longitudinal prediction we followed Kenny, Kashy and Cook's (2006) methods for analyzing data within dyads using the MIXED procedure in SPSS 20.0. We simultaneously estimated all parameters for women and men while accounting for the dependence within dyads, and we calculated whether the differences between men and women were significant. In this model, individuals' own endorsement of benevolent sexism at Time 2 was regressed on individuals' own endorsement of benevolent sexism at Time 1 (so that any effects represent prediction of residualized change in benevolent sexism over time) and individuals' perceptions of their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism at Time 1 (which tests our key prediction). We also

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics and correlations across individuals' own endorsement of sexism and perceptions of the partner's endorsement of sexism (Study 1).

	Cronbach's Alpha		Mean (Standard Deviation)		Correlations across Variables					
	Men	Women	Men	Women	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Benevolent Sexism (Time 1)	.80	.77	0.33 (1.01)	-0.33 (1.04)	.38*	.69*	.15	.14	.62*	.15
2. Benevolent Sexism (Time 2)	.78	.76	0.05 (0.98)	-0.62 (0.99)	.78*	.37*	.15	.28*	.59*	.08
3. Hostile Sexism (Time 1)	.88	.88	-0.03 (1.20)	-0.21 (1.33)	.50*	.51*	.40*	.80*	.14	.71*
4. Hostile Sexism (Time 2)	.91	.87	-0.22 (1.29)	-0.74 (1.27)	.30*	.43*	.82*	.47*	.22	.54*
5. Perceptions of the partner's Benevolent Sexism (Time 1)	.86	.82	0.66 (1.19)	-0.22 (1.12)	.72*	.56*	.48*	.39*	.33*	.14
6. Perceptions of the partner's Hostile Sexism (Time 1)	.73	.90	-0.90 (0.83)	0.74 (1.24)	.12	.15	.28*	.35*	.10	.24

Note. Measures were assessed on a -3 to 3 scale, with a mid-point of 0. Correlations for women are above the diagonal, correlations for men are below the diagonal. Within-dyad correlations are on the diagonal and are displayed in bold. * $p < .05$.

controlled for the corresponding ratings of hostile sexism at Time 1 to ensure that any lagged associations were not due to perceiving that the partner held antagonistic and aggressively-toned attitudes toward women.³

The effects for women and men provided strong support for our hypothesis; greater perceptions of the partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism at Time 1 was significantly associated with residual increases in women's endorsement of benevolent sexism nine months later (left side of Table 4.2). Although this association was not significant for men, the gender difference was very close to conventional levels of significance ($p = .06$; right side of Table 4.2).⁴

To show that perceptions of intimate partners' benevolent sexism shape women's own endorsement of benevolent sexism, rather than the reverse, we ran comparable analyses testing whether individuals' own sexist attitudes predicted perceptions of their partner's sexist attitudes at Time 2. Individuals' own benevolent sexism did not predict residual changes in perceptions of the partners' benevolent sexism for women ($B = -.02$, $p = .86$, $r = -.02$) or men ($B = -.01$, $p = .96$, $r = -.01$), providing evidence that women's perceptions of the partner's sexism influences endorsement of their own sexist attitudes, and not vice versa.

Discriminant Tests Ruling out Alternative Explanations

Transmission of Men's Sexist Attitudes. Our initial analyses illustrate that, as predicted, perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism fosters benevolent sexism in women but not men. We next contrasted the effects of *perceptions* of partner's benevolent

³ Across Studies 1 and 2, the predicted links between women's benevolent sexism and perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism remained when own hostile sexism and perceptions of hostile sexism were not included in the models.

⁴ We assessed the overall reliability of the longitudinal change in sexism by computing a meta-analytic average for the focal effect sizes (r) across Study 1 and Study 2. The effect of perceptions of the partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism on changes in own endorsement of benevolent sexism was reliably different across gender (average $r = -.16$, 95% CI = $-.28$ to $-.05$, $z = -2.79$, $p < .01$), was reliably strong for women (average $r = .25$, 95% CI = $.09$ to $.40$, $z = 3.03$, $p < .01$), and was not significant for men (average $r = -.08$, 95% CI = $-.25$ to $.08$, $z = -0.98$, $p = .33$).

Table 4.2. The effects of individuals' own sexism and perceptions of their partner's sexism at Time 1 predicting benevolent sexism at Time 2 (Study 1).

	<i>Women's Benevolent Sexism (time 2)</i>				<i>Men's Benevolent Sexism (time 2)</i>				<i>Gender Diff. t</i>
	95% CI				95% CI				
	<i>B</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>r</i>	
Individuals' Benevolent Sexism (time 1)	.50*	.28	.71	.51	.72*	.47	.96	.62	1.54
Individuals' Hostile Sexism (time 1)	.10	-.09	.29	.14	.12	-.04	.29	.19	0.38
Individuals' Perceptions of Partner's Benevolent Sexism (time 1)	.23*	.03	.43	.28	-.05	-.25	.16	-.06	-1.88[†]
Individuals' Perceptions of Partner's Hostile Sexism (time 1)	-.10	-.30	.10	-.13	.03	-.17	.24	.04	1.30

Note. The effects for women and men are from dyadic models simultaneously estimating each effect for women and men while accounting for the dependence within dyads. The *Gender Diff. t* column presents the *t* statistic from equivalent dyadic analyses testing whether the effects differ across women and men (*women* -1, *men* 1). Predicted effects displayed in bold. Approximate effect sizes (*r*) were computed using Rosenthal and Rosnow's (2007) formula: $r = \sqrt{(t^2 / t^2 + df)}$. * $p < .05$. [†] $p = .06$.

sexism with those of the partner's actual (self-reported) sexist attitudes. Women's perceptions of their partner's benevolent and hostile sexism were correlated with their male partner's self-reported sexist attitudes ($r = .55$ and $.47$, $p < .001$, respectively), but the partner's benevolent sexism ($B = .09$, $p = .41$, $r = .11$) and hostile sexism ($B = .08$, $p = .44$, $r = .10$) at Time 1 did not predict changes in women's benevolent sexism at Time 2. Moreover, the hypothesized effect of women's perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism remained significant ($B = .24$, $p = .04$, $r = .27$) when controlling for partners' reported endorsement of sexism. These results support that, rather than male partners persuading or pressuring women to adopt similar attitudes, it is women's perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism, and thus the perceived availability of care, provision and reverence in relationships, which fosters women's benevolent sexism.

General Adoption of Partners' Attitudes. Our analyses demonstrated that men's perceptions of their partner's attitudes were unrelated to changes in their endorsement of sexist attitudes, which indicates that people did not generally endorse the attitudes held by their partners. In addition, if women's internalization of benevolent sexism occurs because of the benefits offered by those attitudes, then women should *not* endorse hostile sexism when perceiving their partners strongly endorse hostile sexism. Indeed, additional analyses which predicted individuals' endorsement of *hostile sexism* at Time 2 revealed that perceptions of the partner's endorsement of sexist attitudes were unrelated to residual change in hostile sexism for women or men ($Bs = -.07$ to $.20$, $ps > .09$).

STUDY 2

In Study 1, women's perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism were associated with greater residual increases in their own endorsement of benevolent sexism nine months later. In Study 2, we collected measures of sexist attitudes five times over a 1-year period which provided a more fine-grained test of our predictions because it enabled analysis of the

trajectory of change in endorsement of sexism across time. At each time point we assessed individuals' own sexist attitudes, individuals' perceptions of their partner's sexist attitudes, and individuals' perceptions of the prevalent endorsement of sexist attitudes in society. We predicted women's perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism would be associated with women's endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. As in Study 1, we expected that this effect would emerge for women and not men, benevolent sexism and not hostile sexism, and be independent of the partner's actual endorsement of sexism. In Study 2, we also wanted to contrast the effect of perceptions of the *partner's* benevolent sexism against perceived societal norms; in particular, perceptions of the sexist attitudes held by most men in society. Consistent with prior research showing that people's endorsement of sexist attitudes follows the normative influence of the perceived attitudes held by most men (Sibley et al., 2009), we expected that societal-level perceptions of men's benevolent sexism in society would be associated with changes in *both* women's and men's benevolent sexism. However, we expected that the effect of perceptions of intimate partner's sexist attitudes on women's endorsement of benevolent sexism would occur above and beyond (i.e., be statistically independent) of any normative effect. This predicted pattern would demonstrate that a unique pathway for women's adoption of benevolent sexism is perceptions of the partner's sexist attitudes and thus whether the reverence and care offered by benevolent sexism is personally accessible.

Method

Participants

Eighty-four heterosexual couples replied to electronic and paper advertisements distributed across a New Zealand university. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 41 ($M = 21.74$, $SD = 3.61$) and they were involved in long-term committed relationships (Mean length

= 2.59 years, $SD = 1.72$, range = 0.6 to 20.5 years). Participants reported their relationship status as married (12%), cohabitating (44%), serious (38%) or steady (6%).

Procedure

Couples completed five questionnaires across a 1-year period. During an initial laboratory session, participants completed scales assessing participants' own endorsement of sexist attitudes, perceptions of their partner's sexist attitudes and perceptions of the level of sexist attitudes generally held by men and women in society. Participants were then mailed a separate set of questionnaires four times over the following year at three month intervals. To be included in the current analyses, both partners of the couple needed to have completed at least one follow-up questionnaire. Fourteen couples did not meet this requirement, leaving the sample described above; these participants were relatively higher in their endorsement of benevolent sexism relative to those who completed at least one follow-up questionnaire ($M_{Diff} = 0.45$, $t = 1.98$, $p = .05$), but there were no other differences in endorsement or perceptions of sexist attitudes. Participants were reimbursed \$35 NZD for participating in the initial session and \$15 NZD for the completion of each follow-up postal questionnaire.⁵

Measures (completed every three months)

Benevolent Sexism and Hostile Sexism. Participants completed a short-form version of the ASI used in Study 1 (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Six items assessed benevolent sexism and 6 items assessed hostile sexism. These short-form scales demonstrate good across-time reliability (Sibley & Perry, 2010) and predictive utility (Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011; Hammond & Overall, 2014).

⁵ Data collected at Time 1 has been used in prior research investigating how sexist attitudes predict observed conflict behavior (Overall et al., 2011) and responses to unmet relationship ideals (Hammond & Overall, 2014). The current study uses the same measure of sexism assessed at Time 1 as these prior studies, but the research questions, measures of perceptions of partner's sexism, and longitudinal change in own sexist attitudes reported in the current study have not been previously examined.

Perceptions of the Partner's Sexism. As in Study 1, participants rated the short-form ASI according to how their partner would agree or disagree with the statements.

Perceptions of Societal Sexism. Participants also completed two versions of the short-form ASI assessing how, regardless of their own personal opinion, most men in contemporary New Zealand society would respond to these statements.

Results

Descriptive statistics and scale reliabilities are displayed in Table 4.3 and correlations across measures at the initial session are displayed in Table 4.4. We used growth curve analyses to test whether there was significant change in individuals' sexist attitudes across the year, and whether this trajectory of change in sexist attitudes varied across individuals. This analytic strategy is superior to analysis of lagged or residualized change (as used in Study 1) because it utilizes the multiple assessments to (1) model time as a random effect, (2) examine naturalistic change in endorsement of sexism over one year rather than assuming these changes occur in small and equivalent increments across three-month phases, and (3) provide specific information regarding the nature of change (i.e., increases, decreases or maintenance of attitudes) and the resulting differences in trajectories and end-points for participants who perceive their partners to endorse relatively high versus low levels of benevolent sexism. An additional advantage of multilevel models is that these analyses effectively account for missing data without excluding participants who only completed 2-4 time points by weighting the extent to which the effect for each individual contributes to the total effect by the reliability of that slope (i.e., the number of measurements).

We first examined whether and in what way sexist attitudes change over time. Following Kenny et al.'s (2006) methods for analyzing repeated measures data within dyads, we ran a series of growth curve analyses. First, individuals' benevolent sexism was modeled as a function of time (coded as 0 = *the initial session* through to 4 = *12-month follow-up*) to

Table 4.3. Means (and standard deviations) for questionnaire measures across all time points (Study 2).

	Women					Men				
	<i>Time 0</i>	<i>Time 1</i>	<i>Time 2</i>	<i>Time 3</i>	<i>Time 4</i>	<i>Time 0</i>	<i>Time 1</i>	<i>Time 2</i>	<i>Time 3</i>	<i>Time 4</i>
Benevolent Sexism	0.33 (1.08)	0.43 (1.13)	0.27 (1.15)	0.15 (1.18)	0.27 (1.13)	0.51 (1.03)	0.45 (1.01)	0.37 (1.06)	0.22 (1.06)	0.20 (1.13)
Hostile Sexism	-0.50 (1.05)	-0.50 (1.33)	-0.46 (1.26)	-0.49 (1.23)	-0.30 (1.29)	0.14 (1.17)	0.15 (1.16)	0.22 (1.13)	0.35 (1.26)	0.23 (1.13)
Perceptions of Partner's Benevolent Sexism	-0.08 (1.14)	0.00 (1.15)	-0.02 (1.24)	0.04 (1.27)	0.04 (1.20)	1.17 (1.02)	1.03 (1.12)	0.82 (1.14)	0.93 (1.11)	0.88 (1.04)
Perceptions of Partner's Hostile Sexism	0.56 (1.16)	0.36 (1.33)	0.47 (1.31)	0.35 (1.21)	0.50 (1.13)	-0.87 (1.06)	-0.82 (1.01)	-0.69 (1.03)	-0.67 (1.09)	-0.69 (1.04)
Perceptions of Men's Benevolent Sexism in Society	-0.08 (0.98)	-0.06 (1.02)	-0.23 (0.92)	0.00 (0.83)	-0.25 (0.78)	0.48 (0.89)	0.29 (1.02)	0.20 (0.96)	0.25 (0.86)	0.23 (0.96)
Perceptions of Men's Hostile Sexism in Society	1.60 (0.74)	1.28 (0.73)	1.42 (0.76)	1.18 (0.88)	1.18 (0.85)	1.44 (0.94)	1.29 (0.87)	1.13 (0.95)	1.08 (1.01)	0.97 (0.97)

Note. Measures were assessed on a -3 to 3 scale, with a mid-point of 0. Couple *N* at the initial session (Time 0) = 84 (subsequent *N*s = 84, 74, 66, 56).

Table 4.4. Correlations for questionnaire measures at the initial session (Study 2).

