Red Flags in Recruitment: Communicative Impacts of Ambivalent Sexism on Women in a Simulated Recruitment Scenario.

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Stephanie Robertson

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the communicative impacts of ambivalently sexist communication on self-identified women with varying strengths of gender identity through the vignette of a simulated recruitment scenario. 90 participants completed an online survey assessing their strength of gender identity before watching a video of a recruiter containing no sexist communication, hostilely sexist communication, or benevolently sexist communication (using Glick and Fiske's 1996 theory of ambivalent sexism). They then completed assessments around their anticipations of contact quality and reluctant accommodation with the recruiter and their trust in the recruiter based on the video they watched. The results were analysed in SPSS using the PROCESS macro.

Both hostilely sexist communication and benevolently sexist communication yielded significant decreases in anticipated contact quality and trust when compared to the control (no sexism) group. Both sexism conditions also resulted in significant increases in expectation of the need for reluctantly accommodating behaviour. No significant effect was found for strength of gender identity as a moderating variable. These results are broadly consistent with other research into ambivalent sexism, but provide a unique communications-based lens through which to view its impacts.

Keywords sexism, ambivalent sexism, gender, gender identity, women, communication, trust, anticipated contact quality, reluctant accommodation, impacts of sexism, New Zealand

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Red Flags in Recruitment: Communicative Impacts of Ambivalent Sexism on Women in a Simulated Recruitment Scenario.

1. INTRODUCTION

From the earliest proto-languages, humans have had the tools at their disposal to police and denigrate others based on their sex. Stereotyping and policing behaviour based on sex or gender roles has been common throughout ancient and modern history and through it all sexist communication has been a major tool of enforcement (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2002; Glick & Fiske, 2011). In Western and colonial history, women have been the primary targets of sexism, yet while research into sexism itself is prevalent, there has been surprisingly little research into the impacts of sexist communication on those who experience it.

This research seeks to begin growing collective understanding of the communicative impacts of sexism on women and the role women's own senses of their gender identity may play in this interaction. It does this through the prism of ambivalent sexism.

This exploration presented here begins with an examination of the key terms of this research, looking at how gender differs from gender identity and how the term woman has been constructed in society and in academia, both traditionally and more recently. The history of the study of sexism is then looked at, including the many different concepts and terms used to explain and measure sexism. In the Research section, three hypotheses are outlined: that encountering benevolent or hostile sexism will elicit more negative assessments of contact quality, reluctant accommodation and trust; that hostile sexism will have a greater negative impact on participants than benevolent sexism; and that gender identity will moderate the impacts of sexism such that more gender identified women would be more adversely affected by their encounters with sexism. Following this is an outline of the research methods used to

gather and analyse the data collected, following which, discussion of the results of the research is presented. Finally, any potential limitations of the research are discussed, as well as opportunities for further study that have been identified regarding the interplay of gender identity and sexism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several attempts have been made in the past 50 years to define, research and measure different forms of sexism. From the 1990s onwards, four major schools of thought emerged that attempted to name and describe sexism, both overt and covert: 'old-fashioned and modern sexism' (Swim et al., 1995; Swim & Cohen, 1997), ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997), neosexism (Tougas et al., 1995), and subtle sexism (Benokraitis, 1997; Swim & Cohen, 1997). From these four schools of thought stemmed four attempts to measure sexism: the Modern Sexism Scale (Swim & Cohen, 1997), the Neosexism Scale (Campbell et al., 1997), the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and the Old Fashioned Sexism Scale (Zehnter et al., 2021). All theories and scales have, in some way, taken inspiration from and attempted to build on the Attitudes Towards Women Scale—an early attempt to categorise men's attitudes to women's "roles, rights and privileges" across a range of spheres of modern life (Spence et al., 1973; Spence & Helmreich, 1972, p. 201). Although the scale did not explicitly claim to measure sexism and sexist beliefs, it is clear from the work of later scholars to build on it that it created an ideal foundation for such an activity.

Before understanding extant work in this space, it is important to define the concepts this research will discuss and investigate. To that end, presented below is a brief cover of the ideas of gender and gender identity and an explanation of how the term woman has been defined for the purposes of this research.

2.1 Gender Versus Gender Identity

Although often used interchangeably, the terms gender and gender identity do represent different concepts. New Zealand's official statistical agency, Stats NZ (2021), defines gender and gender identity as follows:

> Gender refers to a person's social and personal identity as male, female, or another gender or genders that may be non-binary. Gender may include gender identity and/or gender expression. A person's current gender may differ from the sex recorded at their birth and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. A person's gender may change over time. Some people may not identify with any gender …
>
> Gender identity refers to a person's internal and individual experience of gender. (p. 12)

Despite these distinctions, there is still inconsistency in how the two terms are used. Many studies do not clearly define whether they relate to gender or gender identity, often conflating the two concepts under a single term. This makes teasing apart the different threads of research challenging, and in some cases, it is unclear whether the results are more strongly related to one's sense of self or social constructs.

This thesis is primarily interested in participants' own sense of identity, rather than social expectations and constructs, and will thus primarily use the term "gender identity". Where the term gender is used instead, it should be understood per the definition above. Where research has been cited, the terminology used by the cited author has been retained and may not perfectly match the above definitions.

2.2 Defining the Term "Woman"

There is a lack of congruence around the meaning of the term woman. Traditionally, it has meant an adult, female human, where female denotes specific sex characteristics (Fausto-Sterling, 1993). In this traditional framework, sex, gender and gender identity were one and the same and could be measured within a masculine-feminine binary (Fausto-Sterling, 1993; Koestner & Aube, 1995; Silva & Alves, 2020). Increasingly, however, people are coming to realise that gender identity is more about one's own sense of identity than the sex organs they possess (Silva & Alves, 2020). We can see this in the rise of additional genders for those who feel the binary labels society has traditionally used do not fit them. Then there are people who are intersex, born with variations in their sex characteristics, which can occur within a large range of variables (Blackless et al., 2000). Intersex advocates point out that although they have variations in sex characteristics, those variations are separate from and do not define their gender identities (*What is Intersex?*, 2021).

There is a growing body of research showing that how people experience and interact with the world is influenced more by gender identity than biological sex or sex at birth. Such research includes work showing that gender identity rather than sex influences how transgender people react when confronted with romantic rivals (Arístegui et al., 2019), that gendered behaviour affects production of testosterone independent of sex (Van Anders et al., 2015), and that gender identity significantly impacts consumer behaviour (Palan, 2001).[1] For

[1] There is significant work in the psychology space around the construction of gender identity and how to measure it. Two of the main theories are multifactorial gender identity theory and the gender schema theory (Palan, 2001). Multifactorial gender identity theory holds that gender identity develops along multiple spectrums, many of which may interact with each other. In contrast, gender schema theory suggests that gender identity is a matter of process (Silva & Alves, 2020); that people learn about gender through socialisation (Silva

these reasons, it was deemed far more relevant to this research to allow people to self-identify whether they are a woman, rather than to proscribe particular behaviours or characteristics participants must fit within.

2.3 Sexism

Presented below is an overview of a range of types of current sexism theory and epistemologies. As mentioned on page nine, many of these share common roots by way of the Attitudes Towards Women Scale. However, as the Attitudes Towards Women Scale was not designed to explicitly measure sexist ideas and behaviour (Glick & Fiske, 1996), it has not been included as a standalone measure here alongside its epistemological children.

& Alves, 2020), then acquire and display behaviours and conceptions of themselves in line with their gender identity (Palan, 2001). Both theories recognise, in their own ways, that once a gender identity is held (however it is developed), it informs how an individual both conceives of and experiences themselves and the world (Silva & Alves, 2020).

Beyond these core theories, post-structuralist conceptions of gender are gaining traction (Silva & Alves, 2020). A unifying element of these theories is that they "analyze how socially constructed discourses about gender influence individuals' development of the self-concept, impacting on the perpetuation of a specific status quo" (Silva & Alves, 2020, p. 218).

The differences between these theories become most relevant when undertaking measurement or assessment of gender, and as this thesis does not seek to do that, a determination will not be made about the relative pros and cons of each approach. Despite this, the general ways in which gender and identity are conceived of in each approach are relevant for those interested in the interaction between gender identity and other concepts.

2.3.1 Ambivalent Sexism

In 1996, Glick and Fiske proposed a new theory to describe men's sexism towards women: the theory of ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997). Using their theory, they posited that sexist men conceive of women in both benevolently and hostilely sexist ways (literally at two opposing valences) and manifest sexism in ways that society has not always recognised. They suggest that men create cognitive separations between those valences to alleviate any potential dissonance that could be caused by holding two diametrically opposing views of the same group of people and to allow them to quickly categorise and evaluate the women they encounter (Glick & Fiske, 1997). To do this, ambivalently sexist men break women into subtypes based on a consistent range of stereotypes, such as home-makers, career women, feminists, and "sexy women"; they then apply either benevolent or hostile attitudes, judgements and behaviours to individuals or groups of women according to those subtypes (Glick et al., 1997, p. 1325). What's more, this phenomenon was not new—evidence existed for it as far back as antiquity—and was not isolated to British or North American cultures (Glick et al., 2000; Glick & Fiske, 2011).

The theory holds that ambivalently sexist men (and here I feel I do need to say #notallmen) "habitually classify women into liked and disliked subtypes" (Glick et al., 1997, p. 1328) that tend to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. Sexist men, it was found, believe women play important roles as mothers, wives and daughters and should be pure and chaste, but they also wield considerable sexual power due to heterosexual men's reproductive dependence on them and sexist men fear women may use this power to manipulate them. Similarly, sexist men believe women are naturally and uniquely built to be carers and homemakers, but some women prioritise academic and career achievements over looking after their families, which sexist men find inappropriate. Finally, sexist men believe that women perfectly complement men's innate leadership skills and roles, except some women

(like feminists) who insist on undermining this established dynamic (Glick et al., 1997; Glick & Fiske, 2011; Glick et al., 2002; Sibley et al., 2007; Viki et al., 2003). These competing ideas clearly break into three categories, each of which has a hostile and a benevolent manifestation. Glick and Fiske named these three categories paternalism, gender differentiation, and heterosexuality (1996).

Paternalism is the idea of people relating to each other in the way that a father may relate to his children (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In ambivalent sexism, there are two forms of paternalism: dominant paternalism and protective paternalism. Dominant paternalism is the idea that women are not fully competent adults and therefore require men to instruct, command and control them; it is correlated with hostile sexism. Protective paternalism, on the other hand, is the idea that women are soft and meek and need a man to protect and care for them; it is correlated, perhaps not surprisingly, with benevolent sexism. Glick and Fiske note that “protective paternalism may coexist with its dominative counterpart because men are dyadically dependent on women (because of heterosexual reproduction) as wives, mothers, and romantic objects; thus, women are to be loved, cherished, and protected … [and] their "weaknesses" require that men fulfil [sic] the protector-and-provider role” (1996, p. 493). This is where the common theme of men’s heterosexual dependence on women comes from in ambivalent sexism theory—the idea that men are both reliant on but ultimately need to be in charge of women due to their reproductive dependence on them.

Gender differentiation, as explained by Glick and Fiske, is the idea that each of the two genders (for in this belief there only ever seem to be binary genders) are innately possessed of separate skills, aptitudes and communication styles and are therefore naturally suited for separate roles and responsibilities (Cameron, 2007; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Further, it is predicated on the idea that stepping outside one’s naturally assigned role(s) is a form of trespassing and must be discouraged, scorned or punished (Glick et al., 1997; Nichols, 2018).

