12-1-2017

Associations among Benevolent Sexism, Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem, and Relationship Maintenance Strategies in Heterosexual Women

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ASSOCIATIONS AMONG BENEVOLENT SEXISM, RELATIONSHIP-CONTINGENT

SELF-ESTEEM, AND RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE STRATEGIES IN

HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN

By

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Bachelor of Arts – Psychology
University of Tennessee
2012

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Arts – Psychology

Department of Psychology
College of Liberal Arts
The Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
December 2017

Thesis Approval

The Graduate College
The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

September 22, 2017

This thesis prepared by

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entitled

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is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts – Psychology
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Abstract

Past research shows that heterosexual women who endorse benevolent sexism (a sex-role attitude) tend to be highly invested in romantic relationships (Lee, Fiske, Glick, & Chen, 2010). Consequently, they may be more likely than other women to remain in relationships that are troubled. The current study aimed to shed light on this possibility by examining whether benevolent sexism was associated with the relationship maintenance strategies that women use in troubled relationships. I presented women with a scenario of a troubled relationship and manipulated the type of sexism the male partner in the scenario endorsed. Repeated measures ANCOVA revealed that women endorsed positive relationship maintenance strategies (e.g., making interactions enjoyable) more than they endorsed relationship dissolution when the hypothetical male partner endorsed benevolent sexism. Additional analyses revealed that relationship contingent self-esteem partially mediated the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies (e.g., making the partner jealous). This finding illustrates that relationship contingent self-esteem helps to explain the association between women's benevolent sexism and their use of maladaptive relationship maintenance strategies in troubled relationships. Practical implications focus on benevolent sexism's ties with troubled relationships.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I Love Lucy was a popular television show that depicted Lucy, the star of the show, getting into trouble while her husband Ricky was at work. Ricky often came home to a mess Lucy had made. She would then start complimenting him and telling him she loved him to improve his mood. Lucy and Ricky portrayed a heterosexual romantic relationship where both members adhered to traditional gender roles, and when issues arose in the relationship they focused on positive actions to prolong the relationship.

In contrast to Lucy and Ricky's relationship, *Honeymooners* depicted a husband and wife, Ralph and Alice, who used negative strategies to maintain their relationship. Ralph was largely unsuccessful at his job and at his role as a breadwinner, which led to many get-rich-quick schemes. Alice offered advice on why his schemes would not work, which he responded to with threats and insults. In turn, Alice would undermine Ralph's threats by responding with sarcasm as a way to maintain their relationship.

The first goal of this study was to understand why some women, like Lucy, engage in positive relationship maintenance strategies while other women, like Alice, engage in negative relationship maintenance strategies. Specifically, I examined the extent to which individual difference variables and features of the romantic relationship are associated with the types of relationship maintenance strategies that women use in relationships. While the women in the example are fictional characters, real women's preferred relationship maintenance strategies can have serious implications, particularly if they are choosing to maintain a troubled relationship.

This will be the first study to my knowledge that has assessed associations among benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and relationship maintenance. The first goal of this study was to assess whether the participants' own level of benevolent sexism and the hypothetical partner's sexism would interact to influence the type of relationship maintenance

strategies the participant would engage in. The second goal was to understand why women try to

maintain, rather than end, troubled romantic relationships. Specifically, I examined whether

relationship-contingent self-esteem functions as a mechanism that accounts for the link between

women's benevolent sexism and their maintenance of a troubled romantic relationship (see

Figure 1 for a depiction of the conceptual model). Below I provide an overview of benevolent

sexism and how it relates to relationship maintenance strategies and relationship-contingent self-

esteem.