	Average Cronbach's Alpha		Correlations across Variables					
	Men	Women	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Benevolent Sexism	.66	.73	.12	.29*	.40*	.31*	-.11	.08
2. Hostile Sexism	.81	.77	.30*	.24*	.25*	.55*	.10	.23*
3. Perceptions of Partner's Benevolent Sexism	.72	.78	.57*	.41*	.17	.14	.24*	.01
4. Perceptions of Partner's Hostile Sexism	.73	.82	-.04	.21	-.04	-.04	-.01	.50*
5. Perceptions of Men's Benevolent Sexism in Society	.62	.68	.06	-.12	.10	-.01	.14	-.20
6. Perceptions of Men's Hostile Sexism in Society	.79	.77	.09	.30*	.13	-.02	-.22*	.13

Note. Measures were assessed on a -3 to 3 scale, with a mid-point of 0. Correlations for women are above the diagonal, correlations for men are below the diagonal. Within-dyad correlations are on the diagonal and are displayed in bold. * $p < .05$.

assess whether participants' levels of benevolent sexism reduced (revealed by a negative significant coefficient), maintained (a coefficient close to zero), or increased (significant positive coefficient) across time. We modeled time as a random effect to test whether changes in endorsement of sexism significantly varied across individuals, and therefore whether some participants' levels of sexism changed more than others. As in Study 1, dyadic models estimated model parameters simultaneously for men and women and tested whether each parameter significantly differed across gender. All analyses accounted for the dependencies in the data across dyad members, and allowed error variances to differ across men and women.

As shown in Table 4.5, the significant and negative coefficients estimating the average change in endorsement of benevolent sexism across time indicated that, on average across the sample, both women's and men's endorsement of benevolent sexism reduced across time, and did so at comparable rates (i.e., there were no gender differences). Examining the variance in levels of change also indicated that the degree to which benevolent sexism changed over time varied across both women ($B = .03$, $SE = .01$, $p < .01$) and men ($B = .02$, $SE = .01$, $p = .02$). Thus, some participants exhibited greater reductions in benevolent sexism whereas other participants' benevolent sexism maintained or increased across time.

To investigate whether individuals' perceptions of their partner's sexism predicted the extent to which individuals' own endorsement of sexist attitudes changed across time we entered perceptions of the partner's sexism as predictors of the intercept, representing initial levels of sexism, and the effect of time, representing changes in sexist attitudes across time. Individual j 's endorsement of benevolent sexism at a particular measurement phase (i) was modelled as a function of: (1) an intercept (B_0) representing their initial levels of sexism, (2) the effect of time (B_{01}) which models the degree of change in sexism across the year, (3) the association between individuals' own endorsement of hostile sexism and individuals' initial

Table 4.5. Estimates testing whether levels of benevolent sexism (left half) and hostile sexism (right half) changed over time and whether this change varied across individuals (Study 2).

	<i>Effects for Women</i>				<i>Effects for Men</i>				<i>Gender Diff. t</i>
	95% CI				95% CI				
	<i>B</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>r</i>	
Benevolent Sexism	-.09*	-.15	-.04	-.39	-.07*	-.12	-.01	-.28	-0.71
Hostile Sexism	-.01	-.06	.04	-.04	-.00	-.06	.05	-.02	0.11

Note. The effects for women and men are from dyadic models simultaneously estimating each effect for women and men while accounting for the dependence within dyads. The *Gender Diff. t* column presents the *t* statistic from equivalent dyadic analyses testing whether the effects differ across women and men (*women* -1, *men* 1). Effect sizes (*r*) were computed using Rosenthal and Rosnow's (2007) formula: $r = \sqrt{(t^2 / t^2 + df)}$. **p* < .05.

levels of benevolent sexism (B_{02ij}) and changes in endorsement of benevolent sexism across time (B_{03ij}), (4) individuals' perceptions of their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism on individuals' own initial levels of benevolent sexism (B_{04ij}) and changes in benevolent sexism across time (B_{05ij}), and (5) individuals' perceptions of their partner's hostile sexism on individuals' own initial levels of benevolent sexism (B_{06ij}) and changes in benevolent sexism across time (B_{07ij}), and an error term (e_{ij}) representing random error and the effect of unmeasured factors which influence participants' sexism.

The results from these analyses are presented in Table 4.6. As predicted, women's, but not men's, perceptions of their partner's sexism was significantly associated with changes in their own benevolent sexism across time (see bottom half of table marked predicting changes in benevolent sexism). Also as expected, this effect significantly differed between men and women (see right column). Figure 4.3 plots the predicted values of women's benevolent sexism at the initial session (Time 0) and final follow-up (Time 4) for women who perceived their partner to more weakly (1 SD below the mean) versus more strongly (1 SD above the mean) endorse benevolent sexism. Women who perceived their partner's benevolent sexism to be relatively low initially endorsed lower levels of benevolent sexism ($b = .18, t = 3.18, p < .01$) and their endorsement of benevolent sexism declined across the year ($b = -.13, t = -3.34, p < .01$). In contrast, women who perceived their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism to be relatively high did not demonstrate the sample-level reductions in agreement with benevolent sexism. Instead, these women maintained their initially higher endorsement of benevolent sexism across time ($b = -.00, t = -0.36, p = .97$), resulting in even greater endorsement of benevolent sexism at the end of the year compared to women who perceived their partner's benevolent sexism to be relatively low ($b = .39, t = 5.76, p < .001$).

In sum, across the sample, participants generally displayed reductions in benevolent sexism across time. However, women who perceived their partners as more strongly

Table 4.6. The effects of perceptions of partner's sexism on individuals' initial endorsement of benevolent sexism and the degree to which participants' own benevolent sexism changed over time (Study 2).

	<i>Effects for Women</i>				<i>Effects for Men</i>				<i>Gender Diff. t</i>
	95% CI				95% CI				
	<i>B</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>r</i>	
<i>Predicting Initial Levels of Benevolent Sexism</i>									
Own Hostile Sexism	.20*	.07	.34	.19	.03	-.08	.14	.04	-1.96 [†]
Perceptions of Partner's Benevolent Sexism	.18*	.07	.29	.20	.41*	.29	.52	.45	2.71*
Perceptions of Partner's Hostile Sexism	.03	-.10	.15	.03	-.01	-.12	.10	-.01	-0.38
<i>Predicting Changes in Benevolent Sexism</i>									
Own Hostile Sexism	-.05	-.10	.01	-.14	.00	-.05	.05	.00	1.27
Perceptions of Partner's Benevolent Sexism	.05*	.01	.09	.23	-.03	-.08	.02	-.10	-2.51*
Perceptions of Partner's Hostile Sexism	.02	-.03	.08	.07	.01	-.04	.06	.02	-0.46

Note. The effects for women and men are from dyadic models simultaneously estimating each effect for women and men while accounting for the dependence within dyads. The *Gender Diff. t* column presents the *t* statistic from equivalent dyadic analyses testing whether the effects differ across women and men (*women* -1, *men* 1). Predicted effects displayed in bold. Approximate effect sizes (*r*) were computed using Rosenthal and Rosnow's (2007) formula: $r = \sqrt{(t^2 / t^2 + df)}$. * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .06$.

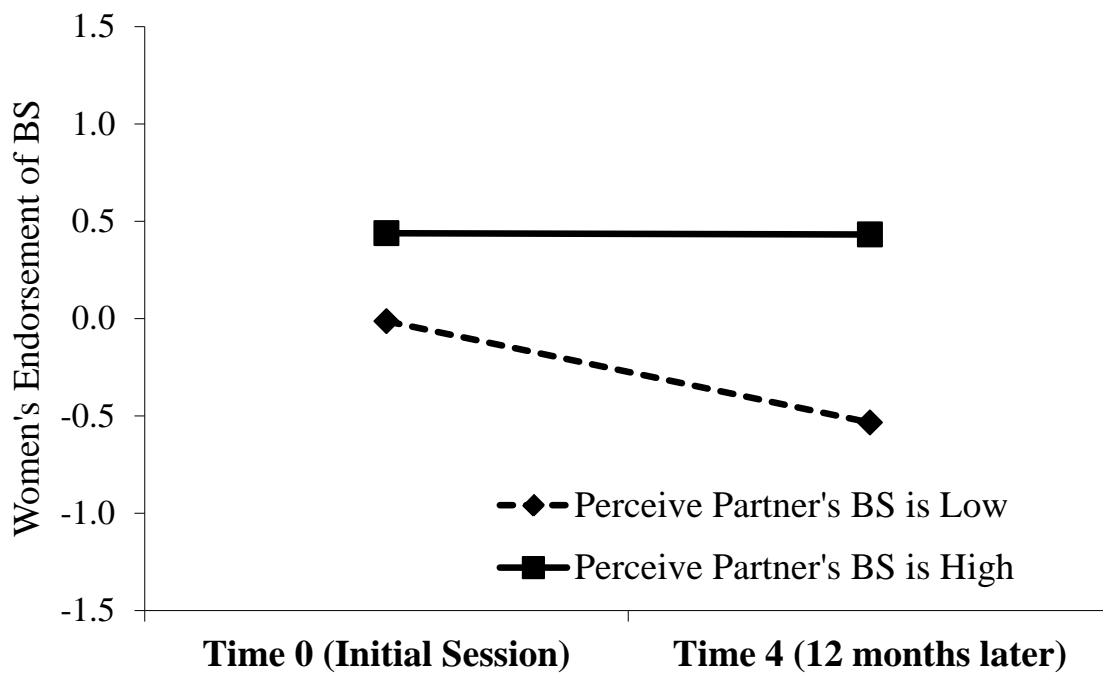


Figure 4.3. The association between women's perceptions of their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism (BS) and change in their endorsement of benevolent sexism (BS) over a 12 month period.

Note. 'High' and 'low' levels represent 1 SD above and below the mean.

endorsing benevolent sexism expressed greater agreement with benevolent sexism and maintained stronger endorsement of benevolent sexism across the year. In contrast, women who perceived that their partner expressed relative disagreement with benevolent sexism were more rejecting of benevolent sexism and exhibited significant declines in endorsement of benevolent sexism across time.⁶

As in Study 1, we also tested the reverse pathway by predicting changes in perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism from individuals' own levels of sexism. Neither women's ($B = -.03, p = .17, r = -.14$) or men's ($B = -.02, p = .53, r = -.06$) own benevolent sexism was associated with changes in their perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism across the year, indicating that perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism influences women's endorsement of their own sexist attitudes, and not vice versa.

Ruling out Alternative Explanations and Supplementary Analyses

Transmission of Men's Sexist Attitudes. First we examined whether partners' actual sexism (i.e., sexist attitudes reported by the partner) predicted changes in individual's endorsement of benevolent sexism across the year.⁷ Women's perceptions of their partner's sexism were correlated with their male partners' self-reported benevolent ($B = .19, p < .05, r = .21$) and hostile ($B = .20, p < .05, r = .21$) sexism, and initial levels of the male partner's benevolent sexism marginally predicted women's maintenance of benevolent sexism across the year ($B = .07, p = .05, r = .13$). However, when running models including both the

⁶ An alternative analytic approach involves conducting lagged analyses which model residualized change in endorsement of benevolent sexism across each three-month phase. As expected, women's perceptions that their partner endorsed benevolent sexism at time i predicted a residual increase in their own endorsement of benevolent sexism at time $i+1$ ($B = .11, p < .01, r = .17$) and men's perceptions did not ($B = .04, p = .37, r = .05$). These analyses also supported our rejection of the reverse pathway by showing that neither women's ($B = .04, p = .44$) or men's ($B = .06, p = .33$) benevolent sexism was related to perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism at the next time point.

⁷ The complexity and number of parameters included in these models created convergence problems and so these analyses examined the effects entering the partner's sexist attitudes at Time 0 as predictors of individuals' own sexist attitudes across time and did not include random effects.

partner's actual sexism and perceptions of the partner's sexism, perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism ($B = .08, p < .01, r = .16$) and not the partner's actual endorsement of benevolent sexism ($B = -.05, p = .18, r = -.08$) predicted changes in women's benevolent sexism. As in Study 1, this supports our prediction that women's internalization of benevolent sexism arises from perceiving their partners endorse benevolent sexism, and thus that the relationship benefits promised by benevolent sexism are accessible.

General Adoption of Partners' Attitudes. We next tested whether perceptions of the partner's sexist attitudes predicted changes in endorsement of hostile sexism. Baseline analyses indicated that, on average across the sample, there was no systematic change in participants' endorsement of hostile sexism (i.e., hostile sexism remained stable across the year, Table 4.5) and that change in hostile sexism only significantly varied across men ($B = .02, SE = .01, p = .03$) and not women ($B = .01, SE = .01, p = .38$). As expected, neither perceptions of the partners' benevolent or hostile sexism significantly predicted change in hostile sexism for women or men (B s $-.03$ to $.03, p$ s $> .21$). This supported our prediction that women, but not men, internalize benevolent sexism when it is personally relevant and accessible rather than the alternative that people's (both men's and women's) sexist attitudes generally align with their partner's attitudes across time.

Normativity of Sexist Attitudes. Finally, we utilized the measures of individuals' perceptions of the extent to which most men in *society* endorsed sexism to test whether societal perceptions accounted for the effect of women's perceptions of their partner's sexism. Prior research suggests that people more strongly endorse benevolent sexism when perceiving that most men in society endorse benevolent sexism (Sibley et al., 2009). Consistent with this finding, and our argument that women's benevolent sexism is fostered by the perceived availability of the relationship benefits and reverence men's benevolent sexism offers, perceptions of societal levels of men's benevolent sexism were marginally associated

with more positive trajectories of women's own benevolent sexism across time ($B = .05, p = .06, r = .14$). However, unexpectedly, perceptions of societal sexism was not associated with the trajectory of men's benevolent sexism ($B = -.00, p = .96, r = -.00$). To rule out the possibility that the effect of perceived partner's sexism on women's endorsement of benevolent sexism over time was due to perceptions of societal-level attitudes, we reran our primary analyses (shown in Table 4.6) including perceptions of men's sexism in society as simultaneous predictors. In this model, women's maintenance of benevolent sexism over time was predicted by perceptions of their male partner's benevolent sexism ($B = .04, p = .06, r = .18$) but not by perceptions of most men's benevolent sexism ($B = .03, p = .26, r = .08$). By demonstrating that perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism predicted changes in women's benevolent sexism over and above perceptions of sexism as normative in society, these analyses demonstrate that intimate relationships play a distinct and unique role in shaping women's benevolent sexism.⁸

STUDY 3

In Study 1 and Study 2 we demonstrated that women's, but not men's, perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism predicted subsequent changes in their own benevolent sexism across time. In Study 3 we wanted to provide stronger causal evidence of this process. We first did this in Study 3A by experimentally manipulating perceived partner's benevolent sexism, and testing whether this produced differences in women's, but not men's, post-manipulation endorsement of benevolent sexism. As in Study 2, we also wanted to contrast the effect of perceptions of the *partner's* endorsement of benevolent sexism with perceptions of most men's endorsement of benevolent sexism. To do this, in Study 3B, we experimentally

⁸ We also measured participants' perceptions of the sexist attitudes endorsed by most *women* in society. As in Sibley et al. (2009), these perceptions were unrelated to changes in both men's and women's own levels of benevolent sexism across the year ($ps > .05$). In addition, the hypothesized effect for women's perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism on changes in their own benevolent sexism remained significant ($B = .05, p = .02, r = .23$) when perceptions of most women's sexism were included as additional predictors in the model.

manipulated perceived benevolent sexism held by most men in society. Given prior research showing that both men and women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is shaped by normative attitudes (e.g., Sibley et al., 2009) we expected that manipulating perceptions of most men's sexist attitudes would produce differences in *both* women's and men's endorsement of benevolent sexism. The predicted pattern across Study 3A and B, therefore, would show that perceptions of partners' benevolent sexism represent a unique pathway for the internalization of women's, but not men's, sexist attitudes.