As with paternalism, there are two distinct forms of gender differentiation: competitive and complementary. Competitive gender differentiation, an element of hostile sexism, is the idea that only men are suited to roles as decision-makers, protectors and leaders. “This creates downward comparisons, in which women serve, in Virginia Woolf's (1929/1981) words, as "looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of a man at twice its natural size" (p. 35), allowing individual men to enhance their self-esteem by association with a male social identity” (Tajfel, 1981, as cited in Glick & Fiske, 1996). Complementary gender differentiation, on the other hand, is the idea that many of women’s innate qualities complement those of men and enhance men’s power and esteem; complementary gender differentiation is a core element of benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Finally, there is heterosexuality. “Heterosexuality is, undoubtedly, one of the most powerful sources of men's ambivalence toward women” (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 493). Heterosexual intimacy, an element of benevolent sexism, underpins the deep desire for romantic and sexual companionship many heterosexual men feel. This closeness, however, puts women in a position of extreme risk when they have a sexist partner, as it also exposes them to a significantly increased likelihood of rape, abuse and intimate partner violence (Masser et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 2016). It is this other, more dangerous side of straight, sexist men’s heterosexual dependence on women that underpins hostile sexism: the power imbalance and perceived precarity that result from a dominant partner being dependent on a subordinate partner (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

> Sex is popularly viewed [by men] as a resource for which women act as the gatekeepers … This creates a vulnerability that [sexist] men may resent, which is reflected in the frequency with which women are portrayed in literature as manipulative "temptresses” … The belief that women use their

> sexual allure to gain dominance over men … is a belief that is associated with hostility toward women … for some men [sic] sexual attraction toward women may be inseparable from a desire to dominate them" (pp. 493-494)

Crucially, although benevolent sexism may seem to consist of positive views about some women, it is still sexism and, as with hostile sexism, functions "to justify men's structural power" by promulgating the idea that women ought to be restricted to predominantly domestic, caring/nurturing, and subservient roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). Benevolently sexist men believe that women lack the "competence to exercise structural power" and, as such, are in need of men's shepherding (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 492). As Glick and Fiske explain:

> Benevolently sexist attitudes [do] not [prevent] men from behaving horribly toward women, including [through] violent assault and murder. The protection and affection [benevolent sexism] promises (and sometimes delivers) is readily withdrawn when women fail to conform to sexist expectations. (2011, p. 532)

The core difference between hostile and benevolent sexism for sexist men is that their benevolently sexist beliefs allow them to justify their own prejudice against some women.

> Both hostile and benevolent sexism serve to justify men's structural power. Hostile sexist beliefs in women's incompetence at agentic tasks characterize women as unfit to wield power over economic, legal, and political institutions, whereas benevolent sexism provides a comfortable rationalization for confining women to domestic roles. (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 492)

Ambivalently sexist men see it as their role to control, decide and lead (both society and women) in order to maintain a developed, civil, right-thinking society (Glick & Fiske, 1996). At times, this is conceived of almost like a burden to bear (Nadler & Morrow,1959, as cited in Glick & Fiske, 1996), much as women must bear the burden of child-raising. Such a burden allows men to justify their harmful sexist views because to them, they don't hate women—they adore many of them, especially their girlfriends, wives, mothers, daughters (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

It was these observations and the combination of these attitudes that led Glick and Fiske to develop the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (1996), a 22-item scale designed to measure the strength of both hostilely and benevolently sexist attitudes in line with their theory. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory has been widely used by sexism researchers in the 25 years since its creation, and the items contained within it were influential in the design of this research project.

2.3.2 Old-Fashioned/Traditional and Modern Sexism

In 1995, and again in 1997, Janet Swim and her colleagues proposed a dichotomy of old-fashioned (or "traditional") and modern sexism similar to that used the previous decade to catalogue forms of racism (Swim et al., 1995; Swim & Cohen, 1997). The basis for the classification was a change from older and more familiar types of sexism—often quite overt—to more insidious and sex-based discrimination that denied women equality while simultaneously denying that they suffered from inequality at all by attributing any perceived suffering to women's own shortcomings (Swim et al., 1995; Swim & Cohen, 1997; Zehnter et al., 2021).

The framework draws from two contrasting scales of sex-based attitudes: the Attitudes Towards Women Scale (Spence & Helmreich, 1972) and the Modern Sexism Scale

(Swim et al., 1995). The Attitudes Towards Women Scale, Swim and Cohen believed, measured more overt and "harmful" sexism, whereas their own Modern Sexism Scale was better at measuring the more pernicious sexism they felt had become prevalent in contemporary society (1995). Interestingly, their distinction of overt or old-fashioned sexism as "harmful" implied a belief that modern and covert forms of sexism were *not* harmful– a belief that academic research has proven false (more on that later).

At heart, both old-fashioned and modern sexism reflected the belief that women were born to occupy certain social roles and that transgression of those roles was neither desirable nor appropriate (Zehnter et al., 2021). That these attitudes could be expressed both overtly and covertly did not mean they were not children of the same belief system. In fact, modern sexism has been shown to be strongly analogous with benevolent sexism (Swim et al., 2005). Just as benevolent sexism goes hand-in-hand with hostile sexism (here analogous to traditional sexism), it seems highly probable that modern sexism and traditional sexism are themselves two expressions of the same belief system.

2.3.3 Neosexism

In 1995, Francine Tougas and her co-authors defined a new form of sexism, one which they saw as having remarkable parallels to a new form of racism developing in North America around the same time. The new form of racism, known variously as symbolic or modern racism, pushed away the outward-facing hatred seen commonly in previous decades and centuries and focused instead on the feelings of those who experienced affirmative action and attempts at improving racial equity as a slight—something that reduced their rights and lowered their own place in society (Tougas et al., 1995). The new form of sexism they saw evolving in parallel shared those foundations of fear and discomfort, expressing itself not only in denial of discrimination towards women but also in a belief that men had become the

discriminated-against sex and were regularly disadvantaged by and in favour of women (Campbell et al., 1997). Indeed, Tougas et al. defined neosexism as a "manifestation of a conflict between egalitarian values and residual negative feelings towards women" (Tougas et al., 1995, p. 90). In essence, men who prided themselves on prioritising fairness and equality in society saw additional work being done to lift the equity of women and, having never experienced the systemic and ongoing marginalisation women did, saw such efforts as undermining their view of the fundamentally egalitarian nature of civil society. In essence, neosexist men see society as having been flipped on its head with men now being the subjects of pervasive and systemic sexism at the hands of a controlling feminist politburo.

In line with this thinking, a new scale was developed to measure these new and pernicious sexist attitudes: the Neosexism Scale (Campbell et al., 1997). The instrument focused primarily on attitudes towards gender equity policies and affirmative action—rather than attitudes towards women themselves or their roles in society—and lacked the clear focus on enacted behaviour that prior scales had included. In these ways, the Neosexism Scale differentiated itself from the sexism scales that came before it. Men who ranked highly on the Neosexism Scale were much less likely to support social and economic policies directed solely at women, while individuals with lower scores were far more likely to support gendered affirmative action (Campbell et al., 1997).

Despite its focus on policies instead of people, neosexism is correlated with hostile sexism, meaning it favours outright hatred for women, including distrust of them, assumptions they will use their sexuality to manipulate men, and belief in rape myths (defined on page 29) (Masser & Abrams, 1999). These findings are important because they begin to line up both traditional and modern ideas and expressions of sexism against the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. This process provides researchers of sexism with a valuable window across overlapping and competing epistemologies, showing not only where there are

similarities in theory and expression but also where there are gaps that individual theories or definitions may not account for, such as ambivalent sexism's failure to properly account for the neosexist idea that men are now the subjects of sexism at the hands of women.

2.3.4 Theories of Covert Sexism

Since the late-1980s, increasing efforts have been made to define and document more subtle forms of sexism. This has coincided with the rise of feminism in mainstream culture and saw a sharp upswing in and around 2007 and again in the mid-late-2010s with the rise of the #everydaysexism project and #metoo—both viral social media trends that sparked dramatic increases in discussions about sexism in media, politics and popular culture (Bates, 2016; Chiang, 2017).

In the intervening period, four major forms of less overt, more nuanced or insidious sexism were documented: microaggressions, microinequities, subtle sexism, and modern sexism (discussed above). Of these, only microinequities does not have a predominant focus on sexism, though the research into it contains significant elements of sex- and gender-based inequalities.

2.3.4.1 Microaggressions

The term microaggressions was first coined by Black psychiatrist Chester Pierce to describe the ongoing, small harms and dehumanisations Black people faced at the hands of white people in the United States (Pierce, 1970). Pierce's theory has transcended its original scope, being picked up by North American academics across a range of spectrums, including those studying sex-based discrimination (Basford et al., 2014; Capodilupo et al., 2010; Gartner, 2021; Gartner & Sterzing, 2016; Gartner et al., 2020).

Sexist microaggressions are generally seen as subconscious or small acts, comments or omissions that enforce gendered stereotypes or expectations on women or signal otherness or unwelcomeness (Basford et al., 2014). They straddle a line between subtle and overt sexism (Basford et al., 2014), varying in subtlety and impact in a way that is not always captured in other theories. It is precisely this aspect of microaggressions that provides a useful jumping-off point for investigating a wide array of insidious sexist behaviours and developing comparisons between frameworks for subtle forms of sexism and the theory of ambivalent sexism. The variation in overtness and covertness is explained well by Basford et al. (2014, p. 341), quoting from the work of Derald Wing Sue and Christina Capodilupo—early researchers into racial microaggressions and pioneers in the field:

> In Sue et al.'s (2007) model, microaggressions span from ambiguous microinvalidations to slightly more overt microinsults to explicit microassaults. Microinvalidations encompass "actions that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiences of people of color" (Sue et al., 2008, p. 331); microinsults involve "actions … that convey insensitivity, are rude, or directly demean a person's racial identity or heritage" (p. 331); and microassaults include expressions similar to old-fashioned racism that are "most often deliberate on the part of the microaggressor, whose intent is to hurt, oppress, or discriminate…" (pp. 330–331).

Research into sexist microaggressions led to the development of a taxonomy of forms (Capodilupo et al., 2010), which Gartner proposed an update to in 2021 to make it more relevant to young, urban, educated women. The new taxonomy had seven categories representing seven spheres of microaggressions against women: Invisibility, Intersectionality, Caretaker and Nurturer, Women-Dominated Occupations, Presumed Incompetence, Sexual

Objectification, and Environmental Invalidations. Of the seven categories Gartner proposed, four are closely associated with benevolent sexism as they tap into the notions of men as protectors and women as nurturers and benevolently sexist ideas of women's proper roles and places in society. Those four are Invisibility, Caretaker and Nurturer, Women-Dominated Occupations, and Environmental Invalidations. In contrast, and despite being micro-, not macro-, aggressions, two items from the taxonomy (Presumed Incompetence and Sexual Objectification) tap more heavily into traditional notions of men's heterosexual dependence on women and women's natural lack of competence compared to men, both hallmarks of hostile sexist belief (Gartner, 2021, pp. 8-14).