Figure 1.
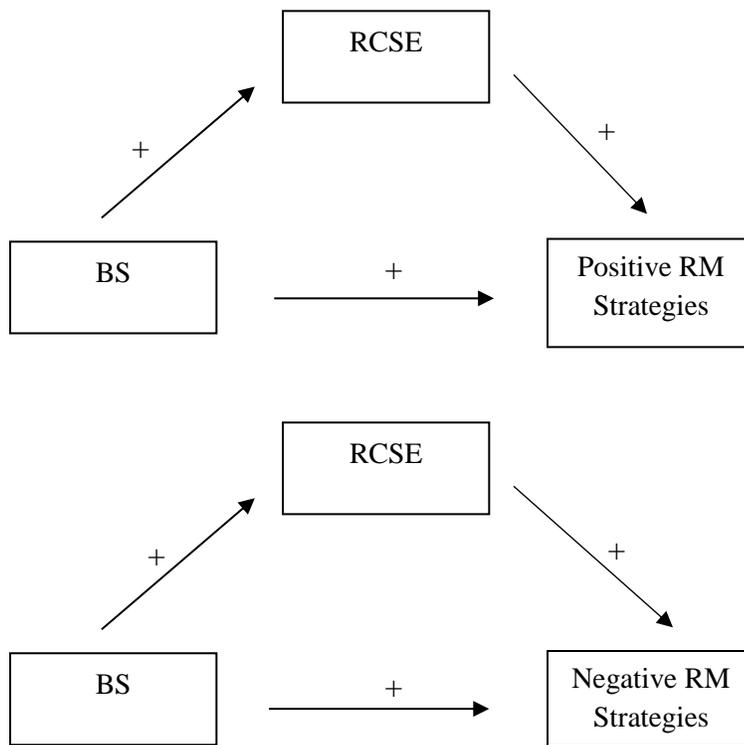
Hypothesized mediation models among benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and relationship maintenance strategies. BS = Benevolent Sexism, RM = Relationship Maintenance, RCSE = Relationship-contingent Self-Esteem.

Ambivalent Sexism

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Attitudes toward women come in two complementary forms termed hostile sexism and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism is characterized by overtly negative feelings and behaviors directed toward women as well as the belief that women are inferior to men. Hostile sexism is typically directed toward feminists and career women because people who endorse hostile sexism believe that these women are trying to gain power over men (Lee, Fiske, & Glick, 2010). For example, people who endorse hostile sexism typically believe that women who demand equality at work are actually asking for special treatment. Such women are acting outside of the rigid gender norms of femininity and are punished for it through overtly negative evaluations.

In contrast, benevolent sexism is characterized by viewing women as if they are childlike and treating them as if they need to be protected. It involves seemingly positive perceptions of women that are actually damaging in nature because they prevent women from reaching their full potential (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism reinforces women's inequality by rewarding behavior that fits a restrictive, narrowly defined set of gender roles. Culturally romanticized relationships, which are idealized relationships built on the myth that romantic relationships should be perfect and fulfill all of each partner's needs, lead to an expectation of behavior that promotes benevolent sexism in romantic relationships (Lee et al., 2010).

Benevolent sexism has three components that reflect relationship norms: protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy (Glick & Fiske, 1996). *Protective paternalism* is the belief that a man must provide for his partner in the same way he would provide for a child because women are unable to make their own decisions. Protective paternalism in a romantic relationship is expressed through the expectation that a man will take care of his partner and protect her. For example, the man is expected to open doors for

the woman, pay for her dinner, and perhaps even order her meal on her behalf. *Complementary gender differentiation* is the belief that women are inherently different from men and that their personality characteristics make up for characteristics that men lack. For example, men are expected to be authoritative while women are expected to be nurturing. *Heterosexual intimacy* refers to a reversal of power dynamics in which men rely on women for intimacy, but women are expected to remain pure and innocent. Heterosexual intimacy is reflected in the belief that a man is incomplete unless he is in a relationship.

Although benevolent sexism is perceived as a more positive type of sexism, both benevolent sexism and hostile sexism promote discrimination and resentment toward women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In a cross-cultural study of 19 nations, Glick et al. (2000) found that hostile sexism and benevolent sexism are pervasive concepts that co-occur and are predictive of national levels of gender inequality such that nations with higher levels of gender inequality also have higher average levels of hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. However, women are more likely than men to endorse benevolent sexism, especially in nations with high levels of gender inequality. This is because benevolent sexism offers a sense of support and adoration, which can be appealing when women also face hostility. In this sense, hostile sexism and benevolent sexism work together to encourage gender role adherence. Men want to gain power over women (hostile sexism), and women allow men to gain power as long as they believe this inequality benefits them by making them feel protected and adored (benevolent sexism; Glick et al., 2000). The current study focused on women who endorse benevolent sexism, rather than hostile sexism, because benevolent sexism influences expectations in heterosexual romantic relationships. For example, women who endorse benevolent sexism also ascribe to the ideal of a romance-oriented relationship (Lee et al., 2010).