STUDY 3A

To manipulate perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism over and above individuals' existing perceptions of their partner's beliefs, participants were first asked to complete measures of their perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism, and then read an article summarizing (fictional) research which demonstrated that people tend to either *underestimate* or *overestimate* their partner's benevolently sexist attitudes. After completing measures regarding the article, participants reported their own endorsement of benevolent sexism. If women endorse benevolent sexism when the relationship benefits promised by benevolent sexism should be available in their relationship, then learning that they likely underestimate their partner's sexism, and thus their partner's benevolent sexism is likely higher than they initially thought, should result in women (but not men) reporting higher levels of benevolent sexism compared to when learning that they probably overestimate their partner's sexism, and thus their partner's benevolent sexism is likely lower than they initially thought.

Method

Participants

Participants were 151 individuals (68 women and 83 men) recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a source of participants who reliably complete questionnaires (see

Burmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011) for a small monetary compensation (\$0.30 USD). Eligibility required being involved in an exclusive heterosexual relationship, living in the United States or Canada, and holding a successful completion rate on MTurk of at least 95% with an approved number of completions ≥ 1000 . Ages ranged from 19 to 70 ($M = 36.74$, $SD = 11.09$) and relationship length ranged from 6 months to 42 years ($M = 9.46$, $SD = 9.79$). Seventy-five percent of the sample were married/cohabitating, 20% reported ‘serious’ relationships, and 5% reported ‘steady’ relationships.

Procedure and Measures

Participation was described as reading an article on the topic of people’s gender-related beliefs and then answering some questions about the article. Participants completed the demographic information described above, and then completed the following scales and tasks.

Perceptions of the Partner’s Sexism. Participants were first asked to consider their partner’s (rather than their own) attitudes toward women and completed the 11-item scale assessing their perceptions of their partner’s benevolent sexism (see Study 1). Because the purpose of this study was to manipulate levels of perceived sexism by providing information about people’s tendency to underestimate or overestimate these specific beliefs, all contrast items were reworded so that higher answers represented higher agreement with benevolent sexism (e.g., “In a disaster women should be rescued before men”; -3 = *my partner would rate strongly disagree* to 3 = *my partner would rate strongly agree*). Accordingly, reliability was very high (alphas and descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 4.7).

Experimental Manipulation. Participants were then randomly allocated to read a news article about recent research on the veracity of people’s perceptions of their partner’s benevolently sexist attitudes (see Murray & Holmes, 1993, for a similar method). The article

entitled ‘What we really believe about men and women’ was presented as an online *Psychology Today* article. The article was constructed by taking an actual online article,

Table 4.7. Scale reliabilities and descriptive statistics for the experimental studies.

	<i>Reliability</i>		<i>Mean (Standard Deviation)</i>	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<i>Study 3A</i>				
1. Perceptions of Partner's Benevolent Sexism (pre-manipulation)	.93	.92	1.30 (1.16)	0.25 (1.59)
2. Own Benevolent Sexism (post-manipulation)	.94	.94	1.04 (1.29)	0.46 (1.46)
<i>Study 3B</i>				
1. Perceptions of Societal Benevolent Sexism (pre-manipulation)	.89	.89	1.09 (0.90)	0.47 (1.12)
2. Own Benevolent Sexism (post-manipulation)	.96	.94	0.36 (1.63)	0.18 (1.49)
<i>Study 4A</i>				
1. Perceptions of Partner's Benevolent Sexism (pre-manipulation)	.95	.91	0.46 (1.46)	-0.32 (1.43)
2. Own Benevolent Sexism (pre-manipulation)	.93	.92	0.84 (1.57)	0.11 (1.40)
3. Perceived Regard (post-manipulation)	.83	.85	4.80 (1.75)	4.17 (1.93)
4. Felt Security (post-manipulation)	.90	.88	5.49 (1.42)	4.98 (1.74)
<i>Study 4B</i>				
1. Perceptions of Societal Benevolent Sexism (pre-manipulation)	.91	.91	0.71 (1.09)	0.10 (1.25)
2. Own Benevolent Sexism (pre-manipulation)	.93	.96	0.03 (1.41)	-0.40 (1.68)
3. Perceived Regard (post-manipulation)	.81	.80	4.64 (1.80)	4.72 (1.76)
4. Felt Security (post-manipulation)	.81	.68	5.39 (1.57)	5.60 (1.57)

Note. All measures of sexism were assessed on a -3 to 3 scale, with a mid-point of 0.

Perceived Regard and Felt Security were assessed on a 1 to 7 scale, with a mid-point of 4.

Reliabilities were assessed with Cronbach's Alpha (α), with the exception of the 2-item perceived regard and felt security measures, in which case reliability represents Pearson's correlation (r).

along with header, menus, and links, and then altering the title, text and author. The constructed article reported the results of a recent large-sample study which found that people inaccurately perceive their partner's beliefs regarding the degree to which women should be protected and cherished by men (i.e., benevolent sexism). There were two versions of the article that differed only in statements of the direction of people's misjudgment of their partner's beliefs. In one condition (*underestimate benevolent sexism*), the article reported that partner's beliefs tended to be higher than suspected and people tended to underestimate their partners' agreement with benevolent beliefs. In the other condition (*overestimate benevolent sexism*), the article reported that partner's beliefs tended to be lower than suspected and people tended to overestimate their partners' agreement (see Appendix 1 for full transcript).

Reading Comprehension Check. Given the online nature of the study, we wanted to make sure that participants had read and comprehended the article. Participants first confirmed that they had read, and were ready to answer questions about, the article via a confirmation button. Participants were then presented with two comprehension check questions. The first required identification of what the study found about most people's opinion of their partner's traditional beliefs about men's and women's roles: (1) people usually overestimate their partner's agreement with traditional beliefs, (2) people are accurate about their partner's agreement with traditional beliefs, or (3) people usually underestimate their partner's agreement with traditional beliefs. The second question asked participants to correctly identify an example of the traditional gender beliefs discussed: (1) "Women are resourceful and realistic", (2) "Women should be cherished and protected by men", or (3) "Most men want to be rich and to drive nice cars". Fifty-six people incorrectly identified the main finding of the article and/or the types of beliefs that were discussed, indicating they had not fully read or comprehended the article; these participants were removed and are not included in the sample described above.

Questions about the Article. To solidify the effect of the manipulation and to ensure that participants were reflecting on their own partner's beliefs in relation to the informed bias, participants then completed the apparent measure of interest for the study. Instructions stated that the research presented meant that “the answers you gave on the previous page about your partner's beliefs about men and women were biased. Indeed, your romantic partner probably agrees [disagrees] more with the statements than you think he or she does”, and asked participants to tick which of the 11 statements from the benevolent sexism scale they thought they underestimated [overestimated] their partner's answers the most.

Own Benevolent Sexism. Finally, participants reported on their *own* agreement with benevolent sexism. Participants were told they had answered all the questions about the article and that the researchers now wanted to get their own honest opinion regarding the beliefs they just read about. Participants rated their own agreement with each of the statements on the 11-item protrait scale of benevolent sexism described above.

Purpose of Our Study. Finally, participants were asked to describe the purpose of our study. Twelve people guessed that the purpose of the article was to influence people's agreement with gender-related beliefs; these participants were removed, leaving the sample described above.

Results

We predicted that the manipulation would produce differences in women's, but not men's, own agreement with benevolent sexism. In particular, controlling for their initial perceptions of their partner's sexism, we expected that women who were led to believe that they likely *underestimated* their partner's sexism would report greater endorsement of benevolent sexism compared to women who were led to believe that they probably *overestimated* their partner's benevolent sexism. To test this prediction, we regressed individuals' endorsement of benevolent sexism on individuals' initial perceptions of their

partners' endorsement of benevolent sexism (so that the effects represented change from initial perceptions of partner's sexism), condition (coded -1 = *underestimate benevolent sexism*, 1 = *overestimate benevolent sexism*), gender (coded -1 = *women*, 1 = *men*), and the gender \times condition interaction, which tested our central hypothesis. A significant effect of condition ($B = -0.22$, $SE = .08$, $t = -2.74$, $p = .007$, $r = .22$) revealed that participants who read that people typically underestimate their partner's sexism (and thus their partner's sexism was likely higher than they initially thought) endorsed greater levels of benevolent sexism than participants who read that people typically overestimated their partner's sexism. However, as hypothesized, this effect was qualified by a significant gender \times condition interaction ($B = 0.19$, $SE = .08$, $t = 2.29$, $p = .02$, $r = .19$).

As displayed in Figure 4.4, women in the 'underestimate' condition reported significantly higher average levels of agreement with benevolent sexism ($M = 1.06$, $SD = 1.03$) than women in the 'overestimate' condition ($M = 0.24$, $SD = 0.99$; $M_{\text{diff}} = -0.81$, $SE = 0.24$, $t = -3.38$, $p < .001$, *Cohen's d* = 0.82). In contrast, and as expected, men's endorsement of benevolent sexism did not differ between the 'underestimate' condition ($M = 0.75$, $SD = 0.97$) and 'overestimate' condition ($M = 0.69$, $SD = .97$; $M_{\text{diff}} = -0.06$, $SE = 0.22$, $t = -0.29$, $p = .78$). These results indicate that women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is bolstered when they are led to believe that their partners' benevolent sexism is higher versus lower than they initially thought, and thus the reverence, case and relationship benefits promised by benevolent sexism are more versus less available. As predicted, manipulated changes in perceptions of partner's sexism did not influence men's endorsement of benevolent sexism.

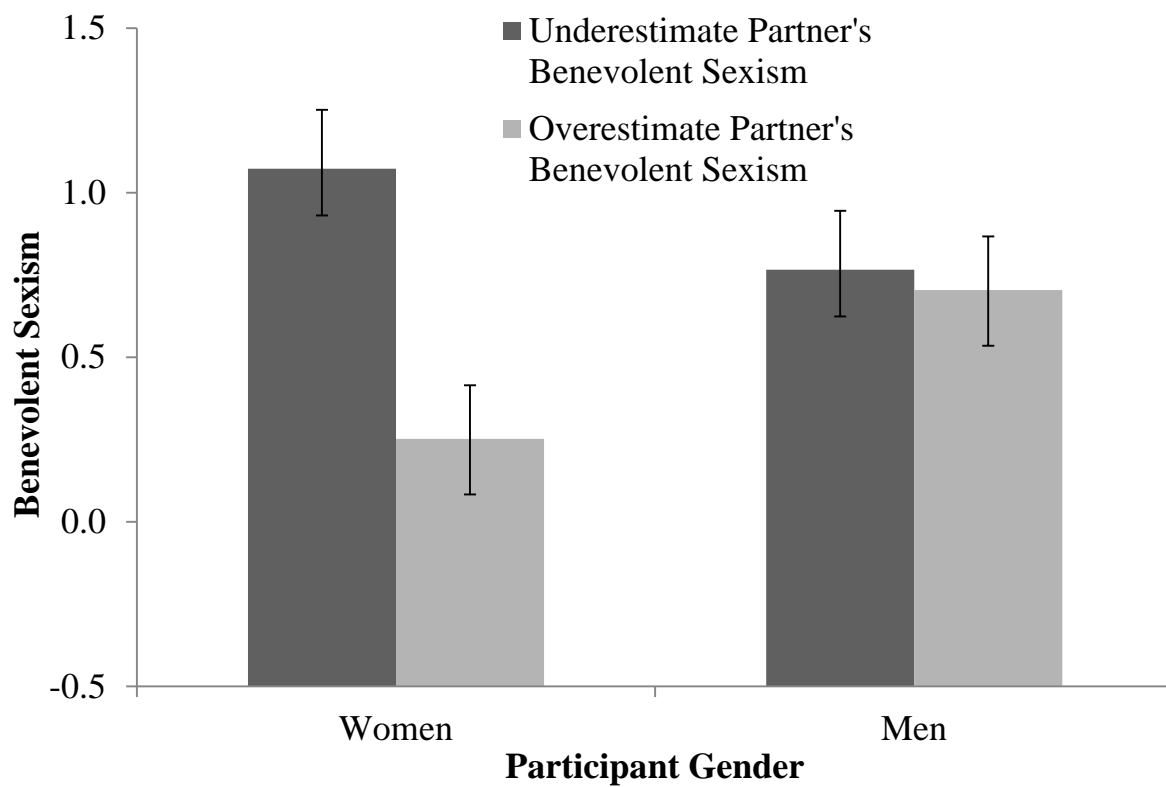


Figure 4.4. Men's and women's mean endorsement of benevolent sexism following an experimental manipulation in which participants were led to believe that they probably *underestimate* or *overestimate* their partner's benevolent sexism (Study 3A).

Note. Endorsement of benevolent sexism was assessed on a -3 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*) scale, with a mid-point of 0.

STUDY 3B

We next ran a comparative study to demonstrate that, unlike information which concerns the attitudes held by intimate partners, information which concerns normative levels of sexism would influence *both* women's and men's endorsement of benevolent sexism. We reran the experiment outlined in Study 3A using identical procedures with one key change: We assessed participants' perception of what *most men* in society believed and then presented participants with a fictional article about *most men's* endorsement of benevolent attitudes. Given that women's beliefs should also follow the norm set by the dominant group (e.g., Sibley et al., 2009; also see Study 2), we expected that women's endorsement of benevolent sexism would be stronger if told they underestimated (versus overestimated) most men's benevolent sexism. However, because new information about the normative levels of attitudes should also influence *men's* benevolent sexism, unlike Study 3A we expected that men's endorsement of benevolent sexism would also be stronger when told they underestimate most men's benevolent sexism (e.g., Sibley et al., 2007; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Thus, the distinct pattern we expect across Study 3A and 3B, including the gender differences shown in Study 3A and the lack of gender differences we predict in Study 3B, supports that perceptions of partners' benevolent sexism represent a unique pathway for *women's* internalization of benevolent sexism.