2.3.4.2 Microinequities

The first documented use of the term microinequities was by Mary Rowe of MIT in 1973 and was used to describe the innumerable small harms marginalised people experience at MIT every day (Rowe, 2008). Her work on the topic, which has carried on well into the 1990s and twenty-first century (Rowe, 1990; 2008), built on research on microaggressions begun earlier in the decade (Institute for Work and Employment Research, 2016). Rowe defined the term microinequities as "apparently small events, which are often ephemeral and hard to prove; events that are covert, often unintentional, frequently unrecognised by the perpetrator", adding that "microinequities occur wherever people are perceived to be 'different'" (1990, p. 153).

Rowe saw microinequities as distinct from but correlated with microaggressions (1990). To her, microinequities are less about outright acts of othering than microaggressions are. Instead, her and others' research on microinequities has highlighted the environmental and attitudinal factors that often lead to perverse outcomes for marginalised individuals and communities, such as a lack of appropriate parking for pregnant people near facilities on a

large business campus—an example straight from popular feminist literature (Rowe; 1990; 2008; Sandberg, 2013).

Despite how applicable her research is to sexism and gender-based discrimination, Rowe's work has stayed at a relatively high level, resisting being pulled down to focus on only sexism, only racism or only homophobia. Instead, she has maintained a view across a range of discriminations; this cross-sphere focus provides a valuable lens for understanding the intersections of sexism and other forms of prejudice.

2.3.4.3 Subtle Sexism

Although sometimes used as an umbrella term for a variety of forms of covert sexism, academically subtle sexism is in itself a distinct area of sexism research. The term enjoys a long history, being first used in the late-twentieth-century by Sadker et al. (1989) and Nijole Benokraitis (1997). Although the age and breadth of scholarship in this space lends itself to more variation in definition than may be seen in more recent theories, a generally accepted definition centres around subtle sexism being accepted as 'normal', good-natured or 'traditional' (Benokraitis, 1997). Do not let the use of the word 'traditional' fool you, though; subtle sexism leans heavily into the benevolent side of the theory of ambivalent sexism, drawing its ideas from beliefs that there are certain roles women should play, certain innate capabilities they have (and lack) and that it is men's roles to protect and provide for them—acting strongly to enforce gendered hegemonic values (Johnson, 2007; Rhode, 2007; Swim et al., 1995; Swim et al., 2004). In recent years, as research into sexism has broadened and become more nuanced, it has become necessary to consider that sexism looks and feels different to different people. To that end, a new field of research has evolved looking into perceptions of subtle sexism, something Tran et al. termed "perceived subtle gender bias" (2019). Although closely tied in a practical sense to subtle sexism, subtle gender bias also

relates strongly to microaggressions theory. Unlike gendered microaggressions, however, subtle gender bias much more closely parallels benevolent sexism (Tran et al., 2019).

2.3.5 Combined Theories of Sexism

Some theories of sexism do not distinctly separate expressions of sexist thought or sexist behaviour into overt and covert catalogues. Although these sexisms cannot be compared one-to-one against the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, they nevertheless provide a relevant and rounded out view of scholarly work in this area.

2.3.5.1 Everyday Sexism

Possibly one of the most well-known theories of sexism outside the academic world is everyday sexism. Although the term reached its zenith in 2012 with Laura Bates' #everydaysexism project, it was first coined in 1997 by Ronai, Zsembik and Feagin. Swim et al. (2001) discussing Ronai and other scholars' work, describe everyday sexism as displays of sex-based prejudice or discrimination that are part of the construct of people's behaviours and that are embedded in their everyday lives.

In 2012, Laura Bates popularised the term through a worldwide campaign to promote the sorts of subtle, commonplace sexisms women were so used to experiencing. The project's hashtag, #everydaysexism, launched the term into digitally-enabled societys' collective lexicons and imparted a new consciousness to women who had never considered the numerous daily sex-based micro-harms they experienced, and which had become embedded in their lives, to be sexism (Bates, 2016; Nichols, 2018). Bates describes everyday sexism as "little pinpricks … so niggling and normalising that to protest each one [feels] petty … [yet] commonplace and deep-rooted, [visible] everywhere you look" (2016, pp. 1-3). It is not clear whether Bates knew of earlier scholars' work when she started the project.

One of the biggest risks of everyday sexism is the ease with which it is passed off as jokes, banter or teasing and denied to be sexist (Bates, 2016; Calder-Dawe, 2015; Nichols, 2018). This minimisation and justification is a key feature of everyday sexism: If it is only a joke or just a bit of fun, or if women have achieved equality, then there is no issue and women have nothing to complain about (Calder-Dawe, 2015). Scholars of everyday sexism argue that these narratives are, in fact, more prevalent than the equality they claim to centre on: "through repetition, narratives of women's economic, social and sexual liberation [have] come to stand in for the real thing, sheltering sexism while appearing to expunge it" (Calder-Dawe, 2015, p. 2).

Everyday sexism mixes both subtle and traditional elements, as demonstrated by the myriad examples Bates (2016) has collected throughout her project. Catcalling, for example, is still widely experienced, undeniably overt, and an expression of men's traditional heterosexual dependence on and possession of women—clear hallmarks of hostile sexism. On the other hand, patronising name calling, such as "love" or "sweetheart", is benevolent sexism and taps into the idea of complementary gender differentiation and heterosexual intimacy.

2.3.5.2 Mischievous Masculinities

Finally, there is the concept of mischievous masculinities, an extension of everyday sexism that focuses on the masculine traditions of banter and locker-room talk through the lens of 'laddism' (Nichols, 2018). Laddism describes attitudes and behaviour that "often centre upon the idea of men having fun and behaving in ways deemed to align with historical and hegemonic notions of masculinity. These include displaying masculine characteristics such as strength, aggression, physicality, wit and heterosexuality"—usually through the medium of insults and teasing and often accompanied by raucous laughter (Nichols, 2018, p. 75).

One of the most interesting facets of research in this area, and which takes it far beyond initial conceptions of everyday sexism, is how it ties sexism into contemporary constructions of masculine identity. One such example of this behaviour is found in the teasing of a rugby player by a teammate for having long hair, with the teammate asking the player if he would like to borrow his wife's hairdryer to tidy his hair up post-match (Nichols, 2018). By framing the jab as a joke, the teammate gets away with what is actually quite a harmful and sexist comment, implying that to have long hair is feminine and therefore inappropriate for a man. It should be noted here that although the teasing was directed at a man, it still reinforces sexist notions of women as the other and any man who engages in them worthy of shame and scorn. These are direct expressions of attitudes about women, regardless of the recipient.

Nichols (2018) explains well how these behaviours and attitudes layer together with traditional notions of masculinity to reinforce dominant cultural milieux and remove accountability for sexism perpetrated as part of mischievous masculinities, in essence showing how laddism and sexism have traditionally been accepted as immutable elements of male adolescence:

> Theorising on men has suggested that there is an inevitability regarding the behaviour of boys, building on academic writing which notes that from a young age men learn 'masculine' behaviours associated with stereotypical masculine identities such as aggression, competition, domination and control … This implies that men have limited agency within the construction of their masculine identities, with previous work suggesting that men construct notions of what constitutes a lad through learning what a lad is not and thereby creating binaries and hierarchies in understandings of gender in society … (pp. 74)

What is clear here is that this banter acts as a regulatory tool: It polices masculinities and enforces traditional concepts of them on young men by their peers (Nichols, 2018). Interestingly, while still perpetuating everyday sexism and leaning into sexist stereotypes, banter and lad culture also saw men construct, deconstruct and challenge sexist ideas about and stereotypes of women. Nichols explains this further (2018):

> Though sexist ideas still underpin the rugby culture at the club, some of the men had implemented strategies, drawing on laddish behaviours, to challenge and critique them. Significantly, the men implemented banter, usually utilized to convey sexist ideas, to be critical of sexist comments or to disarm sexist behaviours … Resonating with the wider literature, there was much evidence to show how women can be oppressed through linguistic insults (see e.g. Phipps & Young, 2013). However, the research extends this discussion by demonstrating how banter can also be implemented as a tool to challenge sexist ideas, with men utilising humour to reverse or question those insults that they thought problematic.
> (pp. 81-82)

Furthermore, research into mischievous masculinities vis-à-vis sexism suggests that younger men who engage in it do not necessarily parse their behaviour as problematic in the context of respect for women or women's everyday safety (Nichols, 2018). As lads age, however, they became more aware of the unacceptability of their behaviour on a wider social scale, with older participants in Nichols' research demonstrating some understanding of the problematic nature of some of their joking, even if this did not translate into reticence to engage in it (2018). Ultimately, though, regardless of their level of self-awareness, the playful and teasing nature of laddish behaviour serves to hide the real and pernicious impacts

mischievous masculinities can have on women, both individually and across society more broadly (Nichols, 2018).

2.4 Impacts of Sexism

It is clear that sexism impacts significantly on women, girls, and western society at large. What is less well-known outside academic circles is the way different sexisms lead to different impacts, and that the impacts of subtle/benevolent sexism can be as deep and damaging as that of more traditional, hostile sexisms.

2.4.1 Traditional or Hostile Sexism

The impacts of traditional sexism are, in many cases, analogous to the impacts of hostile sexism as traditional sexism is, itself, inherently hostile in most contexts (Riggs, 2019). Traditional or hostile sexism has been linked to problems for women across a range of social domains, including power dynamics, jealousy, gender-role conflict, abuse, infidelity and problematic use of alcohol and/or drugs (Cross & Overall, 2019). Traditional sexism has also been found to lead to an increase in cyberbullying of men towards women (Martinez-Pecino & Durán, 2019); the researchers postulated that cyberbullying in this context may stand in as a proxy for in-person violence in the modern era, clearly linking this abusive behaviour to traditional expressions of men's anger towards and control over women. Along more well-trodden lines, traditional/hostile sexism has also been linked to increases in the rape proclivity of men towards all female targets when traditional sexism is present—regardless of whether the women in question adheres to traditional gender stereotypes; this behaviour directly increases danger for women as a result (Masser et al., 2006).

In workplaces, ambient traditional sexism (that is, an atmosphere of traditional gender beliefs and hostile sexism) has been found to lead to an increase in office conflict, decrease in

cohesion, decrease in financial performance, decrease in employee wellbeing and increase in organisational withdrawal for office staff (Bradley-Geist et al., 2015). In women specifically, it also leads to decreases in performance self-esteem and career aspirations (Bradley-Geist et al., 2015). Staying with the sphere of work, traditional sexism has also been found to lead to hiring discrimination (Rudman, 1998, as cited in Connor et al., 2017), and specifically to increases in negative evaluations of women's curriculum vitae (CVs) compared to the same CV with a male name on it; it has also been found to lead to a decrease in recommendations that someone be hired as a manager when they are a woman when compared to a man with matching skills and experience (Masser & Abrams, 2004). When women are hired, the presence of traditional/hostile sexism has been shown to lead to reduced efficacy in salary negotiations—that is, men's sexism in salary negotiations leads to women achieving less success in those salary negotiations and earning lower salaries as a result (Bowles et al., 2007, as cited in Connor et al., 2017).

In the field of interpersonal relationships, traditional/hostile sexism has been found to lead to increases in intimate partner violence and general sexual violence perpetrated by men against women (Moor and Stuart, 2005, as cited in Schwartz et al., 2016) as well as increased rates of men apportioning blame to women for suffering or causing intimate partner violence (Glick et al., 2002, as cited in Connor et al., 2017), increases in men committing verbal aggression, abuse and rape against women including an increase in verbal aggression towards all intimate partners of men (Schwartz et al., 2016; Forbes et al., 2004, a cited in Connor et al., 2017) and increases in acceptance and support for rape myths (Longsway and Fitzgerald, 1994, as cited in Connor et al., 2017).