Benevolent sexism can present challenges in romantic relationships because women who endorse benevolent sexism idealize the relationship, which leads to a discrepancy between expectations and reality. For instance, Casad, Salazar, and Macina (2015) found that women who endorsed benevolent sexism reported relationship dissatisfaction because their expectations for the relationship fell short of reality. Furthermore, women who endorse benevolent sexism also tend to have poor relationships because they are likely to respond to their partners with negativity when their partners do not endorse benevolent sexism ideals (Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011). Thus, women's behavior in romantic relationships, such as their preferred relationship maintenance strategies, may vary depending on their partner's level of benevolent sexism as well as their own.

Relationship Maintenance Strategies

Relationship maintenance strategies are behaviors people engage in to enhance their romantic relationship (Canary & Stafford, 1992). Relationship maintenance strategies are predictive of satisfaction, commitment, and love in romantic relationships (Stafford & Canary, 1991). Positive relationship maintenance strategies consist of five explicitly planned actions to enhance a relationship: positivity, openness, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks. *Positivity* refers to communicating with the partner in a pleasant manner, such as being polite in conversation. *Openness* refers to discussing the relationship with the partner; in particular, talking about the quality of the relationship and the relationship's future. *Assurances* refers to using affirmations to communicate affection for the partner, such as telling the partner how important he or she is. *Social networks* refers to developing relationships with the partner's friends and family. *Sharing tasks* refers to assisting the partner with duties and work.

While positive relationship maintenance strategies are a more effective way to influence a relationship, people also engage in negative relationship maintenance strategies as a means to prolong and enhance a romantic relationship. Negative relationship maintenance strategies are socially unacceptable behaviors that people engage in with the intent of restoring a relationship to a desired state (Dainton & Gross, 2008). These negative behaviors consist of six explicitly planned actions to enhance and prolong a relationship: jealousy induction, avoidance, spying, infidelity, destructive conflict, and allowing control. *Jealousy induction* refers to people engaging in behaviors to elicit jealousy in a partner, such as flirting with others. *Avoidance* refers to a person's refusal to interact with a partner if conflict is inevitable. *Spying* includes behaviors with the intent to gather information, such as checking cell phone messages or asking the partner's friends for information. *Infidelity* refers to behaviors that serve the purpose of preventing boredom in the relationship; in this regard, affairs offer the excitement that the relationship is lacking. *Destructive conflict* involves arguing with and trying to control the partner. Finally, *allowing control* refers to how a person isolates his or herself from family and friends, or shirks responsibilities to spend more time with the partner.

People's use of negative relationship maintenance strategies may arise from relationship dissatisfaction (Dainton & Gross, 2008). This possibility is consistent with equity theory, which states that people who feel as though they are under-benefited in their relationship will attempt to restore equity in the relationship through the use of maladaptive behaviors (Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne, & Hay, 1985; Sprecher & Schwartz, 1994). For instance, they are more likely to express anger in a destructive manner such as attacking the partner, and they are unlikely to apologize when they feel guilty (Guerrero, La Valley, & Farinelli, 2008). Under-benefited partners are motivated to restore equity because they feel as if they are investing more in the

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relationship than they are receiving from it, which causes relationship dissatisfaction (Sprecher, 1992).

Past research illustrates gender differences in the frequency of relationship maintenance strategies. Relative to men, women engage in more positive relationship maintenance strategies, and they perceive it to be their duty and responsibility to tend to the relationship, possibly because there is an expectation for women to be relationship-oriented (Ogolsky & Bowers, 2012). Gender-role adherence, however, may be a more accurate predictor of relationship maintenance strategies than biological sex. For example, Stafford et al. (2000) found that femininity was a strong predictor of positive relationship maintenance strategies in heterosexual women, beyond biological sex. The authors suggest that gender-role adherence is a better predictor of relationship maintenance strategies because women who uphold society's expectations of gender-roles are also more likely to engage in relationship-oriented behaviors.

To date, benevolent sexism and relationship maintenance strategies have not been considered in the same study. Research on attachment styles, however, offers indirect support for the hypothesized association between relationship maintenance strategies and benevolent sexism. Specifically, people with an anxious-preoccupied attachment style, which is characterized by constantly seeking approval from others and an intense desire for intimacy, are prone to spying, destructive conflict, and allowing control (Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011). Individuals with anxious-preoccupied attachment styles may engage in these negative strategies as a way to reassure themselves that the partner is committed. Because women with an anxious attachment style and women who endorse benevolent sexism both idealize romantic relationships (Hart, Glick, & Dinero, 2013), I expected that women high in benevolent sexism may also engage in negative relationship maintenance strategies when the hypothetical male partner endorsed hostile sexism.