Method

Participants

Participants included 217 individuals (142 women and 76 men) recruited via MTurk. Eligibility criteria and compensation were identical to Study 3A. Ages ranged from 19 to 71 ($M = 38.77$, $SD = 12.46$) and relationship length ranged from 3 months to 42 years ($M = 9.39$, $SD = 9.35$). Sixty-seven percent of the sample were married/cohabitating, 22% reported 'serious' relationships, and 11% reported 'steady' relationships. This sample does not include

22 people who failed at least one comprehension check and 33 people who correctly guessed that the purpose of the article was to influence their agreement with the statements.

Procedure and Materials

The procedures and questionnaires were identical to Study 3A, with the exception that the measures and manipulations replaced the word “partner” with “most men in society”, and references to “experiences within romantic relationships” replaced by “experiences in society”. We initially assessed participants perceptions of what *most men* in society believed (as in Study 2). Participants were then randomly allocated to read an article reporting that *most men’s* beliefs were higher than people suspected (*underestimate benevolent sexism* condition) or lower than people suspected (*overestimate benevolent sexism* condition), before finally completing measures of their own endorsement of benevolent sexism. Reliability and descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 4.7.

Results

The analytic strategy was identical to that of Study 3A. A significant effect of condition ($B = -0.39$, $SE = .10$, $t = -4.02$, $p < .001$, $r = .27$) indicated that participants’ endorsed benevolent sexism more strongly after reading that most men typically endorse benevolent sexism more than people believe compared to after reading that most men disagree with benevolent sexism more than people believe (Figure 4.5). As expected, there was no gender difference for the effect of condition ($B = 0.08$, $SE = .10$, $t = 0.80$, $p = .43$), suggesting that men’s and women’s agreement with benevolent sexism tended to conform to the beliefs held by the dominant group (Sibley et al., 2009; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Thus, because *both* men and women followed the perceived societal norm of most men’s attitudes, these results do not support that the manipulation in Study 3A focused on perceptions of partner’s sexist attitudes influenced women’s (but not men’s) benevolent sexism by simply

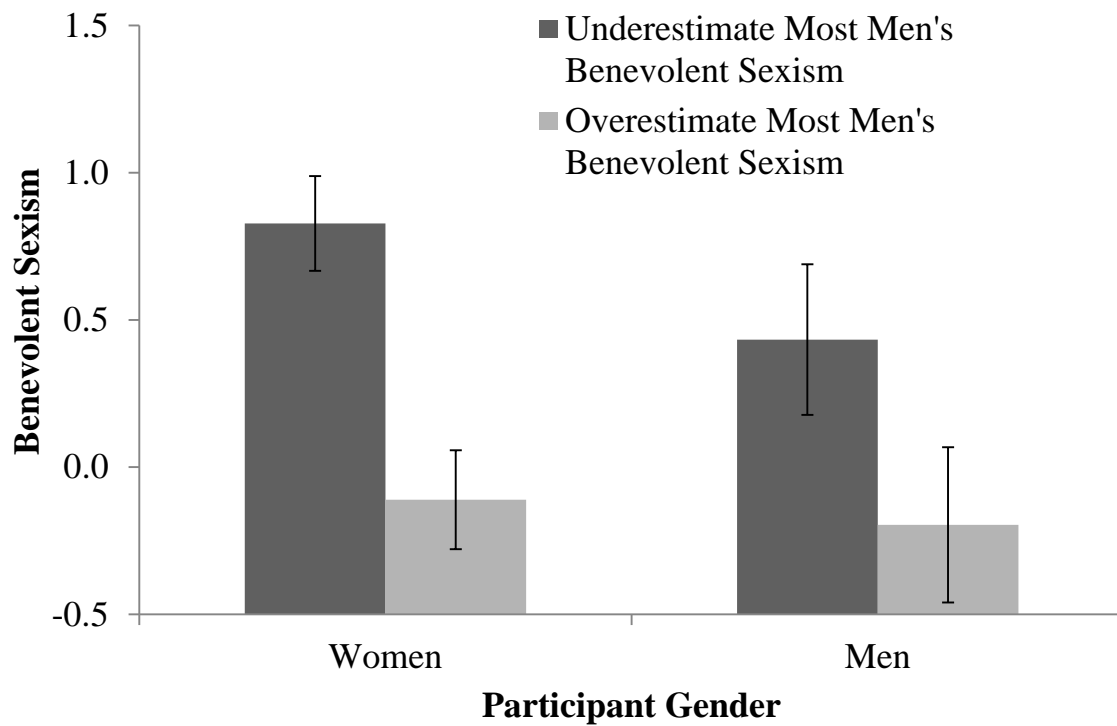


Figure 4.5. Men's and women's mean endorsement of benevolent sexism following an experimental manipulation in which participants were led to believe that they probably *underestimate* or *overestimate* the extent to which most men in society endorse benevolent sexism (Study 3B).

Note. Endorsement of benevolent sexism was assessed on a -3 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*) scale, with a mid-point of 0.

activating perceptions of normative sexism (in which case men should have also shown differences in post-manipulation endorsement of sexist attitudes).

STUDY 4

Our final set of experiments were designed to provide direct evidence for the claim that perception of benevolent sexism endorsed by *partners* indicates that the relationship benefits (i.e., reverence and care) promised to women, but not men, encompassed in benevolent sexism are available and accessible. We did this in Study 4A, by utilizing the same experimental manipulation of partners' benevolent sexism as in Study 3A. However, rather than participants' own endorsement of benevolent sexism, the key dependent variable included feelings of perceived regard and relationship security, which are critical to relationship functioning (cf. Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 2000) and capture the reverence and security that benevolent sexism offers women, but does not offer men. If perceptions of partners' sexism signals the availability of regard and reverence in relationships, then women who are led to believe their partner endorses benevolent sexism more versus less than they thought they did should report more positive post-manipulation feelings of regard and relationship security. As in Studies 2 and 3, we also wanted to contrast the effects of perceptions of the *partner's* endorsement of benevolent sexism with perceptions of most men's endorsement of benevolent sexism. To do this, we utilized the same experimental manipulation of *most men's* sexism as in Study 3B, and expected that societal levels of sexism would have no effect on perceived regard and felt-security. This predicted pattern would again reveal that the effect of perceptions of partners' sexism on women is distinct from the role of societal perceptions and norms.

STUDY 4A

The manipulation procedures followed that of Study 3A precisely with two exceptions. First, participants completed measures of their own benevolent sexism *prior* to

the manipulation in order to ensure that any effects were not due to participants' own endorsement of sexist attitudes. Second, following the manipulation of the partners' benevolent sexism, participants rated the degree to which they felt (1) regarded by their partner, and (2) secure in their relationship when thinking about conflicts in their relationship. Assessing outcomes in the context of relationship threat, such as recalling experiences of conflict, is standard procedure when assessing security-related relationship outcomes because any factor that bolsters or undermines these outcomes should be most evident when relationship events threaten feelings of regard and relationship security (e.g., Winterheld & Simpson, 2011). We predicted that exposing participants to information indicating they likely underestimate their partner's sexism should result in women reporting greater regard and security compared to when learning that they probably overestimate their partner's sexism. In contrast, men's regard and security should not be influenced by condition because perceptions of partner's benevolent sexism do not signal the availability of reverence and security for men. This study is the first investigation of whether women's perceptions of their partners' endorsement of benevolent sexism foster feelings of regard and security in women. Importantly, this study also tests the primary reasons that women should endorse benevolent sexism when perceiving their partner more strongly endorses benevolent sexism—perceiving that male partners endorse sexism signals that the care and reverence promised to women by benevolent sexism are accessible within their relationships.

Method

Participants

Participants included 321 individuals (219 women and 102 men) collected via MTurk. Eligibility criteria were identical to Studies 3A and 3B, and participants received \$0.40 for participating. Ages ranged from 18 to 73 ($M = 35.90$, $SD = 11.66$) and relationship length ranged from 1 month to 48 years ($M = 9.03$, $SD = 9.40$). Sixty-nine percent of the sample

were married/cohabitating, 21% reported ‘serious’ relationships, and 10% reported ‘steady’ relationships. This sample does not include 121 people who failed at least one comprehension check (see Study 3A).

Procedure and Materials

The procedures followed Study 3A, with the exceptions that we (1) assessed participants’ perceptions of what their partners believed and their own endorsement of benevolent sexism *before* the manipulation and then (2) assessed participants’ perceived regard and felt security when faced with relationship conflict *following* the manipulation. After being randomly allocated to read an article specifying that partners’ benevolent sexism is (1) higher than people suspect (*underestimate benevolent sexism* condition) or (2) lower than people suspect (*overestimate benevolent sexism* condition), participants completed the apparent measures of interest to consolidate the manipulation (i.e., selecting items they likely underestimated/overestimated their partner’s agreement of), before completing measures of their own feelings of perceived regard and security when experiencing conflict with their partner. Reliabilities and descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 4.7.

Perceived Regard. Participants were asked to consider “how you think, feel and behave when you experience conflict with your partner”, and rated two items, “I feel less accepted and valued by my partner”, and “I feel less cared for and loved by my partner” (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Extremely*). Items were reverse-scored and averaged to index participants’ feelings of regard by their partner even when experiencing relationship threat.

Felt Security. Participants also rated two items that assessed feelings of relationship security, including “I worry my partner doesn’t love me”, and “I think our relationship might end soon”. Items were reverse-scored and averaged to index participants’ feelings that the relationship is secure even when experiencing relationship threat.

Results

In two sets of analyses, we regressed (1) perceived regard, and then (2) felt security, on condition (coded -1 = *underestimate benevolent sexism*, 1 = *overestimate benevolent sexism*), gender (coded -1 = *women*, 1 = *men*), and the gender \times condition interaction, which tested our hypothesis. Results are displayed in the upper half of Table 4.8. First, the significant interaction between condition and gender indicated that the effect of the manipulation on perceived regard differed for men and women. As displayed in the left side of Figure 4.6, women in the ‘underestimate’ condition reported significantly higher perceived regard when experiencing conflict ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.95$) than women in the ‘overestimate’ condition ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.87$; $M_{\text{diff}} = 0.64$, $SE = 0.25$, $t = 2.55$, $p = .01$, *Cohen’s d* = 0.34). In contrast, men’s perceived regard was relatively *lower* after reading people underestimate their partners’ benevolent sexism ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.84$) relative to men in the ‘overestimate’ condition ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.56$; $M_{\text{diff}} = -0.86$, $SE = 0.37$, $t = -2.37$, $p = .02$). This gender difference held when controlling for participants’ initial levels of benevolent sexism, perceptions of their partner’s benevolent sexism, and the accompanying gender interactions ($B = 0.38$, $SE = .12$, $t = 3.25$, $p = .001$).

We ran analogous analyses predicting participants felt security (see right side of Table 4.8 and Figure 4.6). The interaction between condition and gender was again significant. Women reported higher security in the relationship following the ‘underestimate’ condition ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 4.74$) relative to women in the ‘overestimate’ condition ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.78$; $M_{\text{diff}} = 0.49$, $SE = 0.22$, $t = 2.23$, $p = .03$, *Cohen’s d* = 0.25). Men’s felt security did not differ between the ‘underestimate’ ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.62$) and ‘overestimate’ conditions ($M = 4.99$, $SD = 1.74$; $M_{\text{diff}} = 0.40$, $SE = 0.32$, $t = 1.22$, $p = .22$). As above, this gender difference held when controlling for participants’ initial benevolent sexism, perceptions of their partner’s benevolent sexism, and the accompanying gender interactions ($B = 0.21$, $SE = .10$, $t = 2.04$, $p = .04$).

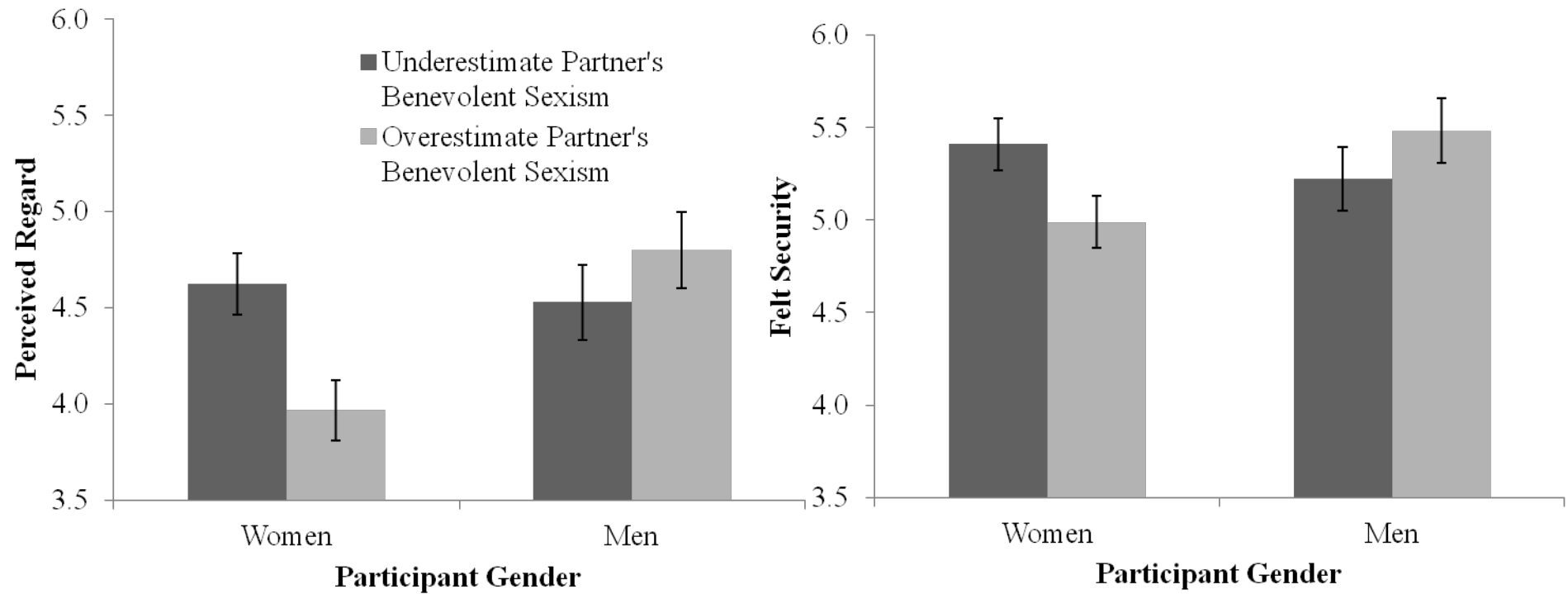


Figure 4.6. Men's and women's perceived regard by their partner (left side) and felt security in their relationship (right side) following an experimental manipulation in which participants were led to believe that they probably *underestimate* or *overestimate* the extent to which their partner endorses benevolent sexism (Study 4A).