Rape myths are pervasive yet false general beliefs pertaining to rape and rape victims (Burt & Albin, 1981). They include, among others, beliefs that women who are drunk or dressed in outfits with large amounts of skin exposure are asking for sex, that people in a

romantic relationship cannot rape each other, that women generally lie about being raped, and that men cannot control their sexual urges and are therefore not to blame for their actions (Victims Information, 2021; Leverick, 2020; Torrey, 1990). Acceptance and support for rape myths act as systemic justifiers for rape and rapists, can severely hamper criminal prosecution for sexual harassment and rape, and lead to women being less likely to report or seek prosecution for unwanted sexual contact (Leverick, 2020; McDonald, 2020; Whiting et al., 2021).

Other documented impacts of traditional/hostile sexism include increases in antagonism towards women (Hammond and Overall, 2013, as cited in Connor et al., 2017) and sexual harassment of women by men (Connor et al., 2017), increasing frequency and normalisation of men dehumanising women through sexual objectification, including a tendency for men to perceive sexualised women more as tools than people (Cikara et al., 2001; Cikara et al., 2010, as cited in Glick & Fiske, 2011; Viki and Abrams, 2008, as cited in Connor et al., 2017), and a general increase in social disapproval of women by men (Heilman et al., 2004, as cited in Connor et al., 2017). In addition to these many and varied impacts, exposure to and acceptance of traditional/hostile sexism in male youths has been found to lead to the perpetration of hostile sexism as a form of sexual violence against young women and act as a "potential 'gateway mechanism' to legally actionable [sexual] offenses" (Gartner & Sterzing, 2016).

At a societal level, men's traditional/hostile sexism has been directly linked with reduced support for female leaders and politicians (Connor et al., 2017) and, upsettingly, overall increases in a society's prevalence of childhood death and disease, homicide, slavery, assault, rape and abuse, "gendercide" (also known as female infanticide) and "femineglect", which is defined as the "deliberate infliction of lower standards of care of female neonates,

infants and children, simply because of their gender" (Kristof & WuDunn, 2009, p. 3; Grech, 2015, p. 852).

In terms of health and wellbeing, women subjected to traditional/hostile sexism have been found to suffer increased levels of physical and mental health challenges (National Academy of Sciences, 2017, as cited in Gartner et al., 2020; Landry & Mercurio, 2009), increased cardiovascular reactivity (Salomon et al., 2015), and increases in symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Berg, 2006), which is perhaps unsurprising given the sometimes-horrific impacts women have been found to experience as a result of men's traditional/hostile sexism discussed above.

These examples are significant, but they remain merely examples. The entire list of impacts traditional/hostile sexism has on women, the economy, and society across all spheres of life would be too long for inclusion within the confines of this paper. Suffice it to say, the impacts are almost innumerable.

2.4.2 Subtle or Benevolent Sexism

The impacts of subtle sexism have been almost as well documented as those of traditional sexism, although research in this area is still less developed than that into more traditional forms of sexism (Gartner et al., 2020). Reviewing the research on both subtle and traditional sexism, it is clear that they and their impacts feed into and drive each other and that the impacts of subtle sexism are analogous to those of benevolent sexism, much as those of traditional sexism have been established to be analogous to those of hostile sexism (Riggs, 2019). The impacts of subtle/benevolent sexism span a wide range of spheres, including health (physical, mental and emotional), cognitive processing, economic and social equity, and women's safety.

In the field of health, subtle/benevolent sexism has been found to have a "cumulative, deleterious effect on health outcomes" (Nadal, 2010, as cited in Gartner et al., 2020, p. 283). It increases trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (Berg, 2006), decreases cardiovascular recovery (Salomon et al., 2015), decreases concentration (Pearson et al., 2000, as cited in Jones et al., 2014), increases psychological distress (Cortina et al., 2001, as cited in Jones et al., 2014), increases body surveillance, body shame, body-policing and self-objectification (Connor et al., 2017; Shepherd et al., 2011), and increases self-construal as incompetent and autobiographical memories of displaying incompetence (Dumont et al., 2010). It also impacts on the cognition of women and girls, decreasing productivity and engagement (Pollack, 2017, as cited in Dardenne et al., 2007; Murugas, 2019), decreasing working memory (Dardenne et al., 2007), and decreasing children's self-efficacy, persistence and competency in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects at school (Brown & Stone, 2016).

Economically, subtle/benevolent sexism has been linked to a range of workplace impacts that can either directly or indirectly lead to reduced income and economic success, including decreasing self-efficacy and workplace performance (Jones et al., 2014), decreasing job satisfaction (Cortina et al., 2001, as cited in Jones et al., 2014), reduced provision to women of opportunities for development and advancement at work (Connor et al., 2017), decreases in rates and values of high-value performance rewards given to women, such as promotions or remuneration (Connor et al., 2017), decreases in recognition of others' successes (Connor et al., 2017), perpetuation of unequal opportunity (Rowe, 1990), and leads women to experience increased rates of patronisation at work (Connor et al., 2017).

In terms of social impacts, the presence of subtle/benevolent sexism has been found to lead to decreased resistance to gender inequality (Connor et al., 2017), increased willingness to endorse hostile sexism over time (Sibley et al., 2007, as cited in Connor et al., 2017), increased self-protective endorsement for benevolent sexism (Glick et al., 2000 and 2004, as

cited in Connor et al., 2017), increased systems-justifying support for benevolent sexism (Connor et al., 2017), increased victim blaming in cases of acquaintance rape (Yamawaki, 2007, as cited in Connor et al., 2017), and increased vulnerability to intimate partner violence (Duran et al., 2011 and 2014, as cited in Connor et al., 2017). In children, the ongoing presence of subtle/benevolent sexism causes increased rates of endorsement of sexist stereotypes (Brown & Stone, 2016). Most concerningly, all of these can directly lead to increased prevalence of traditional/hostile sexism which, as has been established, has significant implications for women's day-to-day safety. On the whole, these two valences of sexism—traditional/hostile and subtle/benevolent—work together to compound, complement and justify each other and to reinforce and hegemonise women's own inequality (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

As with traditional/hostile sexism's effects, it is simply not possible to pull together a complete list of all the impacts of subtle/benevolent sexism. Nevertheless, this sample should leave no reader in doubt about how pernicious and serious benevolent sexism is.

2.5 Sexism in a New Zealand Context

In 2019, less than half of people in New Zealand believed gender equality had been reached and 56% believed women were disadvantaged by gender inequality (National Council of Women, 2019). Anecdotally, it is not uncommon to hear women talking amongst themselves or on social media about the sexism they have experienced. Both during and in the wake of the #metoo movement, New Zealand women spent (and continue to spend) significant time on social media sharing their experiences with sexual harassment and abuse from men (Chiang, 2017; *"Me Too": New Zealanders' Stories of Sexual Abuse*, 2017-2020; *Twitter,* 2017-2021; 2018-2021). In 2018, respected veteran Kiwi journalist Alison Mau dedicated a team within New Zealand's largest online news platform, Stuff, to investigating sexual

harassment in New Zealand (Hufferdine, 2018) and in 2021 the project is still running (*Stuff | #metoonz*, 2021). It is clear from the evidence gathered in the project, plus women's online discussions, that women in New Zealand are broadly aware that they are not free of the day-to-day impacts of sexism perpetrated against and about them largely by men. What is not clear is whether they understand the different and sometimes insidious ways sexism can present itself and how those different forms of sexism can impact them.

2.6 Research Plan

It was determined that the best way to investigate the communicative impacts of ambivalent sexism was through a simulated recruitment scenario, following a similar broad structure to that laid out by Dardenne et al. (2007). The reasons for this were threefold. First, Dardenne et al.'s broad process, providing women with a simulated recruitment scenario to test specific impacts of ambivalent sexism in a controlled atmosphere, charted a clear and reliable path for similar future research. Second, a simulated recruitment scenario could easily be altered to focus on the communicative impacts of benevolent sexism on potential hirees rather than the cognitive impacts Dardenne et al. investigated. Third, a recruitment scenario would simulate a common scene in which many of the harms documented from both hostile and benevolent sexism have been experienced, including impacts on job satisfaction, self-efficacy, performance, self-esteem, employee wellbeing, and withdrawal from office life, and increased rates of women being patronised in workplaces (Bradley-Geist et al., 2015; Connor et al., 2017; Cortina et al., 2001, as cited in Jones et al., 2014).

2.6.1 Variables for Investigation

Based on the literature reviewed, particularly regarding ambivalent sexism, three dependent variables and one moderating variable were identified for this research. The three dependent

variables chosen were anticipated contact quality, reluctant accommodation, and trust. The moderating variable chosen was strength of gender identity.

An independent variable of sexism type was chosen and three groups were assigned: a control group, a group who would be exposed to hostile sexism, and a group who would be exposed to benevolent sexism. Definitions of benevolent and hostile sexism followed those used by Glick and Fiske (1996).

2.6.1.1 Anticipated Contact Quality

The dependent variable of anticipated contact quality was chosen to investigate how experience of men's sexism could affect a woman's perception of how pleasant, cooperative, superficial, and insincere they expected encounters with the man would be. This is relevant to the communicative impacts of sexism in a recruitment scenario as we know improving contact quality reduces turnover intentions (Henry et al., 2015). Reduced anticipated contact quality can lead to increased avoidance of individuals exhibiting the unwanted behaviour and cause increased anxiety in those who are exposed to it (MacInnis & Hodson, 2012). As a result, it could be theorised that if exposure to sexism reduced anticipated contact quality, women recruited to roles in those situations could reasonably be expected to avoid the recruiting staff more frequently and intend to spend less time working for the hiring company post-recruitment. This would pose problems for companies whose hiring managers exhibited sexist attitudes or behaviours as it would decrease the already-reduced likelihood of women being hired to the company (Masser & Abrams, 2004), which could easily perpetuate the multiplicity of economic harms women already suffer from sexism, as discussed above. When a woman was hired, it could serve to reduce the likelihood of her staying for a length of time that would allow the company to get real value from her.

It was expected that an increase in sexism would see a decrease in anticipated contact quality, consistent with literature around women's attitudes towards experiencing sexism (Bates, 2016).

2.6.1.2 Reluctant Accommodation

Next, reluctant accommodation was chosen to investigate how a woman exposed to a man's sexism may anticipate reluctantly moderating her speech or behaviour in his presence. The conceptualisation of accommodation here follows those used by Harwood (2000) and focuses on the ways in which conversation participants attune themselves and their communication to their perceptions of the attitudes and expectations of their conversational partners, especially where they do so reluctantly to avoid discomfort or confrontation.

Reluctant accommodation centres around the idea that one or more interlocutors may amend their speech or non-verbal communication to show respect or deference to their conversational partner (Soliz & Giles, 2014). This is not, however, a positive thing. In severe cases, reluctant accommodation can lead to avoidant communication, which is where "interlocutors, moved unconsciously by negative stereotypes or, more overtly, by prior unfortunate experiences, wish to end the conversation as quickly as feasible and avoid future such interactions by withholding or constraining communication" (Soliz & Giles, 2014, p. 110). In cases of moderate-to-high levels of reluctant accommodation, a female interlocutor who is currently or has previously been confronted with sexism by her communicative partner is likely to avoid being honest or speaking her mind, avoid certain topics of discussion, or avoid communicating altogether unless strictly necessary (Harwood, 2000). This is not a solid base for an employment relationship and is something most modern companies would seek to avoid in employer-employee relationships. In addition, the ongoing presence of reluctant accommodation in an individual is likely to be a marker of discomfort

in their environment, perhaps due to ongoing sexism, which can lead to psychological distress and symptoms of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (Berg, 2006; Jones et al., 2014).