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I expected this outcome because women high in benevolent sexism will also want to ensure their partners are committed to the relationship. Furthermore, past research has demonstrated that women who endorse benevolent sexism treat their partner with hostility if he does not endorse benevolent sexism (Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011). Conversely, I expected that women high in benevolent sexism will be likely to engage in positive relationship maintenance strategies when the hypothetical male partner endorses benevolent sexism because the women's needs will be fulfilled since he is endorsing some of the same ideals she endorses (see Sprecher, 1992).

Contingent Self-Esteem

Relationship-contingent self-esteem could help to explain why women high in benevolent sexism might engage in relationship maintenance strategies, rather than simply exiting troubled relationships. Benevolent sexism prescribes that women should be highly relationship-oriented. Thus, when women are high in benevolent sexism, their self-esteem may be contingent on the success of their romantic relationship. Accordingly, women high in benevolent sexism may be more motivated to maintain relationships than to dissolve them. Below, I further explain the concept of relationship-contingent self-esteem and its potential ties to benevolent sexism.

An underlying human need is the pursuit of self-esteem through mastering a sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). *Competency* is the feeling that one is successful in tasks. *Autonomy* refers to the belief that one's actions and convictions are self-determined and are not initiated by an outside source. *Relatedness* is the sense of belonging that one draws from social support. Self-esteem will flourish if all of these needs are met.

If any of the three sources of self-esteem are lacking, individuals will compensate for their poor self-esteem through external domains. Externally contingent self-esteem is self-esteem that is dependent upon success in a particular external domain. People whose self-esteem relies

on external sources tend to view the outcomes of events as a way to gauge their own value (Crocker, 2002; Crocker & Park, 2004). One example of this occurs in people who experience academic-contingent self-esteem. Crocker, Sommers, and Luhtanen (2002) found that college seniors' global self-esteem fluctuated based on whether they were accepted to graduate school. This group of people was highly invested in academics to the point that their self-esteem hinged upon their success in school. When they perceived themselves as performing poorly in the academic domain, their self-esteem was damaged because they considered their academic failure to be a reflection of their identity. This example illustrates that people whose self-esteem is contingent upon a particular external domain are likely to experience fluctuations in their global self-esteem based on how they view their status in that domain.

Relationship-contingent self-esteem is a specific type of external self-esteem where individuals' self-esteem is based on how they perceive their relationship to be functioning. Lacking competency, autonomy, and relatedness is a consequence of relationship-contingent self-esteem, but it also causes relationship-contingent self-esteem (Knee, Canavello, Bush & Cook, 2008). For example, individuals may feel *incompetent* in relationships if they believe their relationships are failing. A lack of *autonomy* in a relationship develops when a person does not have control in the relationship. Not feeling *related* to the partner occurs in relationally contingent people because of a preoccupation with the self and the inability to be truly attached to another person. When people are unable to develop competence, autonomy, and relatedness, their self-esteem is damaged, and this damaged self-esteem influences how they view the status of their relationship.

Within the contingent domain, failure affects self-esteem more than success, resulting in an overall threatened self-esteem. For example, students with academic-contingent self-esteem

reported less drastic changes in self-esteem when receiving a good grade than a bad grade (Crocker, Karpinski, Quinn, & Chase, 2003). The same pattern may occur in romantic relationships: negative or failing relationships may have particularly strong implications for people high in relationship-contingent self-esteem (Park, Sanchez, & Brynildsen, 2011).

When a poor relationship threatens relationship-contingent self-esteem, people may engage in negative relationship behaviors. Crocker and Park (2003) pointed out that people with relationship-contingent self-esteem tend to have negative perceptions about relationships, and this lack of confidence causes them to act in a way that leads to an even poorer relationship. Furthermore, people who consistently experience threats to their self-esteem are likely to respond to their partner with hostility (Park & Crocker, 2003). They are also likely to respond with defensiveness or aggression when they feel as if the relationship is not serving the purpose of validating their self-esteem (Crocker & Park, 2004). Lastly, Knee et al. (2008) examined both partners' levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem to determine how it affects romantic relationships. When both partners, as opposed to just one partner, measured high in relationship-contingent self-esteem, they were more likely to report feeling committed to the relationship, but not more satisfied. This implies that the couples were clinging to an unsatisfactory relationship because it enhanced their self-esteem. However, if only one partner measured high in relationship-contingent self-esteem, neither partner reported feeling committed to the relationship, which leads to a relationship where neither person is invested but they continue with the relationship regardless.