Table 4.8. The effects of manipulating information that people underestimate/overestimate their partner's benevolent sexism (Study 4A) or most men's benevolent sexism (Study 4B) on participants' perceived regard (left side) and felt security (right side) when recalling conflict with their partner.

	<i>Perceived Regard</i>			<i>Felt Security</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
<i>Manipulating perceptions of partner's benevolent sexism (Study 4A)</i>						
Condition	.06	.11	0.51	-.02	.10	-0.25
Gender	.31	.11	2.83*	.25	.10	2.56*
Condition x Gender interaction	.38	.11	3.39*	.22	.10	2.27*
<i>Manipulating perceptions of most men's benevolent sexism (Study 4B)</i>						
Condition	.03	.11	0.30	.03	.09	0.26
Gender	-.04	.11	-0.38	-.10	.09	-1.09
Condition x Gender interaction	.02	.11	0.15	-.06	.09	-0.69

Note. * $p < .05$. Condition was coded -1 = *Underestimate*, 1 = *Overestimate*. Gender was coded -1 = *Women*, 1 = *Men*.

Together, these results support our claim that for women, but not men, perceiving that a partner endorses benevolent sexism signals accessible relationship benefits, resulting in women feeling regarded, cared for, and secure in their partner's love and stability of the relationship. Thus, learning that their partners were more (versus less) likely to endorse prescriptions that men are completed by women and should be cherishing, stable providers led women to report feeling more loved, cared for and secure in their relationships when recalling situations that threaten their relationships. In contrast, because partners' benevolent sexism does not offer these same relationship benefits for men, (1) men's feelings of relationship security was unaffected by manipulations of perceptions of their partner's sexism, and (2) men's perceived regard was relatively *lower* after reading that their female partner likely agreed with benevolent sexism more than they initially thought. This latter effect (which was in the opposite direction compared to women) may be the result of perceived pressure to live up to a traditional and chivalrous role to match the more stringent expectations of a female partner who strongly endorses benevolent sexism.

STUDY 4B

Our final experimental study was designed to show once again the specific importance of women's perceptions of their *partner's* benevolent sexism relative to the general availability of benevolent sexism from men in society (i.e., societal levels of sexism). As in Study 3B, we did this by running a comparative study manipulating perceptions of most men's benevolent sexism in society rather than perceptions of intimate partner's benevolent sexism. Thus, the procedures were identical to Study 4A except that participants were presented with a fictional article about *most men's* endorsement of benevolent attitudes. As in Study 4A, participants then rated the degree to which they felt (1) regarded by their partner, and (2) secure in their relationship when thinking about conflicts in their relationship. Thus, this study tested whether manipulations about most men's benevolent sexism were related to

differences in women's perceived regard and security when recalling relationship conflict. Our thesis is that the cherishing and reverential promises of benevolent sexism are relevant to women to the extent that *partners* endorse benevolent sexism, and not because these promised benefits are generally available from men in society. If we are correct, then the predicted effects of manipulating perceptions of partners' sexism shown in Study 4A should *not* emerge when manipulating perceptions of societal levels of men's sexism in Study 4B (or at least not as prominently given that most men also capture women's current male partners). Moreover, this pattern would provide additional evidence that the effect of perceptions of *partner's* sexism on women's own endorsement of sexism arises because perceptions of partner's sexism signals the availability of relationship reverence, care and security and not because of other normative processes.

Method

Participants

Participants included 292 individuals (164 women and 128 men) collected via MTurk. Eligibility criteria and compensation was identical to Study 4A. Ages ranged from 19 to 81 ($M = 35.83$, $SD = 12.30$) and relationship length ranged from 3 months to 50 years ($M = 8.64$, $SD = 10.31$). Sixty-four percent of the sample were married/cohabitating, 23% reported 'serious' relationships, and 13% reported 'steady' relationships. This sample does not include 74 people who failed at least one comprehension check (see Study 3B) and five people who guessed the purpose of the study.

Procedure and Materials

The procedures and questionnaires were identical to Study 4A, with the exceptions that we assessed participants' perceptions of what *most men in society* believed rather than perceptions of the partner's beliefs before the manipulation, and participants were randomly allocated to an article about *most men's* benevolently sexist beliefs being (1) higher or (2)

lower than people suspected (identical to Study 3B). Participants then completed the apparent measures of interest to consolidate the manipulation (i.e., selecting items they likely underestimated/overestimated men's agreement), then completed measures of their feelings of perceived regard and security when experiencing conflict with their partner. Reliabilities and descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 4.7.

Results

The analytic strategy was identical to that of Study 4A. In two sets of analyses, we regressed (1) perceived regard, and then (2) felt security, on condition (coded -1 = *underestimate most men's benevolent sexism*, 1 = *overestimate most men's benevolent sexism*), gender (coded -1 = *women*, 1 = *men*), and the gender \times condition interaction. As displayed in the lower section of Table 4.8, there were no significant effects of condition, gender, or the condition by gender interaction when predicting perceived regard or felt security. These results were identical ($ps > .22$) when controlling for participants' initial levels of benevolent sexism, perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism, and the accompanying gender interactions. Thus, these results suggest that perceptions of the general availability of benevolent sexism in society does not facilitate women feeling more regarded and secure in their relationship, and illustrate the particular importance of perceptions of the *partner's* benevolent sexism as a signal of the availability of the promised benefits of benevolent sexism.

General Discussion

Benevolent sexism is particularly effective at legitimizing and sustaining societal gender inequalities because it offers benefits which entice *women* to adopt and endorse sexist attitudes. Yet, prior to the current studies, there was limited research establishing the conditions which promote women's endorsement of benevolent sexism. The present research demonstrates that women's endorsement of benevolent sexism depends on perceptions of

their close heterosexual relationships, which is precisely the context in which women receive the benefits of unwavering reverence and care promised by benevolent sexism. Two longitudinal studies and a series of experiments provided strong evidence that women endorse benevolent sexism more strongly when they perceive their partner endorses benevolent sexism, and thus the reverence and care promised to women by benevolent sexism should be accessible in their intimate relationships. In contrast, women were more likely to reject benevolent sexism when their partner disagreed with these sexist attitudes, and therefore their intimate relationships would not provide access to the promises of benevolent sexism.

In Study 1, women who perceived their partner strongly endorsed benevolent sexism demonstrated residual increases in their own endorsement of benevolent sexism nine months later. In Study 2, women who perceived their partner more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism expressed greater agreement with benevolent sexism and maintained stronger endorsement of benevolent sexism across one year. In contrast, women who perceived their partner expressed disagreement with benevolent sexism demonstrated reductions in their endorsement of benevolent sexism across time. In Study 3A, women's own benevolent sexism was higher when they were led to believe that their partner likely agreed with benevolent sexism more than they initially thought compared to when they were led to believe that their partner likely disagreed with benevolent sexism more than they initially thought. Illustrating the unique importance of relationships for women's benevolent sexism, changes in *men's* benevolent sexism were unrelated to perceptions of their female partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism (Studies 1 and 2) and manipulations of perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism did not produce changes in men's endorsement of benevolent sexism (Study 3A).

Additional experiments and discriminant tests provided further evidence for our argument that women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is fostered and sustained when the promised benefits of benevolent sexism are accessible within their intimate relationships. In Study 4A, women who were led to believe that their partner's benevolent sexism was likely higher than they suspected reported feeling more regarded by their partner and more secure in their relationship when faced with relationship threats compared to women who were led to believe that they likely overestimated their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism. In contrast, men did not feel more regarded and secure when led to believe that their partner's sexist attitudes were likely higher versus lower than they initially perceived.

We also ruled out several alternative explanations for the role of perceptions of partner's benevolent sexism shaping women's endorsement of benevolent sexism. Experimental evidence demonstrated that changes in benevolent sexism (Studies 3A, 3B) and perceived regard and felt security (Studies 4A, 4B) specifically occurred for *women* when manipulating perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism but not for perceptions of most men's benevolent sexism. Indeed, in Study 2, when the effects of naturalistic perceptions of the partner's benevolent sexism and societal levels of men's sexism were included as simultaneous predictors, perceptions of the partner's and not societal levels of sexism predicted changes in women's endorsement of benevolent sexism across the year. Moreover, we illustrated the uniqueness of the links between the partner's benevolent sexism and women's endorsement of benevolent sexism by demonstrating that these effects did not occur for men, did not occur for hostile sexism, and were specific to *perceptions* of benevolent sexism rather than the partner's actual endorsement of sexism. These tests provide strong support that perceptions of the *partner's* endorsement of benevolent sexism is a unique pathway for women's, but not men's, internalization of benevolent sexism

The Promotion and Maintenance of Women's Benevolent Sexism

Benevolent sexism encourages women to support men's societal advantages through promising reverence, care and power within intimate contexts (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Prior research has suggested that benevolent sexism is appealing to women because of these romantic promises (e.g., Becker, 2010; Bohner et al., 2010; Hammond et al., 2014; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998), but the present studies are the first to demonstrate that the relationship context in which these benefits are promised is pivotal in determining when women will adopt sexist attitudes. Women were more likely to endorse benevolent sexism and maintain greater endorsement of benevolent sexism when they perceived that their intimate partner more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism (Studies 1 and 2) or were led to believe that their partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism was higher (versus lower) than they thought (Study 3A). Moreover, Study 4A provided the first evidence to date that perceiving intimate partners to endorse benevolent sexism leads women, but not men, to feel more revered and secure in their relationships. These findings provide a novel theoretical and empirical extension to the literature by illustrating that the relevance and accessibility of benevolent sexism within intimate relationships fosters women's endorsement of benevolently sexist attitudes. Thus, beyond individual differences in the degree to which benevolent sexism is appealing, the perceived likelihood of intimate partners fulfilling the relationship benefits benevolent sexism promises women is one principal driver of women's endorsement of benevolent sexism.

Our results also highlight the conditions under which women will reject benevolent sexism. Women who perceived that their partner tended to disagree with benevolent sexism demonstrated significant reductions in their own endorsement of benevolent sexism across time (Studies 1 and 2), and women expressed lower agreement with benevolent sexism when they were led to believe their partner endorsed benevolent sexism less (versus more) than they thought (Study 3A). The care and provision promised by benevolent sexism are not

relevant or available when partners do not believe that women should be provided special reverence. Accordingly, when women were led to believe their partner endorses benevolent sexism less (versus more) than they initially thought, they felt less regarded and secure in their relationship (Study 4A). When the promises of benevolent sexism are not personally available, and thus its costs are not offset or masked by these relationship-level benefits, our results suggest that women's agreement with benevolent sexism will diminish.

Identifying the factors which influence women's endorsement or rejection of benevolent sexism is critical because of the way in which benevolent sexism functions to perpetuate societal-level gender inequalities. At the personal level, benevolent sexism promotes women's investment in men's societal power by incentivizing the adoption of supportive relationship roles and promoting their interpersonal (rather than agentic) qualities (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Dumont et al., 2010). This emphasis on the relationship domain allows benevolent sexism to suppress women's resistance to societal-level gender inequalities. For example, women's acceptance of benevolent sexism is linked with felt incompetence (e.g., Dumont et al., 2010), a lack of desire for independent success (e.g., Fernández et al., 2006), harsher attitudes toward victims of acquaintance rape (e.g., Abrams et al., 2003) and decreased support for societal policies promoting women's workplace advancement (Becker & Wright, 2011). Thus, the reinforcement of women's endorsement of benevolent sexism within close relationships will indirectly foster beliefs and self-evaluations which restrict women's access to societal power. In contrast, when the appeal of benevolent sexism is undermined in women's close relationships by perceiving male partners' rejection of benevolent sexism, the associated costs of benevolent sexism should also diminish.

Our results also provide novel empirical support for theoretical proposals that women's agreement with benevolently sexist attitudes must be continually reinforced at the interpersonal level in the face of objective inequalities between men and women at the

societal level (see Jackman, 1994; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). It is benevolent sexism, not hostile sexism, which revolves around intimate heterosexual relationships for this reason: Beliefs which appear to be relevant to relationships and are central to the self are more easily adopted and internalized by intimate partners (Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Jost et al., 2008). This point reiterates that women's benevolent sexism must be accessible within relationships to remain attractive to women. Indeed, if benevolent sexism is inaccessible to women, its promises of care and reverence – typically perceived as romantic and relatively attractive (e.g., Sarlet et al., 2012) – may instead be seen as *unappealing*. When actual relationship experiences do not match the relationship ideal depicted by benevolent sexism, cognitive dissonance and relationship-protection motivations could prompt views that benevolent sexism is undesirable (e.g., Gawronski, 2012; Murray & Holmes, 1993). Consistent with this perspective, when not being reinforced by perceptions of the partner's sexism, women increasingly rejected benevolent sexism across time.

Strengths, Caveats and Future Research Directions

The current research has several strengths. We provide the first demonstration that perceptions of intimate partners' attitudes are a central factor influencing women's internalization of benevolent sexism. We did this by examining naturalistic development of sexist attitudes across 9-month and 12-month timeframes (Studies 1 and 2). We also showed this by experimentally manipulating *interpersonal* perceptions of partners' sexist attitudes (Studies 3 and 4), which extends prior research that has primed women's agreement with benevolent sexism by manipulating the *personal* relevance of benevolently sexist beliefs (Becker, 2010) or manipulating *intergroup* threat from men (Fischer, 2006). Moreover, the results across studies demonstrated that the interpersonal context which is relevant for women's internalization of benevolent sexism was distinctly different to normative influences on people's endorsement of sexist attitudes. Our results also support that attitude alignment

depends on the degree to which those attitudes are relevant to the self (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). In contrast to women, perceptions of the partner's sexism did not shape *men's* sexism, consistent with our expectation that sexist attitudes operate to provide men advantages without the necessity for partners to endorse a particular ideology.

In the context of these strengths and contributions, questions still remain. For example, because we tracked how benevolent sexism changed across time according to perceptions of intimate partners' attitudes, our longitudinal analyses incorporated women who remained involved in committed relationships. Participants in our experimental study were also primarily in cohabitating or married relationships. This has three implications. First, perceptions of partners' benevolent sexism may have the effects we demonstrated only to the extent that women intend to remain in the relationship and hence will attain the potential benefits on offer. Moreover, when male partners do *not* endorse benevolent sexism, women who strongly endorse benevolent sexism may opt to end the relationship rather than alter their beliefs. Prior research has shown that women who more strongly endorse benevolent sexism will be less satisfied and behave more negatively when the relationship does not live up to idealized expectations (Hammond & Overall, 2013b; Hammond & Overall, 2014) or the partner does not endorse benevolent sexism (Overall et al., 2011). Thus, more deeply internalized benevolent sexism may be resistant to change when women can exit relationships in search of partners who agree women should be cherished and protected.