It was expected that increases in sexism would lead to increases in reluctant accommodation, but possibly less so for those exposed to benevolent sexism.

2.6.1.3 Trust

Finally, trust was chosen to understand the psychological impacts men's sexist communication has on women's psychological comfort with those men and their belief that they can be relied on to behave with benevolence and integrity. This is in line with the definition of trust used by Larzelere and Huston (1980).

This is highly relevant for a recruitment scenario, as "trust is a central factor in enhancing an organization's long-term success and survival" (Mishra, 1996, as cited in Sousa-Lima et al., 2013, p. 419). An employment relationship with low or no trust cannot be expected to function efficiently or allow an employee to meaningfully contribute to and feel valued by their employer (Sousa-Lima et al., 2013). As with poor anticipated contact quality and the presence of reluctant accommodation, this could easily lead to unanticipated costs for a company while simultaneously leading to the multiple harms sexism causes for the women experiencing it, many of which were covered earlier in this research.

It was expected that trust would decrease for all sexism conditions, but more so for hostile sexism.

2.6.1.4 Group Identification

For the purposes of this research, group identification has been used as a proxy for strength of gender identity. This decision was made based on the strength of existing research into

conceptions of sex-based identity, including feminist research documenting how strongly women group together as women when confronted with sexism (Bates, 2016) as well as a long history of biological anthropological research into gender as a form of group identity and research into social identity theory (Maccoby, 1988, as cited in Glick & Fiske, 1996; Tajfel, 1981, as cited in Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Group identification is an important factor in how people parse their experiences of the world. Group identification is often considered to be multidimensional and can be defined as "the importance of the group in the self-concept" (McCoy & Major, 2003, p. 1005). Further, McCoy and Major note "there is substantial evidence that individual differences in group identification are an important predictor" of behaviour and feeling across a range of situations and, thus, of how group-based discrimination can be interpreted (McCoy & Major, 2003, p. 1007). Following these definitions, group identification can broadly be considered across three key spheres of life: self-conception, emotion, and interpersonal behaviour (McCoy & Major, 2003).

Group identification has been found to mediate perceptions of discrimination and self-esteem/self-conception (Jetten et al., 2001). Here "mediate" is used in the technical sense, meaning perceived discrimination did not have a direct effect on the variables measured by Jetten et al; rather, where group identification was a relevant factor, it acted to cause perceived discrimination to have an indirect effect on the variables measured.

In their 2003 work on group identification, McCoy and Major found that "prejudice in the in-group is a threat against the self" (p. 1005). This threat can lead to significant psychological and self-perceptive impacts as well as novel coping mechanisms. In support of this, McCoy and Major note that "perceiving oneself as a victim of discrimination is harmful to the self-esteem of the stigmatized because this perception requires recognizing that an

important aspect of the self—one's social identity—is devalued by powerful members of society" (Schmitt and Branscombe, as cited in McCoy and Major, 2002, p. 1006).

Research has shown that group identification moderates emotional responses to perceived prejudice and specifically that an increase in perception of prejudice predicts a decrease in self-esteem when group identification is higher (McCoy & Major, 2003). Specifically relating to identification with a sex- or gender in-group, women who exhibit strong group identification who are rejected from an academic or career opportunity due to the sexism of the rejector exhibit both more outward anger and more inward self-blame than those rejected for non-sexist reasons (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). For individuals who identify with consistently marginalised groups, it seems reasonable to assume that they would develop coping mechanisms to minimise these impacts on themselves.

In contrast, individuals low in group identification have been found to exhibit decreases in concern with intergroup treatment (Petta & Walker, 1992), decreases in their likelihood to perceive group-based injustice (McCoy & Major, 2003), decreases in their likelihood to attribute negative outcomes to discrimination in the face of ambiguous cues (McCoy & Major, 2003), and increases in both the likelihood of distancing themselves from the group and protecting their sense of self when the group is threatened (Ellemers et al., 2002, as cited in McCoy & Major, 2003). It could perhaps be expected, then, that someone's emotional or physical response to an external stimulus could be dependent on social evaluations of any relevant groups they are members of (McCoy & Major, 2003, p. 1007). This idea is explored further in the hypotheses of this research.

It was expected that strength of gender identity (group identification) would act as a moderating variable in all situations except in the control group.

3. RESEARCH

3.1 Purpose

This research sought to achieve three things, the first of which was to validate the theory of ambivalent sexism in a New Zealand context. Ambivalent sexism has been well-explored internationally in the 25 years since it was originally posited, but exploration of it in a New Zealand context is scarce. The second aim of this research was to apply a communications lens to what has largely been explored within a frame of cognitive psychology. The third, and possibly the most interesting, was to explore whether the strength of a woman's sense of her own gender influenced the way sexist communication impacted her.

3.2 Hypotheses

Reflecting the three aims of this research, three hypotheses were posited:

1. that, relative to the control condition, encountering benevolent or hostile sexism through vignettes will elicit more negative assessments of contact quality, reluctant accommodation and trust
2. that hostile sexism will have a greater negative impact on participants than benevolent sexism
3. that gender identity will moderate the impacts of sexism such that more gender identified women would be more adversely affected by their encounters with sexism.

3.3 Method

To examine these three hypotheses, an experiment was set up modelled loosely on the work of Dardenne et al. (2007). As with Dardenne et al., a simulated recruitment scenario was used to provide a vehicle for exposing participants to one of three conditions: no sexism (the

control group), hostile sexism, and benevolent sexism. Unlike Dardenne et al., all research was conducted electronically due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3.1 Procedures

Participants were given minimal information about the content of the research, being told only that the survey looked at women's experiences with a range of recruitment materials; no mention was made of sexism during recruitment or in the initial stages of the survey. This deception was necessary to ensure participants were not primed to look for sexism in the videos. A full explanation of the purpose of the study and the theory of ambivalent sexism was provided at the end of the video, as well as specific information about the type of sexism experienced for those in the hostile and benevolent sexism groups. Copies of this information are available in Appendix 3.

The explanation provided was designed to help participants gain an understanding of ambivalent sexism, allow them to begin recognising it in their everyday lives, and allow them to begin overcoming some of the documented negative impacts that exposure to sexism can cause (as discussed on pages 26-31). This decision was made based on work by Johns et al. (2005) that found that education around a harmful phenomenon reduces and can even prevent the harm that phenomenon causes. Due to the strength of Johns et al.'s research, the education provided at the end of the survey was deemed sufficient to mitigate any impacts participants experienced in the process of the research. Further to this, participants were also provided with the opportunity to receive a copy of the finished research by providing their email address at the conclusion of the survey. It was explained clearly that doing so could compromise their anonymity and that they should only proceed if they consented to this. 19 participants chose to provide their emails; information about how this data was treated during cleaning and coding is provided on page 46.

The Qualtrics platform was chosen to build and host the research survey and to act as a platform for videos that laid out the pretext of the simulation and provided the three experimental conditions. The survey was open for a period of 15 days in early-mid-December 2020. During that time, it received 136 responses.

3.3.2 Participants

136 participants were recruited through social media (primarily Twitter and Facebook) and through both formal and informal networks in business, educational and social spheres. Deliberate efforts were made to invite people from a range of possible education levels, religious affiliations, socio-economic and age groups[2], ethnicities, and backgrounds. It is not always possible to know whether someone sees themselves as a woman unless they tell you so, so deliberate effort was made to extend open invitations within Rainbow-safe spaces on the expectation that the survey may be relevant to both trans women and cis women, as well as some people who are genderfluid, non-binary, or masculine-presenting.

Only three conditions were set regarding eligibility for the study: participants must have been 18 or older and in New Zealand at the time of the study, and they must be women. No criteria were set regarding the term "woman"; each participant was left to define themselves whether they were a woman—specifically being told "the term 'woman' for this research is broad and self-defined"—and no justification was sought around participants' decisions.

[2] Age was collected by asking participants to indicate which of a set of pre-set brackets their age fell within, rather than through open text. Means and standard deviations cannot, therefore, be provided for the variable age, but roughly 90% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 54.

Once participants had satisfied the eligibility criteria, they were directed to answer a set of questions about how they think and feel about being a woman. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of three videos by Qualtrics: video one (the control, which had no sexism), video two (the control, plus additional footage containing hostile sexism), or video three (the control, plus additional footage containing benevolent sexism). The assignation process was set to ensure respondents were allocated to all three groups evenly so that the sample sizes for each condition at the end of the survey period were relatively consistent. Scripts for the videos were written by the researcher and designed specifically to only contain the appropriate type and quantity of sexism for the assigned condition. Scripts for all three videos can be found in Appendix 1. Videos were recorded by a 60-year-old, pākehā, male volunteer styled in business attire. Qualtrics was set up to prevent participants from skipping past the videos to provide confidence to the researcher that each participant had been sufficiently exposed to their assigned condition.

A heuristic on overall strength of group identity was needed for the purposes of this research, rather than three separate measures, so the total scores for each of the three subscales were used to create a mean strength of gender identity score for each participant. This is consistent with Obst and White's (2005) treatment of the scale when used as a heuristic to examine overall group identification.

A range of demographic information was requested of participants. A breakdown of the results is provided in the Results section.

3.3.3 Measures

Prior to encountering the videos, participants were asked a series of questions to ascertain the strength of their identity as women (gender identity/group identification). The questions were based on Cameron's (2004) three-factor model of social identity, which assesses strength of

group membership in the areas of cognitive centrality, in-group affect, and in-group ties. All questions were answered using a five-point Likert scale with options ranging from strongly disagree (one) to strongly agree (five). All answers were mean-centred prior to data processing to allow for output comparisons.

After the video had finished playing, participants were directed to a series of questions designed to assess the impact of the videos on them.

3.3.3.1 Anticipated Contact Quality

First, participants were asked to rate how pleasant, cooperative, superficial, and insincere they thought interactions with the recruiter would be. Each item had to be rated on a scale ranging from zero (not at all) to 100 (very much). This measurement replicates the anticipated contact quality scale used by MacInnis and Hodson (2012).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Mean Contact Quality Scale

Mean	Standard Deviation	N	α
35.2750	22.52171	90	0.880

3.3.3.2 Reluctant Accommodation

The second round of questions was designed to assess reluctant accommodation, or how much they feel they would have to amend their behaviour around the recruiter. Participants were asked to respond to seven statements using a five-point Likert scale, with one being ‘strongly disagree’ and five being ‘strongly agree’. This scale replicates those used by Harwood (2000) and Williams et al (1997).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Mean Reluctant Accommodation Scale

Mean	Standard Deviation	N	α
3.6159	1.01211	90	0.910

3.3.3.3 Trust

The third set of assessment questions looked at the impact of the video on participants' trust in the recruiter. Eight statements from Larzelere and Huston's (1980) dyadic trust scale were presented to participants, with answers provided using a five-point Likert scale (response options were the same as for both the strength of group identity and reluctant accommodation Likert scales). All questions are appended in Appendix 2.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Mean Trust Scale

Mean	Standard Deviation	N	α
2.3444	.79551	90	0.884

3.3.3.4 Demographics

For the final section of the survey, participants were asked to provide a range of demographic information, before being directed to a page that explained the purpose of the research they had just participated in and the theory of ambivalent sexism. Lastly, participants were invited to provide their email addresses if they were interested in receiving a copy of the finished research, and were warned that doing so would compromise the anonymity of their responses.