Women who endorse benevolent sexism invest a significant amount of effort into romantic relationships, which suggests that they may have relationship-contingent self-esteem. Sanchez and Crocker (2005) provided indirect evidence for this link. They found that contingent

self-esteem mediated the association between gender-role adherence and lower well-being. In other words, women who strove for gender-role adherence had lower levels of well-being because their self-esteem was contingent on how well they could fit the mold of stereotypical gender roles. Similarly, I expected that women who endorse benevolent sexism, a specific type of gender role, would have relatively high relationship-contingent self-esteem compared to other women.

The Present Study

This research will shed light on factors influencing the relationship maintenance strategies that heterosexual women use in troubled romantic relationships. Past research illustrates that gender-role attitudes such as benevolent sexism influence women's relationship behaviors (Overall et al., 2011). Research, however, has not yet examined whether women's own gender-role attitudes interact with a partner's gender-role attitudes to influence women's preferred relationship maintenance strategies. Furthermore, despite research indicating that gender-role adherence predicts the use of relationship maintenance strategies (Stafford et al., 2000), and that women who endorse benevolent sexism invest a significant amount of effort into romantic relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996), research has not examined associations among women's benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and preferred relationship maintenance strategies.

Factors influencing women's preferred relationship maintenance strategies. The present study's first objective was to examine whether women's own gender-role attitudes interact with those of a hypothetical male partner to predict women's preferred relationship maintenance strategies. To address this objective, I randomly assigned participants to read one of three vignettes that described a couple in an argument. The experimental manipulation pertains

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to the vignette's description of the man in the relationship. In the *benevolent partner condition*, the man was described as endorsing benevolent sexism; in the *hostile partner condition*, the man was described as endorsing hostile sexism; and in the *control condition*, no information about the man's level of sexism was provided. After reading the vignette, participants rated the types of relationship maintenance strategies that they would use if they were the woman described in the vignette.

Hypotheses are depicted in a matrix in Table 1. Hypothesis 1 pertains to the benevolent partner condition. Specifically, I predicted that in this condition women high in benevolent sexism would endorse Positive Relationship Maintenance strategies more strongly than Negative Relationship Maintenance strategies and Relationship Dissolution. Despite the relationship being troubled, it is fulfilling some of the women's expectations because the hypothetical male partner is described as endorsing the same benevolent sexism ideals that women high in benevolent sexism endorse (see Sprecher, 1992). Conversely, I anticipated that women low in benevolent sexism would endorse Relationship Dissolution more strongly than Positive Relationship Maintenance strategies and Negative Relationship Maintenance strategies. This is because women low in benevolent sexism are unlikely to feel inclined to remain in a troubled relationship.

Table 1. Matrix Depicting Expected Outcomes of Hypotheses 1 and 2.

	Experimental Condition	
Participant BS level	Benevolent Partner	Hostile Partner
High	Positive RM strategies	Negative RM strategies
Low	Dissolution	Dissolution

Hypothesis 2 pertains to the hostile partner condition. Specifically, I predicted that in this condition women high in benevolent sexism would endorse Negative Relationship Maintenance strategies more strongly than Positive Relationship Maintenance strategies and Relationship Dissolution. This hypothesis is grounded in prior research showing that when the man in the relationship does not endorse benevolent sexism and the woman does, women tend to respond with negativity because they do not feel as if he is meeting their expectations (Overall et al., 2011). I expected women high in benevolent sexism to engage in Negative Relationship Maintenance strategies instead of Dissolution because women who adhere to society's gender role expectations are more likely to invest effort into making their relationships work (Stafford et al., 2000). As before, I anticipated that women low in benevolent sexism would endorse Relationship Dissolution more strongly than Positive and Negative Relationship Maintenance strategies.