Second, we have focused on intimate heterosexual relationships because the influence and spread of gender-related ideologies is theorized to be most prominent in this interpersonal context; adult relationship partners are the most interdependent and most invested in ensuring romantic relationships continue (Hardin, & Higgins 1996; Jackman, 1994; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). However, benevolent sexism also functions to appeal to women across all relationships, such as single women evaluating prospective partners (e.g.,

Bohner et al., 2010). Accordingly, future research should investigate the different ways that the accessibility of benevolent sexism is signaled to women outside of current intimate relationships. For example, for women who are relatively young and in dating relationships, sexist beliefs will likely be shaped by men in society who could represent potential suitors (e.g., Sibley et al., 2009) as well as models of close others' relationships, such as their parents' or friends' romantic interactions and relationship roles. Nevertheless, because partners are the most consistent and powerful source of the benefits promised by benevolent sexism (e.g., men 'should' sacrifice themselves to provide for a female partner; Glick & Fiske, 1996), it should be the attitudes held by long-term, committed partners which are most relevant to women's internalization of benevolent sexism.

Third, our focus on the development of sexist attitudes within the context of intimate relationships may explain important differences between the present studies and prior research on change in sexist attitudes. Women's endorsement of benevolent sexism did not predict longitudinal increases in their hostile sexism in either of the longitudinal studies, despite this link emerging in prior research examining young undergraduates (e.g., Sibley & Perry, 2010). Further, although men's endorsement of benevolent sexism was greater when they were led to believe that normative attitudes were higher than they thought (Study 3B), men's current beliefs about most men's benevolent sexism was not linked with changes in their own benevolent sexism over time (Study 2) as was reported by Sibley et al. (2009). These differences may be due to variance in the development of sexist attitudes between dating contexts and committed relationship contexts. For example, competition over *potential* partners *within* gender groups may increase the relevance of hostile sexism to single women because other women, who might 'manipulate' men, represent a threat to securing a partner (see de Lemus, Moya, & Glick, 2010). In contrast, competition over potential partners may mean that single men adjust their own benevolent sexism to match other *men's* benevolent

sexism to gain parity in romantically-charged beliefs that fulfill men's need for intimacy (see de Lemus et al., 2010; Hart, Hung, Glick, & Dinero, 2012). Thus, reiterating that close relationships are important in understanding the endorsement of sexist attitudes, relationship status might modify when and how sexist attitudes are adopted and internalized.

Finally, the importance of contextual factors in shaping women's adoption and endorsement of benevolent sexism highlights a central limitation of the current studies. Our studies were gathered in relatively egalitarian countries (longitudinal samples in New Zealand; online samples in North America), where societal gender equality is relatively high and tolerance of violence toward women is relatively low. In these more egalitarian contexts, the predominant tone of benevolent sexism is likely to be romanticism and expressions of care (e.g., Bohner et al., 2010; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998; Sarlet et al., 2012), and these promised benefits encourage women's endorsement of benevolent sexism. However, in contexts of more overt and aggressive forms of sexism, the most salient benefit promised by benevolent sexism (and thus its attractiveness to women) is likely to be protection rather than reverence. Accordingly, threats of violence or discrimination from men should foster women's internalization of benevolent sexism (e.g., Fischer, 2006; Glick et al., 2000). Despite potential differences in the particular facet of benevolent sexism which appeals to women, perceiving that partners' endorse benevolent sexism, and that the special reverence and/or protection promised by benevolent sexism is available, should foster and sustain women's own endorsement of benevolent sexism across countries.

Conclusion

Why do women endorse attitudes which serve to reinforce existing gender inequality, undermine personal competence and achievement, and reduce resistance to societal systems which disadvantage women? The current research indicates that heterosexual women's perceptions of their intimate partners are central to answering this question. The results from

two dyadic longitudinal studies (Studies 1 and 2) demonstrated that women (but not men) were more likely to endorse and maintain greater endorsement of benevolent sexism over time when they perceived that their intimate partner more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism. In contrast, women rejected benevolent sexism across time when they perceived their partner weakly endorsed these attitudes. Study 3 provided experimental support of this process: women (but not men) prompted to think that their partner likely endorses benevolent sexism more (versus less) than they initially thought expressed greater agreement with benevolent sexism. Study 4 also supported that perceiving partners to more strongly endorse benevolent sexism leads women to feel the relationship regard and security that benevolent sexism promises, which should be central to why women adopt benevolent sexism when their partner endorses these attitudes. Together, these findings provide strong evidence that women's adoption and sustained endorsement of benevolent sexism occurs when women perceive that the care and reverence promised by benevolent sexism is accessible and likely to be provided by their intimate partners. Thus, women's intimate involvement with men who are perceived to endorse benevolent sexism contributes to the maintenance of sexist attitudes and, in turn, societal-level gender inequalities.

Chapter Conclusion

A key tenet of ambivalent sexism theory is that gender inequalities are maintained because sexist attitudes appeal to *women*, resulting in women internalizing benevolent sexism and investing in social systems which ultimately advantage men (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Importantly, the studies in this chapter moved beyond individual differences concerning the societal-level factors which contribute to both women's and men's adoption of sexist attitudes, such as system justification and drives to preserve existing intergroup relations (e.g., Altemeyer, 1981; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001), focusing on the appeal of benevolent sexism specifically to women. This chapter provided empirical support that one source of women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is its promises of personal benefits, such as a cherished relationship position involving men being devoted, chivalrous providers. Women who were personally oriented toward gaining status, praise and resources (i.e., higher in psychological entitlement) increasingly endorsed benevolent sexism over time. However, it is *in relationships* that the promise of a warm, caring partner is relevant and accessible. Accordingly, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism was only maintained over time when they perceived that their partner endorsed benevolent sexism. Ironically, although benevolent sexism works to support *men's* societal status and relationship closeness, men's entitlement and perceptions of their partner's benevolent sexism were unrelated to changes in their own benevolent sexism. These results highlight the disparity in the romantically-charged praise and promises of benevolent sexism: The position for women 'on a pedestal' operates in several ways to ultimately reinforce *men's* societal advantages.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Ambivalent sexism theory states that sexism is unique amongst all forms of prejudices because sexist attitudes speak to intimacy between men and women, (Glick & Fiske, 1996; 2001). This thesis examined the processes that occur within intimate heterosexual contexts that help to understand the balance between the functions of sexism that (1) reinforce men's advantaged access to status and societal power while (2) encouraging interdependence and emotional closeness between men and women. In this final chapter, I discuss the aims and findings of the studies presented in this thesis and, in particular, review how the perspective from intimate relationships makes novel advances in understanding the functions and sources of sexism (see summary in Table 5.1). I then discuss the implications and strengths of examining stereotype processes at both the intergroup and the intimate levels, and finally directions for future research on the interpersonal processes linked with sexism.

Men's Hostile Sexism and Intimate Relationships

Chapter Two investigated the relationship behavior and relationship evaluations linked with men's hostile sexism (see upper section of Table 5.1). Relationship aggression is ineffective at maintaining men's power in relationships (Overall et al., 2011), and hostile sexism is generally elicited in domains *outside* of relationships (Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). Yet, a wealth of prior research has demonstrated that men who endorse hostile sexism behave more aggressively toward partners and report relatively lower quality relationships (e.g., Forbes et al., 2004; Forbes et al., 2005; Glick et al., 2002; Overall et al., 2011; Sibley & Becker, 2012; Yakushko, 2005). Two dyadic studies in Chapter Two demonstrated that men who endorse hostile sexism perceive relatively greater levels of negativity in their romantic partner's behavior. In turn, these negatively biased perceptions mediated the links between men's greater endorsement of hostile sexism and greater negative behavior toward partners, feeling more manipulated by partners, and lower relationship

Table 5.1. Summary of Thesis Chapters and Points Demonstrating how Intimate Relationships are Central to Understanding Sexism

Thesis Section	Key Points Derived from Ambivalent Sexism Theory and Associated Research
<i>Chapter 2. Men's Hostile Sexism and Intimate Relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hostile sexism</i> arises to maintain men's societal power by expressing aggressive and derogatory attitudes toward women who are perceived to be challenging men (e.g., feminists, career women). However, even in committed romantic relationships, men who endorse hostile sexism report relatively lower relationship satisfaction and greater acts of aggression toward partners • Chapter Two focused on the aggression linked with hostile sexism from a dyadic perspective, assessing perceptual bias by comparing men's perceptions of their partners with those partners' own reports. • Results illustrated that one reason why men who endorse hostile sexism feel dissatisfied and behave more negatively toward intimate partners is because they overestimate the negativity of their partner's behaviors
<i>Chapter 3. Men's Benevolent Sexism and Intimate Relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Benevolent sexism</i> arises to maintain men's societal power while fulfilling heterosexual needs for intimacy by expressing romantic and idealized attitudes toward women who adopt warm and supportive (rather than competent and independent) roles. However, benevolently sexist expressions of care and protection tend to impede women's abilities and felt competence, which are antagonist to the function of benevolent sexism to promote intimacy and acceptance in relationships • Chapter Three utilized a dyadic perspective which simultaneously examined the naturalistic support behaviors and evaluations of support behaviors provided by both male and female partners • Results illustrated that one way in which benevolent sexism functions to reduce women's competence and fulfill men's intimacy needs is through the support behaviors it fosters in both men and women—men providing support which solved goals <i>for</i> partners, and women providing support which emphasized affection and the strength of the relationship
<i>Chapter 4. Women's Benevolent Sexism and Intimate Relationships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is critical to the maintenance of gender inequality because it fosters women's adherence to a relatively more dependent, vulnerable relationship position. What maintains women's endorsement of benevolent sexism in the face of these damaging consequences for women's competency and independence? • Chapter Four presented two articles investigating personal and dyadic factors, respectively, testing whether the benefits benevolent sexism promises maintain women's endorsement of benevolent sexism • Women higher in psychological entitlement (Article 1) or who perceived that their partner endorsed benevolent sexism (Article 2) maintained a relatively stronger endorsement of benevolent sexism over time. Results illustrated that one reason benevolent sexism appeals to women is the reverence and care it promises in intimate relationships

satisfaction. These studies provided evidence that one reason men who endorse hostile sexism exhibit greater relationship aggression is because they bring the intergroup concerns over women competing for men's power into their own relationships. In particular, my research provides evidence that men who hold more hostile beliefs of women overestimate the extent to which their partners are exploiting the relationship and challenging their power, ultimately prompting aggressive evaluations in behavior in response to negativity that is not actually there.

A dyadic perspective was key to revealing this pathway because the studies obtained a measure of bias by examining the discrepancies between romantic couples' reports of the same relationship experiences (i.e., their own and one another's behavior). This method and associated findings advance the sexism literature because prior research has primarily examined the aggression and discrimination linked with hostile sexism in the contexts of suppressing women's power and advantages (e.g., Hebl et al., 2007; Masser & Abrams, 2004). Acts of discrimination and aggression toward women that occur in career domains capture aspects of hostile sexism that maintain men's power. However, in established and interdependent relationships, hostile sexism works against men's relationship goals and undermines men's power. Examining couple's actual relationship experiences demonstrates these costs in men's day-to-day lives with their intimate partners, and further, illustrates that men's fears of women's power within interdependent contexts bleed into their relationships. When examining daily feelings and behavior, men who endorsed hostile sexism reported relatively higher negativity and lower satisfaction, demonstrating the pervasiveness of hostile sexism. The results also have important implications for understanding the reach of hostile sexism. In particular, the successful functioning of relationships relies on individuals being comfortable with investing in their relationships and displaying care and commitment for their partners, which in turn encourages their partner's cooperation and investment in the

relationship (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). As men who endorse hostile sexism interpret their partners in a negative light and behave negatively, they undermine their *partner's* commitment and investment in their relationship (e.g., Gottman, 1994).

Men's Benevolent Sexism and Intimate Relationships

Chapter Three investigated the behaviors linked with men's and women's endorsement of benevolent sexism as they provided support to their partners, addressing unresolved findings in the sexism literature that benevolent sexism functions to foster men's satisfaction and caring behavior (e.g., Overall et al., 2011; Sibley & Becker, 2012) *and* impede women's competence and independence (e.g., Dardenne et al., 2007; Salomon et al., 2015). As summarized in the middle section of Table 5.1, the dyadic study in Chapter Three provided observational evidence that men who endorsed benevolent sexism tended to take over their female partners' goal pursuits by providing plans and solutions while ignoring their partners' own abilities to strive and achieve their goals. Of importance, the behaviors exhibited by men who more strongly endorsed benevolent sexism led female partners to feel less competent about achieving personal goals. In contrast, women who endorsed benevolent sexism tended to provide greater levels of empathetic and warm support that facilitated their male partner's feelings of intimacy and closeness. Thus, it is through men's *and* women's relationship behaviors that benevolent sexism functions to advantage men's access to power without disrupting men's access to intimacy and emotional support.

A dyadic focus on the naturalistic support behaviors linked with benevolent sexism is necessary to explore the interpersonal interactions *between* men and women. This thesis extends a large literature that has examined how benevolent sexism permeates men's and women's relationship beliefs and relationship roles (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Fernández et al., 2006; Sarlet et al, 2012; Viki et al. 2003) by examining how benevolent sexism shapes outcomes for men and women in actual, naturalistic relationship interactions. First, a dyadic

perspective provides the additional information that support behaviors linked with providers' endorsement of benevolent sexism occurred independently of the recipients' desires or requests for support, illustrating that the behaviors likely stemmed from individuals' beliefs about their relationship role rather than responding to their partner's needs. Second, the results demonstrate that one way to capture *both* the paternalistic, patronizing side of benevolent sexism and the romantic, interdependent side of benevolent sexism is to focus on men and women together. A dyadic perspective reveals how dependency-oriented behaviors which reduce the competence of female partners *also* undermine those partners' feelings of being understood, accepted and valued. Consequentially, it is the support of *women* who endorse benevolent sexism that is required to maintain closeness and intimacy. Thus, this research reinforces a more general principle of ambivalent sexism theory: Benevolent sexism is effective at maintaining men's advantages to the extent that it can appeal for *both* men's and women's endorsement of benevolent sexism.

Women's Benevolent Sexism and Intimate Relationships

Chapter Four examined why women endorse benevolent sexism when agreement with benevolent sexism contributes to the maintenance of women's disadvantaged status in society *as well as* a heightened personal vulnerability when relationships do not meet the ideal picture of relationships that benevolent sexism conveys (e.g., Brandt, 2011; Glick et al., 2000; Hammond & Overall, 2013a; Hammond & Overall, 2014; Overall et al., 2011). The studies in Chapter Four examined factors that predict the maintenance of women's endorsement of benevolent sexism over time (see lower section of Table 5.1). The results supported that one reason benevolent sexism is appealing to women are the personal benefits that benevolent sexism offers to women, such as promises of a devoted partner who provides financial support, the praise for warm and empathetic qualities that are prescribed to be

‘natural’ in women, and respect for women’s power within relationship and domestic domains.