A breakdown of the demographic information collected is available below in Tables 4-8. Ethnicity has been reported below using the *Ethnicity New Zealand Standard Classification 2005 v2.1.0 (Stats NZ, 2005)* to level one of the classification.

Table 4

Number of Participants by Age Range

Age Bracket	Number of Participants
18-24	3
25-34	30
35-44	31
45-54	20
55-64	5
65-74	1
75+	0
Total	90

Table 5

Number of Participants by Religion

Religion	Number of participants
Buddhism	0
Christianity	9
Hinduism	1
Islam	0
Judaism	0
Paganism	0
Other	1

Not religious	78
No response	1
Total	90

Table 6

Number of Participants by Ethnic Group

Ethnic group	Number of participants
Asian	3
European	68
Māori	6
Pacific Peoples	2
Other Ethnicity	11
Total	90

Table 7

Number of Participants Broken Down by Whether They Live in a Rural Area or Small Town

Do you live in a rural area or a small town?	Number of participants
Yes	12
No	78
Total	90

Table 8

Number of Participants by Highest Educational Achievement

Highest educational achievement	Number of participants
School certificate, NCEA level 1 or overseas equivalent	2
Sixth form certificate, NCEA level 2 or overseas equivalent	3
University entrance/Bursary, NCEA level 3 or overseas equivalent	7
Undergraduate university qualification, industry training or equivalent	30
Post-graduate Diploma or Hons	25
Masters	15
PhD	8
Total	90

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 Data Cleaning

As a first step, the email addresses supplied by respondents who wanted to receive a copy of the thesis were separated from their responses in the raw data and sorted alphabetically before any analysis began. This action was taken to preserve their confidentiality and ensure that neither the researcher nor the supervisor know which email address was assigned to which ResponseID[3]. All ineligible and incomplete responses were then removed from the sample. An incomplete response was defined as one where answers had not been provided for all questions in the group identification, anticipated contact quality, reluctant accommodation, and trust sections. Incomplete responses fell exclusively into two categories:

[3] Qualtrics assigns each survey respondent a unique, seventeen-character, alphanumeric identification code, tagged in the output as ResponseID. The assignation of a unique ID enables researchers to keep track of data points when running analyses and do spot checks to ensure responses remain assigned to the correct respondent while maintaining respondents' anonymity.

those who did not meet the eligibility criteria and thus were directed to the end of the survey, and those who stopped the survey part way in and did not return to complete it. A response was not considered incomplete if some demographic data had not been provided.

At the end of this cleaning work, there were 90 surveys remaining that met all criteria for inclusion.

3.4.2 Analysis Plan

To test all three hypotheses, multicategorical regression analysis was conducted in SPSS using Haye's (2012) PROCESS macro, Model 1. Three versions of Model 1 were run, with the sexism condition as the independent variable (X), Mean Total Gender Identity as the moderator (W), and the three dependant variables being Mean Anticipated Contact Quality, Mean Reluctant Accommodation, and Mean Trust (Y).

To ensure that b values and their tests of significance would be interpretable and meaningful when either X or W was at the sample mean, all variables were mean-centred.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Anticipated Contact Quality

In the model where anticipated contact quality was specified as the dependent variable, the coefficient representing the contrast between the control and hostile sexism conditions was significant (b = -29.105, $p < .001$), indicating that relative to individuals in the control condition, those in the hostile sexism condition reported lower levels of anticipated contact quality (a mean difference of 29.105 units) in the recruiter. The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was non-significant (b = -13.018, $p = .108$), signalling that there was no moderation.

The coefficient representing the contrast between the control and benevolent sexism conditions was also significant (b = -20.223, $p < .001$), indicating that relative to individuals in the control condition, those in the benevolent sexism condition reported lower levels of anticipated contact quality (a mean difference of 20.223 units) in the recruiter. The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was non-significant (b = -14.083, $p = .101$), signalling that there was no moderation.

To test whether there was a difference in the benevolent sexism and hostile sexism conditions on anticipated contact quality, the data were recoded so that the benevolent sexism group would be treated as the reference group instead of the control group. The coefficient representing the contrast between the benevolent sexism and hostile sexism conditions was non-significant (b = -8.881, p = .078), signalling that although people in the hostile sexism condition anticipated poorer quality interactions than those in the benevolent sexism condition, this difference was not statistically significant. The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was also non-significant (b = 1.066, $p = .898$), signalling that there was no moderation.

4.2 Reluctant Accommodation

In the model where reluctant accommodation was specified as the dependent variable, the coefficient representing the contrast between the control and hostile sexism conditions was significant (b = .767, $p = .003$), indicating that relative to individuals in the control condition, those in the hostile sexism condition reported higher levels of reluctant accommodation (a mean difference of .767 units) in the recruiter. The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was non-significant (b = .557, $p = .180$), signalling that there was no moderation.

The coefficient representing the contrast between the control and benevolent sexism conditions was also significant (b = .521, p = .044), indicating that relative to individuals in the control condition, those in the benevolent sexism condition reported higher levels of reluctant accommodation (a mean difference of .512 units) in the recruiter. The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was non-significant (b = .500, p = .255), signalling that there was no moderation.

To test whether there was a difference in the benevolent sexism and hostile sexism conditions on reluctant accommodation, the data were recoded so that the benevolent sexism group would be treated as the reference group instead of the control group. The coefficient representing the contrast between the benevolent sexism and hostile sexism conditions was significant (b = .246, p = .338), indicating that relative to individuals in the benevolent sexism condition, those in the hostile sexism condition reported higher levels of reluctant accommodation (a mean difference of .246 units) in the recruiter. However, this coefficient was not significant (p = .338). The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was non-significant (b = -.057, p = .895), signalling that there was no moderation.

4.3 Trust

In the model where trust was specified as the dependent variable, the coefficient representing the contrast between the control and hostile sexism conditions was significant (b = -1.011, p < .001), indicating that relative to individuals in the control condition, those in the hostile sexism condition reported lower levels of trust (a mean difference of 1.011 units) in the recruiter. The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was non-significant (b = -.212, p = .469), signalling that there was no moderation.

The coefficient representing the contrast between the control and benevolent sexism conditions was also significant (b = -.635, p < .001), indicating that relative to individuals in

the control condition, those in the benevolent sexism condition reported lower levels of trust (a mean difference of .635 units) in the recruiter. The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was non-significant (b = -.161, p = .603), signalling that there was no moderation.

To test whether there was a difference in the benevolent sexism and hostile sexism conditions on trust, the data were recoded so that the benevolent sexism group would be treated as the reference group instead of the control group. The coefficient representing the contrast between the benevolent sexism and hostile sexism conditions was significant (b = -.375, p = .041), indicating that relative to individuals in the benevolent sexism condition, those in the hostile sexism condition reported lower levels of trust (a mean difference of .375 units) in the recruiter. The interaction between this contrast and gender identification was non-significant (b = -.051, p = .866), signalling that there was no moderation.

4.4 Summary

The first hypothesis predicted that relative to the control condition, encountering benevolent or hostile sexism through vignettes would elicit more negative assessments of contact quality, reluctant accommodation and trust. The second hypothesis predicted that hostile sexism would have a greater negative impact on participants than benevolent sexism. To test Hypothesis 1 and 2, I followed Hayes' (2012, 2013) process for testing moderation in regression analysis using his computational macro, PROCESS. A multicategorical regression analysis (Model 1) was completed using PROCESS in SPSS for each dependent variable, the results of which are summarised in Table 9. These results show that for all dependent variables, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported.

Plots for the main effects for Hypothesis 2 were then created in Excel using the medians of each dependent variable for each condition. These plots, Figures 1, 2 and 3 below, reveal that in all cases, hostile sexism had a stronger impact on participants than benevolent sexism did. These, again, show that Hypothesis 2 is supported.

To test the third and final hypothesis, that gender identity would moderate the impacts of sexism such that more gender identified women would be more adversely affected by their encounters with sexism, the results of the earlier multicategorical regression analysis were consulted and *p* values were assessed for tests of sexism type*gender identification interaction for each dependent variable. In all cases, $p > 0.05$, indicating that the interaction effects of gender identity were not statistically significant. Hypothesis 3 is, therefore, not supported.

A full breakdown of the results of each analysis for each dependent variable is provided below, after which the table (Table 9) and plots (Figures 1, 2 and 3) mentioned above are included.

4.5 Table and Plots

The tables and plots described above are included below in order of mention.

Table 9

Main Effect Coefficients for Dependent Variables

Y	R^2	F	p
Anticipated contact quality	.34	(5, 84) = 8.49	< .001
Reluctant accommodation	.13	(5, 84) = 2.52	.036
Trust	.30	(5, 84) = 7.01	< .001