Relationship-contingent self-esteem as a mediator. The purpose of the second set of analyses was to examine whether relationship-contingent self-esteem mediates the association between women's benevolent sexism and their preferred relationship maintenance strategies. Hypothesis 3 predicted that relationship-contingent self-esteem will mediate the relationship between benevolent sexism and relationship maintenance strategies, such that higher levels of benevolent sexism in women are expected to predict higher levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem, which will in turn predict stronger endorsement of Positive and Negative Relationship Maintenance strategies (see Figure 1). This hypothesis is grounded in research on ambivalent sexism theory which shows that women who endorse benevolent sexism invest a significant

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amount of effort into romantic relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996), so they are likely to feel as if

a large part of their identity revolves around their relationship. Thus, even when confronted with

a troubled relationship, women high in benevolent sexism should be invested in prolonging the

relationship because exiting it will hurt their self-esteem (Park, et al., 2011; Sprecher, 1992).

Chapter 2: Method

Participants

Participants were 223 heterosexual undergraduate women (*M*age = 20.26, *SD* = 4.34, range = 18–55). Four participants were excluded from analyses for failing to complete the measures. Participants were recruited from the psychology participant pool at a university in the Western United States. Participants identified as European American (30%, *n* = 66), Latina (28%, *n* = 63), East Asian (16%, *n* = 36), African American (11%, *n* = 25), Native American/Pacific Islander (6%, *n* = 14), South Asian (2%, *n* = 4), Middle Eastern (2%, *n* = 4), and Other (5%, *n* = 11). Most participants reported that they were currently in a committed romantic relationship (53%, *n* = 117) which they reported had lasted less than a month (7%, *n* = 8), one to six months (17%, *n* = 20), seven months to one year (21%, *n* = 24), one to two years (25%, *n* = 29), and more than two years (31%, *n* = 36); however, nearly all participants were unmarried (97%, *n* = 217).

Procedure

I randomly assigned participants to read one of three vignettes describing a couple in an argument. Following the vignette, participants responded to the Relational Maintenance Strategies Measure (Canary & Stafford, 1992), the Negative Maintenance Scale (Dainton & Gross, 2008), and the Willingness to Dissolve the Relationship Subscale of the Accommodation Instrument (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991). I counterbalanced these three measures to account for order effects. Next, participants responded to the Benevolent Sexism subscale of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and the Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem scale (Knee, Patrick, & Neighbors, 2001), which I also counterbalanced

to account for order effects. The last measure participants completed was the demographic questionnaire.

Vignettes. In all conditions, participants read the following prompt:

"Imagine you are the woman in the relationship. Read the scenario and respond to the questions based on what you would do."

In all conditions, participants read about a couple in an argument (Exposito, Herrera, Moya, & Glick, 2010). The vignette is as follows:

"It all happened at home in the living room. Anthony and Chloe were about to have dinner. As they usually do every evening, they talked about their day and typical issues couples talk about. At one point, Chloe said something to Anthony and they started to argue. The argument gradually became more heated. Anthony and Chloe often engaged in heated arguments like this one."

In the control condition, the participants were only exposed to the above vignette. If participants were in the Benevolent Partner or Hostile Partner conditions, they read a manipulation after the vignette. I derived the manipulation from a similar study (see Duran, Moya, & Megias, 2014). The manipulations read as follows:

Benevolent Partner: "Anthony is a great provider for the family. Anthony is a man who thinks that, no matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman. According to him, every man should have a woman to love and be happy with. Anthony thinks women should be cherished and protected by men. In fact, he has always believed that a good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man."

Hostile Partner: "Anthony is a great provider for the family. Anthony is a man who thinks many women get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances. He also believes that once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash. Anthony often complains that women interpret innocent remarks as being sexist and that when they lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against."

Relational Maintenance Strategy Measure (RMSM). The RMSM (Canary & Stafford, 1992) is a 29-item measure of positive relationship maintenance strategies. Participants endorsed items on the RMSM using a 7-point Likert-scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). To better fit the purpose of the current study, I slightly altered the instructions. Instead of asking for the *frequency* in which participants engaged in maintenance strategies, I asked participants how *likely* they would be to engage in maintenance strategies. Example items include "I would attempt to make our interactions very enjoyable" and "I would stress my commitment to him." I computed the mean RMSM score such that higher scores reflected greater endorsement of engaging in positive relationship maintenance strategies. Cronbach's alpha obtained for this measure in this study was excellent (α = .96).