The first section demonstrated that women (but not men) who believed that they were more deserving of praise and material gains (i.e., high in psychological entitlement) showed greater endorsement of benevolent sexism both concurrently and increasingly over time. The second section focused on the specific relationship context of the benefits that benevolent sexism promises. Women endorsed benevolent sexism more strongly, and maintained this stronger endorsement over time, when they perceived that their male partner endorsed benevolent sexism. In contrast, women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism decreased over time when they perceived that their partner did not endorse benevolent sexism. Experimental evidence supported this pattern: After priming women with information that their partner likely agreed (versus disagreed) with benevolent sexism, they subsequently reported stronger (versus weaker) agreement with benevolent sexism.

By adopting a dyadic perspective of the reasons that women endorse benevolent sexism these studies identified a novel pathway for women’s internalization of benevolent sexism that exist alongside established processes explaining people’s adoption of sexist attitudes. For example, women’s *and* men’s attitudes tend to follow perceived group norms and are adopted through a process of justifying and explaining differences between groups in society (e.g., Jost & Banaji, 1994; North & Fiske, 2014; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). Chapter Four identified that an additional factor that underlies women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism is whether or not the benefits that benevolent sexism promises are personally relevant and accessible in romantic relationships. Focusing on the benefits that benevolent sexism promises women in relationships is particularly important in identifying how benevolent sexism *appeals for* rather than *coerces* women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism, as has been found by research demonstrating women’s endorsement of benevolent sexism as

protection against hostility and aggression (e.g., Fischer, 2006; Glick et al., 2000). Thus, the appeal of benevolent sexism is particularly relevant to understand sexist attitudes in relatively individualistic and egalitarian countries. First, the offers of protection are likely to be less relevant to women in countries because of relatively high societal intolerance of aggression toward women and relatively greater levels of legal protection against domestic violence. Second, people’s psychological entitlement tends to be higher in more egalitarian countries (Twenge & Campbell, 2010), meaning that people tend to be more swayed by personal access to resources and status, and are relatively less sensitive to threats and punishment (e.g., Campbell et al., 2005; Campbell et al., 2006).¹

The Investigation of Sexism across Intergroup and Interpersonal Levels

The results across the multiple studies presented in this thesis support key principles derived from ambivalent sexism theory regarding the functions, structure, and sources of sexist attitudes (Table 5.1). Ideologies that are competitive and antagonistic—such as hostile sexism—are inevitably undermined by the interdependence that defines close relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). When hostile sexism spills over into interdependent contexts, the fears it expresses about women’s power work *against* men’s advantages and wellbeing. Hostile sexism is not an effective form of control in relationships because the inherent interdependence within relationships clashes with beliefs that men must aggressively maintain their power, derailing men’s satisfaction and prompting negativity that evokes resistance rather than compliance in female partners (Chapter Two; Overall et al., 2011; Yakushko, 2005). Moreover, hostile sexism is unrelated to men’s behaviors when men need, or are providing, support to partners (Chapter Three) and is not appealing to partners

¹ It is also notable that countries with the *lowest* average endorsement of sexism (and lowest levels of gender inequality), such as Finland, Sweden, and the Netherlands, are suggested to have a societal “immunity to narcissism” which stems from social values which encourage *both* individualistic and collectivist traits within a broader political context of high societal equity, such as universal access to healthcare (Twenge & Campbell, 2010, p. 263).

(Chapter Four). Benevolent sexism arises to work in tandem with hostile sexism, promoting comfort with interdependence and incentivizing women's investment in men's advantaged societal (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994). Indeed, benevolent sexism manifested in contexts which required comfort with supporting partners (Chapter Three), and women's endorsement of benevolent sexism was fostered by perceiving that their male partner endorsed benevolent sexism (Chapter Four), supporting that benevolent sexism operates in tandem with hostile sexism to maintain men's power, operating within intimate and close domains.

Examining the processes of sexist ideologies as they manifest in relationships also contributes to the sexism literature by identifying similarities and differences between the processes of sexist attitudes at the interpersonal level and at the intergroup level. For example, an intergroup perspective highlights how sexist attitudes define boundaries for the 'appropriate' social identities and roles for men and women, perpetuate stereotypes that men are competent and women are warm, and justify inequalities between groups (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002; Jost & Banaji, 1994; North & Fiske, 2014; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). At the societal level, benevolent sexism defines the boundaries of gendered relationship roles, maintains men's high status relative to women, and prompts stereotypes of women that evoke behaviors toward women that are overtly helpful but also subtly harmful (Cuddy et al., 2007). At the interpersonal level, benevolently sexist offers of 'help' impinge on women's competence and ability to pursue career challenges (e.g., Dardenne et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2014; King et al., 2014), and as demonstrated for the first time in this thesis, are detrimental for women's goal-related competence in intimate domains (Chapter Three). Thus, benevolent sexism functions in a consistent pattern across societal and interpersonal levels to maintain men's advantages.

However, the manuscripts in this thesis also demonstrate a broader principle in psychological research that emotions and behaviors can function differently, and sometimes in opposing directions, between an intergroup level and an interpersonal level (see Keltner & Haidt, 1999). First, prior research has established that hostile attitudes toward women operate to maintain men's power at a societal level (Brandt, 2011; Glick & Fiske, 1996). For example, hostile sexism prompts discrimination that disadvantages women in career domains (e.g., Masser & Abrams, 2004), and derogation of women who do not conform to traditional gender roles (e.g., Glick et al., 1997; Gaunt, 2013; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). At an intergroup level, hostile sexism aggressively reinforces group boundaries and men's advantaged status. However, goals to maintain dominance and wariness about the power of women to manipulate men undermine fundamental needs for closeness and behavioral strategies to maintain interdependent relationships (e.g., Overall & Simpson, 2013). Accordingly, men who endorse hostile sexism are less able to influence their partners successfully (Overall et al., 2011) and have biased views in their relationships because they are prone to over-interpreting their partner's behavior as criticism (see Chapter Two). Thus, when moving from an intergroup perspective to an interpersonal perspective, the consequences of hostile sexism shift from reinforcing of men's power to undermining men's power.

The contrariness of the consequences of men's expressions of hostile sexism between the societal level and the relationship level provides the necessary conditions for the positivity of benevolent sexism to fulfill men's needs and still maintain men's power. Benevolent sexism functions to promote cooperation between men and women in complementary societal roles (e.g., 'breadwinner' and 'homemaker'), which masks a soft-handed enforcement of traditional gender norms and the ways in which benevolent sexism encourages women to be dependent on men (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Jackman, 1994). Benevolent sexism smoothes the functioning of men's relationships by prompting men to

respect women's power to manage the relationship and domestic domains (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Overall et al., 2011), romanticizing men who adopt high-status 'chivalrous' roles (e.g., McCarty & Kelly, 2015; Viki et al., 2003), and promoting men's satisfaction (e.g., Becker & Sibley, 2011). The subjective positivity of benevolent sexism also masks *interpersonal* behaviors which reinforce women's dependence on men. For example, benevolent expressions of protection and care can make authoritarian relationship decisions appear kind (Moya et al., 2007). Moreover, as demonstrated in Chapter Three, men's endorsement of benevolent sexism prompted dependency-oriented support behaviors that impeded their female partner's competence.

One important aspect of benevolent sexism that is highlighted at the interpersonal, rather than intergroup, level of analysis is the *intent* of benevolent behaviors and expressions. The competence-impeding support behaviors demonstrated in Chapter Three occurred in generally satisfied and committed relationships, in which partners are highly motivated to fulfill one another's needs and provide responsive support; indeed, men who endorsed benevolent sexism were unlikely to be intentionally undermining their partners' goal-related competence and progress or the accompanying lower feelings of regard and intimacy. More generally, benevolent sexism echoes loyalty, idealization of partners, and sacrificing for partners, which are all part of maintaining successful relationships (e.g., Campbell et al., 2013; Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Reis et al., 2004). The subjectively positive content of benevolent sexism also mirrors expressions of care, responsiveness and gratitude in interpersonal relationships, which are all central to establishing shared norms and reinforcing prosocial behavior in others (e.g., Delvaux, Vanbeselaere, & Mesquita 2015; Grant & Gino, 2010; Meeussen, Delvaux, & Phalet, 2014). On the surface, benevolent sexism does not appear to mean any harm to women. However, this is precisely why benevolent sexism is so effective at maintaining gender inequality. By suffusing romantic relationship beliefs,

benevolent sexism develops as an appealing set of ideas that can be sustained and proliferated *within* intimate contexts (see Chapter Four), where the adoption of seemingly positive, beneficial, and romantic attitudes actually prompts relationship-focused choices in women and career-focused choices in men, ultimately bolstering inequality at the societal level.

The Relationship Implications of Ambivalent Sexism

The results reported across this thesis also reveal the impact ambivalent sexism has on the functioning of intimate relationships. Each chapter highlighted the detrimental consequences sexist attitudes can have on people's relationship evaluations and perceptions. For example, the aggressive behavior linked with men's hostile sexism in Chapter Two sits within a wider literature linking hostile sexism with aggression toward women (e.g., Forbes et al., 2004; Forbes et al., 2005), meaning that men's endorsement of hostile sexism is a relatively large risk factor for domestic violence (Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, & Tritt, 2004). Similarly, benevolent sexism encourages women to invest in a traditional, relationship-focused role (Chapters Three and Four), which leaves women more vulnerable to conflict and problems in their relationships (e.g., Casad, Salazar, & Macina, 2014; Hammond & Overall, 2013a; Overall et al., 2011). Moreover, the detrimental effects of sexism may be *particularly* destructive to women because sexist attitudes operate over time to suppress women's independent opportunities outside of the relationship, meaning women are likely to be more reliant on their partners for financial support (see Vogelmann & Eagle, 1991).

More generally, people's agreement (or disagreement) with sexist attitudes is a unique and important predictor of relationship functioning. In the current thesis, sexist attitudes explained a portion of variance in couples' relationship satisfaction, negative behavior toward partners, and social support, all of which are critical factors that ultimately determine the wellbeing of individuals *and* the stability of romantic relationships (e.g., Amato, 2010; Cutrona & Suhr, 1992; Fletcher et al., 2000; Gottman, 1994; Pasch et al., 1997; Rusbult,

1983). Importantly, across all studies, several alternative explanations for the predicted effects of sexist attitudes were tested and ruled out. For example, the negatively biased perceptions of partners linked with men's hostile sexism (Chapter Two) occurred independently of negative perceptions that stem from dissatisfying relationships (e.g., Fletcher & Kerr, 2010). Indeed, other research highlights the unique role of sexist attitudes as a predictor of relationship functioning. Despite being associated with romanticized lay-beliefs about relationships, such as believing that couples experience 'love at first sight' and should be able to read each other's minds, benevolent sexism influences relationship outcomes independently of these beliefs (Hammond & Overall, 2013a). So what makes sexist attitudes unique from other romanticized or unrealistic beliefs? Sexist attitudes encompass beliefs that are somewhat removed from the immediacy of relationship experiences, yet are relevant to relationships because they prescribe how men, women, and heterosexual relationships *ought to be*. Thus, sexist attitudes exist to *shape* relationships rather than reflecting an idyllic view of intimate relationships.

Finally, sexist attitudes are uniquely important to understanding intimate relationships because no existing relationship measures directly capture ambivalence—a central concept to *interpersonal*-level processes. Intimate relationships are defined by interdependence: The more that people invest in their relationships, the more that their own goals and wellbeing depend upon the partner reciprocating this love and investment (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). The investment of time, emotion, and resources into relationships prompts relationship ambivalence. On the one hand, relationship investment accompanies greater satisfaction and the perceived value of partners relative to other potential partners (Rusbult 1983; Rusbult et al., 1991), but on the other hand, a magnified loss if that relationship dissolves (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). As a result, people develop cognitive and behavioral strategies that balance protection of the *relationship* through accommodating,

trusting and supporting their partners versus protection of the *self* against the costs that accompany threats to the relationship (Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). Ambivalent sexism echoes precisely these two motives in relationships: Benevolent sexism emphasizes the romanticism and mutually beneficial aspects of heterosexual intimacy, whereas hostile sexism warns about the vulnerabilities of partners being untrustworthy and disloyal. Thus, studying sexist attitudes as they function within relationships provides one window into the typically opposing consequences of individuals' ambivalent approaches toward intimacy.

Future Research into the Interpersonal Sources and Functions of Sexism

This thesis focused on demonstrating the ways in which intimate relationships are central to the functions and sources of ambivalent sexism toward women. The application of dyadic perspectives and methodologies to understand sexist attitudes can be continued in several ways by future research, which I discuss in turn below. First, women's endorsement of hostile sexism toward women is under-studied but initial evidence highlights how women's hostility may revolve around investment in their intimate relationships. Second, ambivalent sexism toward *men*—the counterpart to sexism toward women—is also under-studied and should mirror sexism toward women in having strong ties to processes in intimate relationships. Third, some existing research suggests that intimate relationships, and the need for closeness, may influence men's adoption and endorsement of sexist attitudes. Finally, sexist attitudes should also reach beyond the level of dyads, including influencing processes in familial relationships, friendship circles, and small communities.

Women's Hostile Sexism and Intimate Relationships. Although both benevolent sexism and hostile sexism operate in tandem, the research in this thesis did not focus on women's endorsement of hostile sexism. Indeed, women's endorsement of hostile sexism may appear strange because holding hostile attitudes toward members of an ingroup are uncommon and because women are the primary targets of hostile sexism, including pushing

women away from career and political domains (e.g., Becker, 2010; Glick et al., 1997). One possible reason is that women's hostile sexism is fostered by investment in a romantic relationship and women's incorporation of their male partner into their identities, epitomized by men and women forming a 'team' made up of complementary relationship roles. As women invest in their male partner's opportunities to gain power, status and resources, 'other' women who do not adopt traditional roles could be perceived as a threat. For example, businesswomen could be seen as competition for their partners' career successes and single women could be seen as competing *for* their partners. In support of this proposition, women who endorse benevolent sexism are more likely to express stronger endorsement of hostile sexism over time (Sibley, Overall, & Duckitt, 2007; Sibley & Perry, 2010), suggesting that as women invest in a traditional relationship role that is relatively dependent on their partner embodying the successful 'provider' ideal, women are personally motivated to endorse derogatory attitudes toward women in non-traditional roles.