Figure 1

Plot of Anticipated Contact Quality Means by Experimental Condition

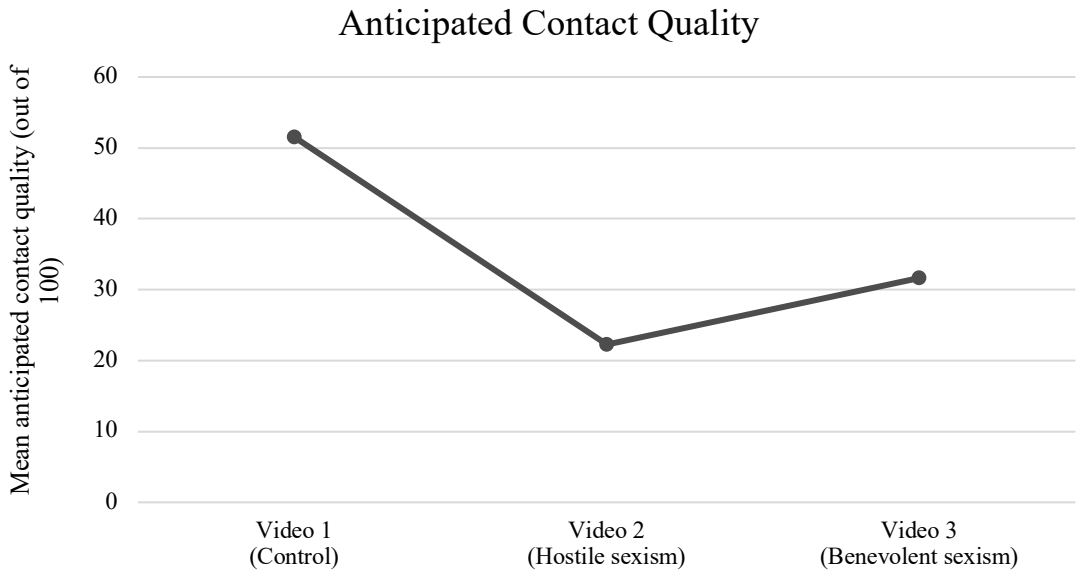


Figure 2

Plot of Reluctant Accommodation Means by Experimental Condition

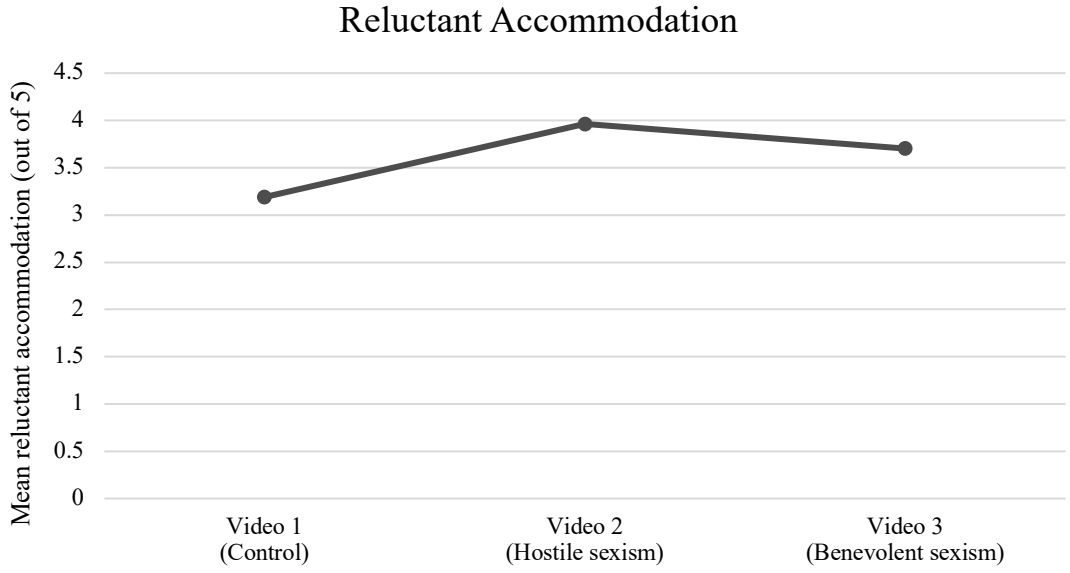
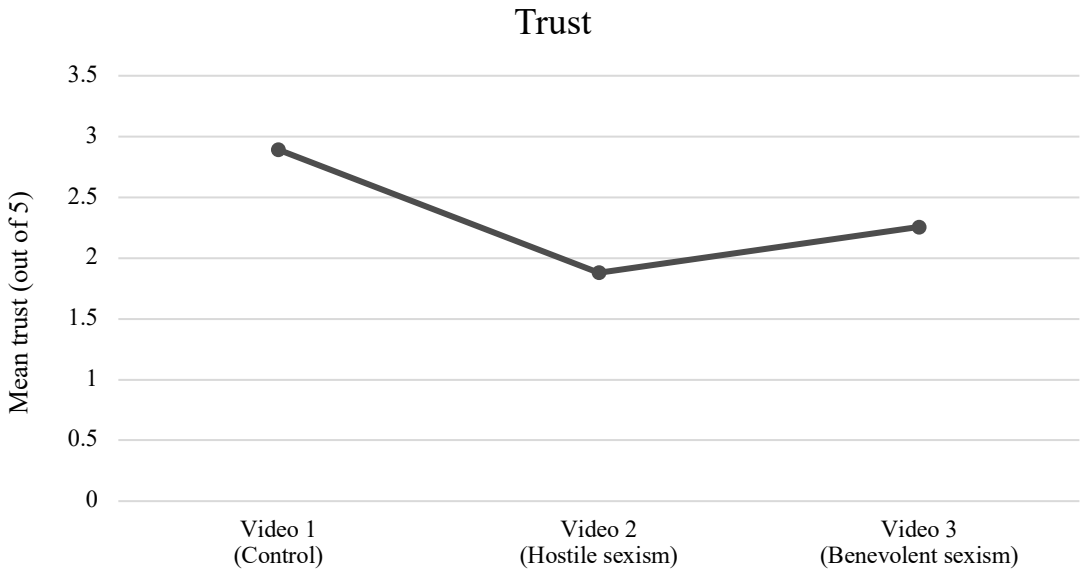


Figure 3

Plot of Trust Means by Experimental Condition



5. DISCUSSION

For all three dependent variables, significant main effects were found with the independent variable (that is, the video each participant saw). Regardless of whether it was couched in terms of paternalistic care or patriarchal malevolence, women who experienced sexism in this study experienced significant decreases in both their levels of trust in the speaker and in their perceptions of the quality of contact they would have with the speaker. They also demonstrated clear belief that they would have to display significantly more reluctantly accommodating behaviours when communicating with a sexist speaker than they would when exposed to a sexism-free recruitment scenario. It is worth noting here that reluctant accommodation was measured on a 100 point scale, which is why these coefficients are so large—essentially, there is a very large difference in anticipated reluctant accommodation between those who experienced sexism and those who did not, especially where the sexism experienced was hostile.

Also of note was the lack of support for Hypothesis 3, which predicted that strength of gender identity (here measured through the proxy of group identification) would have a moderating effect on all forms of sexism. The strength of women's sense of gender identity

did not influence the effect of sexism on their perceptions of anticipated contact quality, reluctant accommodation or trust.

5.1 Implications

From a conventional standpoint, it is unlikely anyone would try to counter an assertion that hostile sexism is the most harmful form of sexism women experience. This research does not change the status quo, in that sense, but it does provide striking support for the less well-accepted idea (outside academic and feminist circles) that subtle/benevolent sexism is also significantly impactful. On all three dependent variables in this study, hostile sexism had a stronger negative impact on women than did benevolent sexism, though in each case, the gap between the control condition and the benevolent sexism condition was larger than the gap between the benevolent sexism condition and the hostile sexism condition (refer figures 2-4). That is, for every dependent variable, the results of the hostile and benevolent sexism conditions were far more similar than the results of the control and benevolent sexism conditions were. This demonstrates that benevolent sexism is not something we can afford to shrug off as a society; it is doing real harm to the women on the receiving end of it.

This discovery disrupts traditional Western ideals of gender roles (Glick et al., 2002) and more broadly New Zealand societies' traditional notions of the ways men should treat women (Partners, 2006), and suggests that the behaviours people may have been conceiving of as care or concern or love, and sometimes even promoting as gold standard behaviour (Jewkes et al., 2015; Keller et al., 2010; Salter, 2015), are not only directly harmful to women but have very similar impacts to the sorts of hostilely sexist attitudes New Zealand society has come to reject (Fanslow et al., 2010).

Furthermore, this research provides a window into the communicative impacts of ambivalent sexism, rather than the psychological, social, workplace or health impacts that

have been so well-researched. There has been scant research into ambivalent sexism from a communications standpoint, and precious little that quantifies its impact on women's trust in those men who display sexism in their communication.

These results also make very apparent the dual valences of sexist men's prejudice towards women when examined using communications theory in a New Zealand context. In terms of Glick and Fiske's theory of ambivalent sexism (1996, 1997), nothing found in this research provides any evidence to disprove or discredit it. This, along with results from many other countries verifying the theory's applicability within their own cultural contexts (Glick & Fiske, 2011), provides significant evidence for ambivalent sexism as a concept that holds universally, rather than something confined to selected countries, religions, or political or social systems. Across the English-speaking world, men's attitudes towards women have consistently been found to align with Glick and Fiske's original findings (Glick & Fiske, 2011).

For the women who experience these sorts of sexist communications, the impacts can be severe (as discussed in the literature review). In a professional sense, there is a real risk that reluctantly accommodated communication and behaviours, for example, could reinforce sexist notions of women's inferiority or lower competence (Dardenne et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2014), which in turn could expose more women to such behaviours and limit the remunerative and career prospects women are afforded (Connor et al., 2017; Masser & Abrams, 2004). There is also psychological distress associated with being a victim of sexist behaviours—specifically with benevolently sexist behaviours (Cortina et al. 2001, as cited in Jones et al., 2014). There are also significant incidences of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder associated with exposure to benevolent sexism (Berg, 2006). All of this can easily stem from a sexist job interview, especially if the interviewer is a hiring manager and not, as in the case of this research, a recruiter. A woman who encounters sexism from a hiring

manager during a job interview who is then offered the job has to walk into that job knowing she will regularly be subjected to sexism from her boss. We know from this research that she will anticipate poor contact quality with him, possibly leading her to avoid him; we know she will display an increased prevalence of reluctantly accommodating behaviours, suppressing her own personality, opinions and needs in the process; we know she will have significantly less trust in him; and we know that this will have significant effects on her physical, mental, emotional, and financial health (refer literature review for full impacts). This is simply not acceptable in a supposedly-equitable society in the 21st century and with this research, women have the evidence they need to more strongly advocate for change.

The research presented here also provides an important empowerment tool for women. According to Johns et al. (2005, p. 175) "studies have shown that anything that reminds women or minorities of their stigmatized identity can reduce their performance on a stereotype-relevant task" such as a maths or cognition test, which women tend to be stereotyped as less capable at (Glick et al., 1997). Research into stereotype threat has shown that when women are informed that they may be subject to stereotype threat, or presented with evidence of what stereotype threat is and how it impacts them, their awareness of the phenomenon counteracts direct harm from said phenomenon in a test or similar scenario (Johns et al., 2005). That is, when women are told they are expected to perform worse on a math test because of negative stereotypes about women's mathematical competence, they perform the same as they would have had they been provided the same test under a label that did not tap into negative gendered stereotypes. There is good reason to think the same impact could apply if women are informed of the existence, nature and impact of benevolent sexism. Research from Dardenne et al. (2007) established that exposure to benevolent sexism reduces women's working memory and productivity. The researchers theorised that this is due to the fact that benevolent sexism is not always clear cut; women exposed to it may often feel

something is off in how they have been spoken to or treated, but as it does not fit traditional ideas of sexism as they understand them, their working memory is tied up trying to make sense of what they have experienced for far longer than if they are exposed to hostile sexism. From this, it is clear that there may be a significant education problem for women in terms of the diverse nature and presentations of sexism. Connecting one theory to the other, it is not unreasonable to think that educating women about benevolent sexism may prove a powerful tool in mitigating its negative effects and disarming those who wield it.

5.2 Limitations

No research is without its limitations, and the research presented here is not an exception to this rule. One of the largest limitations is that it has been conceived of, designed and analysed from a predominantly Western perspective. While effort was made to involve participants from a range of ethnic groups and to specifically seek out and include wāhine Māori, the research was conducted by a pākehā research team and a te ao Māori lens has not been applied to its design, implementation, or assessment. The research team recognises this is a significant shortcoming given the bicultural nature and history of New Zealand.

While it would be unexpected for the underlying results to change were a version of this research designed and implemented by a Māori researcher using predominantly Māori participants—that is, it is likely that the results from both hostile and benevolent sexism conditions would still prove more similar than either would to the control condition—it cannot be denied that the cultural context of a Māori worldview should be expected to alter the degrees of difference, especially given the influences different cultural contexts have on communication (Neuliep, 2012).

Beyond the necessity of applying a Māori lens in a New Zealand context, it is also clear from the English-language research into ambivalent sexism that insufficient work has

been done to assess the way ambivalent sexism plays out in non-Western cultures, especially from a communicative standpoint. There have been attempts to integrate international studies to create a cross-cultural view of ambivalent sexism to ameliorate some of the risk posed by this issue, such as that conducted by Glick et al. (2000) but it is the opinion of the researcher that this work does not go far enough towards incorporating non-Western cultural contexts. More work needs to be done to understand how intercultural communication and different histories and cultural milieux vis-à-vis sex and gender roles interplay with the communicative impacts of ambivalent sexism, especially for indigenous and non-Western populations. There is research into ambivalent sexism with indigenous Mexican Americans that could prove a jumping-off point here (Jezzini, 2013; Pearson, 2009).

Beyond culture and ethnicity, it is clear from the demographic data collected that this research has skewed towards younger, more educated, urban, non-religious women—an image some may associate with the middle class. Research in New Zealand has shown that women in small towns who work in blue-collar, especially male-dominated workplaces (such as freezing works) experience sexual harassment very differently from their white-collar counterparts in retail or banking centres and have very different (and often fewer) coping strategies available to them (Handy, 2002). It is not a stretch to imagine these diverse groups of women may have different reactions to being confronted with hostilely or benevolently sexist communication. Further research into this space would be beneficial for the New Zealand corpus on sexism and sexual harassment.

Staying with gender identity, it should be highlighted that many (though not all) of the respondents to the survey used in this research had moderate-to-high levels of gender identification. Had there been a wider selection of women with low-to-moderate gender identification, in addition to those recruited, the moderation analysis may have yielded different results and the *p* value might have been lower. This would be a beneficial area to

investigate; as has been established in this paper, group identification has been shown to impact how people perceive and respond to prejudiced communication. Perhaps with a larger, more diverse sample more could be teased out of any possible interplays between strength of gender identity and the dependent variables. A mediation analysis could also be a useful examination, rather than a moderation analysis, as it may be that the role of gender identity in experiences of sexism was not sufficiently captured in this study.

5.3 Opportunities for Further Research

Further attention should be paid to how we overcome the expression, and consequently the burden, of benevolent sexism in New Zealand[4]. If men are unknowingly engaging in benevolently sexist behaviours, then they are harming their relationships with the people they love as well as with those they routinely encounter in work and social situations. Consideration must be given to how to counteract these behaviours and what sorts of messages are most likely to be influential. Social marketing theory may provide one viable avenue. Social marketing is a subtype of marketing demarcated by its use of marketing techniques and theories to influence behaviour that contributes to individual or public good but has no direct commercial or financial benefit for the marketer or another commercial organisation (Andreasen, 1994). Peattie and Peattie (2003, p. 370) define social marketing campaigns as those that "aim to alert, inform, educate, incentivize, influence and support their targets in moving them toward behavioural change". Social marketing has been well

[4] I say "in New Zealand" because although ambivalent sexism has been proven consistent across many countries, research on social marketing and behaviour change (Verplanken & Wood, 2006; Wood, 2008) suggests that individual cultural differences are going to be far more valid to benevolent sexism's deconstruction than they are to its consistent perpetuation.

used in New Zealand—so much so that there is a Crown agency, the Health Promotion Agency, dedicated to using social marketing and other related means to improve health behaviours and outcomes in New Zealand (Health Promotion Agency, 2021). Many high-profile social marketing campaigns run in New Zealand, both by the Health Promotion Agency and by others, have proven successful at everything from reducing drink driving (NZTA, 2019) and cigarette smoking (Health Promotion Agency, 2019), to encouraging energy efficiency (EECA & IPSOS, 2017), and shifting attitudes to intimate partner violence in New Zealand (Ministry of Social Development, n.d.; McLaren, 2010). Background research used for the *It's Not OK* campaign against intimate partner violence could be of particular relevance due to the inherently connected nature of hostile and benevolently sexist attitudes and behaviours. For some of the research in this space, see Jewkes et al (2015), Keller et al (2010), and Salter (2015). One potential path forward may be to elevate the harms of benevolent sexism and prompt important peer-to-peer conversations through a national campaign, much like RainbowYOUTH's "If it's not gay, it's not gay" campaign did for casual homophobia (Stuff.co.nz, 2017).

Further to this, there is an intersectional lens needed over this topic. Although we know ambivalent sexism exists, and that women in New Zealand who experience benevolent sexism suffer real impacts as a result of it, we do not know how prevalent sexist attitudes and communication are. We also do not know how experiences of sexist communication in New Zealand interplay, overlap with or are amplified by experiences of other forms of prejudiced communication (such as ambivalent racism, homophobia, transphobia, or ableism). There would be huge value in research that delved into these intersectional impacts. Further research that broke groups down into cis-gender and transgender women, or that considered

how these results compare to the experiences of feminine-presenting non-binary people[5] may also yield interesting and relevant results.

Additional demographic variables were gathered as part of the research in order to examine, possibly in further work, whether any other aspects of identity moderate how women experience sexism. Specifically, there is data available to assess whether age, education, or ethnicity act as moderators. Data on rural-urban split and religion were also gathered, but there is insufficient variation in the data to allow for reliable analysis of potential moderation. Conducting further research with a dataset containing more rural-urban and religious diversity could also be of value and allow for exploration of whether the rural-urban split or religious affiliation impacts on communicative impacts of sexism.

6. CONCLUSION

Research techniques grounded in communications theory provide a novel and largely untapped lens through which to investigate the impacts of diverse expressions of sexism on the women who experience them. By using such techniques, this research has demonstrated that significant impacts on anticipated contact quality, reluctant accommodation and trust are experienced by women who are subject to either hostilely or benevolently sexist communication. Although substantial research exists documenting the impacts of group identification on group members' experiences of prejudice, a moderating effect of strength of gender (group) identity on the above-mentioned dependent variables did not prove

[5] As covered in the Literature Review section, there is evidence to suggest that the prejudice people experience is strongly related to the way people perceive them, regardless of their personal identity. With this in mind, it would seem fair to extend the research beyond people who identify as women to people whom others may identify as women. This would also allow researchers to further tease out how one's own sense of identity impacts others' prejudicial communication towards us.

statistically significant in this case. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for further research in this space that may yet bear fruit.

This research provides a strong platform to advocate for intervention to help break patterns of sexism and empower women to better parse a wide range of not only overt but also, and particularly, covert sexist communications when they encounter them. It is hoped that this improved awareness and understanding will allow women to better advocate for their own rights and equity, as well as mitigating and preventing many of the documented harms that sexist communications impart.

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8. APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Scripts for Condition Videos

Participants assigned to the control condition only saw video one in their surveys. Participants assigned to the hostile sexism condition saw video one and video two (cut together), and participants in the benevolent sexism condition saw video one and video three (cut together).

8.1.1 Control (Video 1)

"The company has a very strong diversity policy and is aware that the majority of their staff are male. As a result, they are very keen to bring women on board for these two new roles. The roles are in one of Wellington's leading craft breweries and will require exceptional customer service and clerical skills, as well as the ability to operate simple machinery, such as changing kegs and fixing minor malfunctions with pre-mix dispensers, and accurately and efficiently handle cash. The first step in the application process is completing a basic literacy and numeracy assessment. From there, the five top-scoring applicants will be selected to interview for the two roles being recruited."

8.1.2 Hostile sexism (Video 2)

"You'll be given 20 minutes to complete both the literacy and the numeracy assessment. And ladies, if you're thinking showing a little bit of leg or undoing the top button on your blouse will help your chances, you can think again [laugh]. I'm immune to that sort of manipulation, as are the owners of the brewery. Selections for the interview stage will be based solely on the results of this assessment, okay?"

8.1.3 Benevolent sexism (Video 3)

"I popped out to see the team the other day and the guys are so excited to be having some lovely ladies joining the team and are totally prepared to help out with anything you find too hard. It'll be like working with a group of protective big brothers -- plus, there'll always be someone around to get things off the top shelf and carry heavy things for you. And don't worry about any of the male customers being too familiar and asking you out -- the guys wouldn't let anyone near you unless they'd checked he was a properly nice bloke first."

8.2 Appendix 2: Survey Questions

All agree/disagree questions required answers on a five-point Likert scale. Items with (R) at the end of them were reverse coded for analytical purposes. This markup wasn't included in the published survey, nor were the section headings below.

Group Identification/Identity Salience

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Centrality

1. I often think about being a woman
2. Being a woman has little to do with how I feel about myself in general (R)
3. Being a woman is an important part of my self-image
4. The fact that I am a woman rarely enters my mind (R)

In-Group Affect

5. In general I'm glad to be a woman
6. I often regret being a woman (R)
7. Generally I feel good about myself when I think about being a woman
8. I don't feel good about being a woman (R)

In-Group Ties

9. I have a lot in common with other women
10. I feel strong ties to other women
11. I find it difficult to form a bond with other women (R)
12. I don't feel a strong sense of being connected to women (R)

Anticipated Contact Quality

Rate how little (0) or much (100) you think interactions with this recruiter would be:

13. Pleasant
14. Cooperative
15. Superficial (R)
16. Insincere (R)

Reluctant Accommodation

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how you would feel or behave around this recruiter?

17. I would have to bite my tongue
18. I would avoid certain ways of talking
19. I wouldn’t say what I was thinking
20. I wouldn’t feel I could like myself
21. I would avoid certain topics
22. I would feel obliged to be polite
23. I would feel defensive

Trust

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about how you would feel or behave around this recruiter?

24. The recruiter is primarily interested in his clients' welfare
25. The recruiter cannot be trusted (R)
26. The recruiter was honest and truthful with me

27. I feel that I can trust the recruiter completely

28. The recruiter is truly sincere in his promises

29. I feel that the recruiter did not show me enough consideration (R)

30. The recruiter treated me fairly and justly

31. I feel that the recruiter can be counted on to help me

8.3 Appendix 3: Post-Survey Explanations

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please read through the below text then click the arrow button to ensure all your answers are submitted.

What's this all about?

This piece of research is looking into a phenomenon known as **ambivalent sexism.**

Ambivalent Sexism

Ambivalent sexism describes the ways sexist men conceive of women in both positive and negative lights and the sexism they display as a result of that.

The video you watched was participated in by an actor, who was reading a script designed to simulate a [neutral or sexism-free/hostiley sexist/benevolently sexist][6] recruitment interaction. This is one of three conditions survey participants may have seen: neutral, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism.

Hostile sexism

Hostile sexism is the kind society most quickly recognises as sexism. It's overt sexist beliefs and comments, usually underpinned by a belief that woman are trying to subvert their role in society, manipulate men, and use their heterosexual sexuality to trick men.

Benevolent sexism

Benevolent sexism, in contrast, is usually seen by the perpetuator as being them viewing women positively. It's underpinned by a belief that woman should be pure and innocent, that

[6] The words in square brackets varied depending on which condition the respondent was assigned to.

men need them in order to live fulfilled lives, and men's heterosexual dependence on women as wives and mothers. Although benevolently sexist comments often appear positive at first blush, they communicate an underlying belief that women are different to men and should be held to different standards.

How it works in practice

Ambivalently sexist men manage to hold these competing perceptions of women in their heads by allocating women to subgroups, each of which has a clearly coded perception applied to it. Many women may be familiar with the Nice Guy, who treats a woman he is sexually attracted to like she's a princess on a pedestal whom he needs to take care of, but becomes incredibly crude and unkind when she makes it clear she doesn't want to have sex with him. This is an example of a man reallocating a woman from a positive subgroup as a woman he has a heterosexual dependence on (which received benevolent sexism) to a negative subgroup where he believes the woman has used her sexuality to manipulate and use him (and thus receives hostile sexism).

There is evidence to suggest that learning to recognise a social behaviour or paradigm that causes oppression can help subvert the impacts of that oppression. It is our hope that your participation in this research project may have a similar impact for you.

Find out more

If you'd like to learn more about ambivalent sexism, the Wikipedia entry for it is a good place to start.