If women's hostile sexism manifests most strongly when competition with other women is salient, then dating relationships and the early stages of relationship formation is an important interpersonal context for future research to consider. Indeed, one study examining the development of sexist attitudes across adolescence indicates that women (but not men) who have had more relationship experience are likely to endorse hostile sexism more strongly (de Lumus et al., 2010). Hostile sexism may be particularly appealing to women as they pursue romantic goals because hostile sexism (1) is congruous with antagonism toward female competitors, and (2) helps protect self-esteem by offering a rationale for experiencing rejection as losing out to 'manipulative' women. Exposure to aggression and violence in dating contexts could also be a factor in women's endorsement of hostile sexism (see Glick et al., 2000), providing a similar self-protective function by rationalizing aggressive acts and separating the self from women who 'ought to be' targets of men's aggression.

Understanding the origins of women's hostile sexism will also help to resolve puzzling effects found in romantic relationships. For example, when women endorse hostile sexism more strongly, they report greater satisfaction in their relationship, and these higher levels of relationship satisfaction are sustained even in relationships with high levels of problems (e.g., Hammond & Overall, 2013a). Moreover, Lee et al (2010) found that American women who more strongly endorse hostile sexism also express relatively *lower* desire for a partner who is warm and romantic—qualities which are generally considered the most important in a partner (e.g., Fletcher et al., 1999). Why would holding hostile views of women in non-traditional roles influence women's evaluations about their own relationships and desired partners? One answer may be that women who more strongly endorse hostile sexism report more positive evaluations of their own relationships and are less selective when finding partners because they make downward comparisons to women who are not in committed relationships (e.g., Frye & Karney, 2002). Again, hostile sexism may provide a way of protecting or bolstering feelings of self- and relationship-worth by enabling favorable comparisons to single women who must 'manipulate' men or are unable to provide for themselves.

Ambivalent Sexism toward Men. The sources of ambivalently sexist attitudes toward women *also* generate sexist ideologies directed toward men (Glick & Fiske, 1999). Group differences between women and men in status and power, combined with heterosexual needs for closeness between women and men, generate *hostile sexism toward men* and *benevolent sexism toward men*. Hostile sexism toward men encompasses beliefs that men are lazy, irresponsible and immoral, whereas benevolent sexism toward men expresses subjectively positive praise of men's competent traits and adoption of 'protector and provider' roles (Glick & Fiske, 1999). Despite being directed toward men, these sexist ideologies also function to justify gender inequalities, such as by 'excusing' men's aggression and avoidance

of domestic roles and emphasizing that men are suited to adopt high-status career roles (Glick & Fiske, 1999). Measures of sexism toward men have been around for over a decade, but still little research has investigated sexist attitudes toward men (see Lee, Fiske, & Glick, 2010), leaving a large range of possibilities concerning the ways in which these attitudes may function to maintain inequality.

Chapter Three provided suggestive evidence that processes in intimate relationships are important to understanding sexist attitudes toward men: Benevolent sexism toward *men* overlapped with benevolent sexism toward *women* in predicting women's empathetic and relationship-oriented support behaviors, but was unrelated to men's support behaviors. Thus, specifically for women, sexist attitudes toward men may be elicited most strongly in contexts where men's dependence on women is salient, for example, caring for a male partner who is unwell. However, the patronizing aspects of benevolent sexism toward men are likely *also* most salient when men are dependent on female partners, for example, that "men would fall apart if they had to fend for themselves" (Ambivalence Toward Men inventory; Glick & Fiske, 1999). Research is required to understand the effects of women's caring relationship behaviors that carry a patronizing edge. The limited research on women's sexism toward men shows that women higher in benevolent sexism also report relatively higher attachment anxiety (Hart, Glick, & Dinero, 2013), indicating that a potential motivator for women's maternalistic forms of care is the desire to emphasize the recipients' awareness of being dependent on their relationship and the recipients' appreciation of the nurturing role adopted by women.

The Interpersonal Origins of Men's Sexist Attitudes. This thesis focused on the ways in which the benefits in intimate relationships are one source of women's endorsement of benevolent sexism. However, there are also likely to be interpersonal and relationship factors which prompt men's endorsement of sexist attitudes. Prior research has primarily

examined societal factors, establishing that central sources of sexism are individual differences in beliefs about groups in society. Social dominance and concerns over preserving the hierarchical power structure of group relations fosters men's hostile sexism, whereas concerns over the security of the ingroup from harm and the motivation to preserve traditional norms fosters men's benevolent sexism (Duckitt, 2001; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007). Importantly, these societal-level predictors of men's sexism encompass concerns about competition and cooperation, the same ambivalence discussed above that occurs in intimate relationships. In this case, the fear that men's power is vulnerable to women in romantic relationships (hostile sexism) is accompanied by the idealization of women's capacity to complete and fulfill men with their love (benevolent sexism). Thus, in addition to established individual differences, the dynamics of competition and cooperation in men's intimate relationships are likely to influence their agreement with sexism.

Men's endorsement of benevolent sexism should be fostered by dependence on women for intimacy, support and reproduction (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick & Hilt, 2000). In the same way that Chapter Four demonstrated that benevolent sexism appeals to women because of the promise of care and provision, benevolent sexism may be attractive to men because it promises fulfillment of romantic and intimate goals. Benevolent sexism characterizes men as 'gallant providers' and offers chivalrous behavioral scripts (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Viki et al., 2003), that may lure men's endorsement by promising they will have a wonderful, loyal partner who makes them feel whole. Some research does support that intimacy needs are indeed one motivator of men's endorsement of benevolent sexism. Men higher in attachment anxiety, who possess strong desires for intimacy and closeness, tend to endorse benevolent sexism more strongly (Hart et al., 2012), and men's endorsement of benevolent sexism is highest at in adolescence and early adulthood—particularly amongst male teenagers who have greater relationship experience (de Lumus, Moya, & Glick, 2010;

also see Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013; Glick & Fiske, 1996). These correlational findings suggest an important relational motivator of men's sexism: Experiencing doubts about being able to attain women's love may motivate men to endorse benevolent sexism as they look to adopt an identity that is attractive to women.

In addition, if relationship desires and experiences are one pathway to benevolent sexism, then relationships should also influence men's *hostile sexism* (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Returning to the ambivalence in relationships discussed in the prior section, people develop ways to protect themselves and their relationships from the risks of hurt and rejection arising from being dependent on others (Murray et al, 2006). Thus, a possible source of hostile sexism is that it seemingly offers men protection against the risks of investing in interpersonal relationships. Indeed, men higher in attachment anxiety endorse benevolent sexism *and* hostile sexism more strongly (Hart et al., 2012), perhaps reflecting the side of attachment insecurity that encompasses heightened fears of being rejected and abandoned by close others. Importantly, men's attachment anxiety was associated with greater hostile sexism *independently* of the effect of their social dominance orientation (Hart et al., 2012), an established individual difference underlying men's hostile sexism, highlighting the importance of studying interpersonal processes as an additional source of men's sexism. Nonetheless, any protection that hostile sexism offers men against the (perceived) loss of identity and control when depending on others is likely to be destructive. For example, Chapter Two indicated that men who endorse hostile sexism overperceive negativity from their partners, supporting that men who endorse hostile sexism may push partners away and behave aggressively in order to maintain a sense of self control. So, ironically, any protection that hostile sexism provides men who feel threatened by relationship dependence is also likely to increase the risk of relationship dissatisfaction and dissolution.

Sexism in Non-Romantic Interpersonal Contexts. This thesis investigated the functions and sources of sexist attitudes by concentrating on processes in romantic heterosexual relationships. Intimate relationships generate the strongest emotional and cognitive ambivalence toward women because relationships fulfill fundamental needs for intimacy and closeness most vividly but also represent the greatest costs if the relationship dissolves (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Jackman, 1994; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999). Nonetheless, men and women have interdependent relationships outside of intimate domains, including family members and close friendship circles. These relationships introduce further variables involved in the expressions of sexist attitudes, including differences in relative status (e.g., men who have female friends who are more successful in their careers) and life experiences (e.g., relationships with parents versus younger siblings). Non-romantic relationships are likely to be particularly important in shaping sexist attitudes in life periods *before* people establish long-term, adult romantic relationships, consistent with existing suggestions that adolescence is a critical life stage for individuals adoption of sexist attitudes (Glick & Hilt, 2000, also see de Lumus et al., 2010; Garaigordobil & Aliri, 2013). Examining how non-romantic relationship processes shape the sources and functions of sexism is an important area for future research.

Sexist attitudes are also likely to be shaped at the level of small *groups*, including peer networks in schools or workplaces, neighborhoods, and religious communities. In particular, research has identified the important role of sexist humor in shaping the perceived normativity of sexism in small groups. Sexist jokes in social circles perpetuate the ideas to individual members that sexist attitudes are more accepted in society (Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, 2001). In turn, men who more strongly endorse sexist attitudes find sexist humor more amusing and less offensive, presumably leading to repetition and propagation of those sexist ideas (Greenwood & Isbell, 2002; Thomas & Esses, 2004). However, interpersonal

interactions within small groups are also able to reduce the legitimacy of sexist attitudes when someone confronts sexism, such as responding to a sexist remark by speaking up and challenging the speaker. In particular, because men are not perceived to be *personally* invested or emotionally affected by sexist expressions, men's confrontation of sexism elicits relatively more guilt in offenders, suggesting that men may be more effective at curtailing future sexist remarks (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Drury & Kaiser, 2014). An important direction for future research is to link the processes of sexism that exist at the dyadic level and the societal level *with* interactions within and between small groups and communities.

Conclusion

The first aim of this thesis was to examine the ways that men's and women's endorsement of sexist attitudes shape behavior in their heterosexual romantic relationships. Intimate relationships are a central context for the manifestation of sexist attitudes because sexist attitudes both vilify *and* idealize the interdependence between men and women that is inherent to intimate relationships. As demonstrated in this thesis, the ambivalence surrounding the fears and desires of heterosexual intimacy means that sexist attitudes have a pervasive influence in romantic relationships. Hostile sexism spills over from concerns at the societal level into intimate relationships: Men's endorsement of hostile sexism magnifies the negativity of their relationship experiences with their partners, leading to negativity and dissatisfaction (Chapter Two). In contrast, contexts involving intimate partners seeking men's help with personal goals tend to elicit benevolent sexism (Chapter Three). Men's endorsement of benevolent sexism prompts support behaviors which reduce female partner's feeling that they are competent and able to achieve personal goals, whereas women's endorsement of benevolent sexism prompts support behaviors which emphasize the strength and security of the relationship (Chapter Three). The functions of sexist attitudes across these

chapters provide novel support for a fundamental principle of ambivalent sexism theory at a dyadic level: Hostile sexism is an aggressive force upholding men's societal advantages that actually impedes the success of men's intimate relationships. Benevolent sexism is a necessary complement to hostile sexism because it works within intimate contexts to restrict women's independence while also assisting men's fulfillment of intimacy needs.

The second aim of this thesis was to understand how intimate relationships shape women's adoption and endorsement of sexist attitudes toward women. Benevolent sexism is effective at maintaining gender inequality because it incentivizes women's investment in systems where men have societal advantages and power, such as by prescribing that women who invest in a traditional, supportive relationship role ought to be provided and cared for by male partners. These benefits that benevolent sexism promises women within relationships are one reason that benevolent sexism appeals to women: When the benefits of benevolent sexism are personally relevant and accessible within women's relationships, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is sustained across time (Chapter Four). The appeal of benevolent sexism is so powerful because it suffuses romantic ideas of 'true love', interdependence, and celebration of intimacy—echoing beliefs and motivations which are part of successful, satisfied relationships. However, benevolent sexism is distinct from beliefs that actually help relationships because it makes prescriptions for *all* men, *all* women, and *all* relationships, ensuring that men are characterized as the competent, responsible providers for women, who are warm, supportive caregivers. Through shaping perceptions, behaviors, and beliefs *in relationships*, sexist attitudes ultimately reinforce the differences between men and women that exist across societies.

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Appendix 1

The following is the transcript of the manipulation in Chapter 3, Article 2, presented to participants in the form of a *Psychology Today* article. All participants read the same *Preamble* paragraph, followed by either *Condition 1* or *Condition 2*. All emphasis is retained from original text.

[Preamble] What We Really Believe About Men and Women

It is easy to picture the traditional relationships which we have seen on our televisions across the decades, such as "I Love Lucy", "Friends" and even "The Simpsons". These shows depict versions of typical men and women – but this view is often inconsistent. Sometimes the 'man' is completed and fulfilled by his partner, working to provide for his family and cherish his partner, winning her adoration every day. Other times the 'man' does not follow these traditional roles, protecting and caring for his partner as much as she protects and cares for him. It seems like society doesn't know what men believe, so it's no wonder that we don't even know what our partners believe! A recent study published in *The Journal of Gender and Personality Psychology* asked over 2,000 romantic couples about their *partner's* beliefs, and compared those answers to the partner's actual beliefs. It turns out that most people's views of their partner are not what they suspect...

[Condition 1] So what does your partner actually believe about men and women?

When presented with statements such as "Women should be protected and cherished by men" and "Women have a greater moral sensibility than men", the overwhelming tendency was for people to underestimate their partner's agreement with those statements. Interestingly, in general, people inaccurately guessed their partner's agreement with these chivalrous-sounding beliefs – the partner's real answers were actually much higher. Even though we sometimes see the opposite on our television screens, the vast majority of people did not realize how much their close partner *agreed* with the idea that men are completed by loving a woman, and that men should work to care for and cherish their female partners. So why are we getting these beliefs wrong? According to the authors of the study, this underestimation of chivalrous attitudes is due to a very common psychological bias, "Every person in a heterosexual relationship underestimates their partner's beliefs to some extent because normal, everyday experiences in relationships produces a tendency to see your partner as disagreeing more with these ideas than that partner does in reality". This means that if you think about how *your* partner would respond to a statement like, "Women should

be put on a pedestal by their partners", typically your partner actually agrees more with this statement than you think they do.

[Condition 2] So what does your partner actually believe about men and women?

When presented with statements such as "Women should be protected and cherished by men" and "Women have a greater moral sensibility than men", the overwhelming tendency was for people to overestimate their partner's agreement with those statements. Interestingly, in general, people inaccurately guessed their partner's agreement with these chivalrous-sounding beliefs – the partner's real answers were actually much lower. Even though we sometimes see the opposite on our television screens, the vast majority of people did not realize how much their close partner *disagreed* with the idea that men are completed by loving a woman, and that men should work to care for and cherish their female partners. So why are we getting these beliefs wrong? According to the authors of the study, this overestimation of chivalrous attitudes is due to a very common psychological bias, "Every person in a heterosexual relationship overestimates their partner's beliefs to some extent because normal, everyday experiences in relationships produces a tendency to see your partner as agreeing more with these ideas than that partner does in reality". This means that if you think about how *your* partner would respond to a statement like, "Women should be put on a pedestal by their partners", typically your partner actually disagrees more with this statement than you think they do.

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Subject: RE: Query about copyright for PhD Thesis

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Best regards,
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