Negative Maintenance Scale (NMS). The NMS (Dainton & Gross, 2008) is a 20-item measure of negative relationship maintenance strategies. Participants endorsed items on the NMS using a 7-point Likert-scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Example items include "I would flirt with others to make my partner jealous" and "I would avoid interacting with my partner when he was angry with me." To better fit the purpose of the current study, I slightly rephrased items and instructions to capture what participants *would* do in this situation, rather than what they have done in the past. Furthermore, I altered the scale to reflect how *likely* participants are to engage in these responses rather than how *often*. I computed the mean NMS score such that higher scores reflected greater endorsement of engaging in negative relationship maintenance strategies. Cronbach's alpha obtained for this measure in this study was good (α = .88).

Willingness to Dissolve the Relationship Subscale (WDRS). The WDRS is a 4-item subscale of the Accommodation Instrument used to assess exit strategies in response to negative

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relationship experiences (Rusbult et al., 1991). Participants responded to items on the WDRS using a 9-point Likert-scale from 0 (*very unlikely*) to 8 (*very likely*). Example items include "I would threaten to leave my partner" and "I would do things to drive my partner away." To better fit the purpose of the current study, I slightly rephrased items and instructions to capture what participants *would* do in this situation, rather than what they have done in the past. Furthermore, I altered the response scale to reflect how *likely* participants are to engage in these responses rather than how *often*. I computed the mean WDRS score such that higher scores reflected greater endorsement of willingness to dissolve the relationship. Cronbach's alpha obtained for this measure in this study was acceptable ($\alpha = .76$).

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). The ASI is a 22-item measure of hostile sexism and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Participants endorsed items on the ASI using a 6-point Likert-scale from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). As noted, the current study measured women's benevolent sexism. Benevolent sexism example items include "Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores" and "A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man." I computed the mean benevolent sexism score such that higher scores reflected higher levels of benevolent sexism. Cronbach's alpha obtained for this subscale in this study was good ($\alpha = .88$).

Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem Scale (RCSES). The RCSES is an 11-item measure assessing participants' levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem (Knee et al., 2001). Participants endorsed items on the RCSES using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*not at all like me*) to 5 (*very much like me*). Example items include "An important measure of my self-worth is how successful my relationship is" and "when my partner and I fight I feel bad about myself in general." I computed the mean relationship-contingent self-esteem score such that higher scores

reflected higher levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha obtained for this measure in this study was sufficient ($\alpha = .93$).

Data Preparation

Before running any analyses, I carried out two preliminary steps. First, I used a median split to classify participants as either *high benevolent sexism* (i.e., above the median for benevolent sexism; $n = 114$) or *low benevolent sexism* (i.e., below the median for benevolent sexism; $n = 109$). Second, I transformed the within-subjects variables into z scores because they were measured on different scales.

Chapter 3: Results

Overview of Analyses

I conducted two sets of analyses. The goal of the first set of analyses was to investigate whether women's benevolent sexism level interacts with the hypothetical male partner's gender-role attitudes (e.g., endorsement of benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, or no endorsement of sexism) to influence women's endorsement of positive relationship maintenance strategies, negative relationship maintenance strategies, and relationship dissolution. The second set of analyses used path analysis to test whether relationship-contingent self-esteem mediates the relation between benevolent sexism and relationship maintenance strategies.

Preliminary Analyses

Table 2 presents bivariate correlations among the continuous variables. The association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies was significant. This significant association provided preliminary support for Hypothesis 3 which predicted that higher levels of benevolent sexism would be associated with higher endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies. Additionally, the association between benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem was significant, and relationship-contingent self-esteem was significantly correlated with positive relationship maintenance strategies and negative relationship maintenance strategies; these correlations provide preliminary support for the prediction that relationship-contingent self-esteem would mediate the association between benevolent sexism and relationship maintenance strategies.

Table 2. Bivariate Associations Among Continuous Variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. BS	--				
2. RCSE	.34**	--			
3. Positive RM	-.02	.24**	--		
4. Negative RM	.25**	.32**	-.17*	--	
5. Dissolution	.07	.08	-.30**	.40**	--
Mean	2.14	3.32	5.63	2.45	1.92
Standard Deviation	1.05	.96	1.05	.84	1.66
Range	0-6	1-5	1-7	1-7	0-8

Note. BS = Benevolent Sexism, RCSE = Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem, RM = Relationship Maintenance.
$^*p < .05$ $^{**}p < .001$

An independent samples *t*-test yielded significant ethnic differences in benevolent sexism endorsement. Latina, East Asian, African American, Native American/Pacific Islander, South Asian, and Middle Eastern participants ($M = 2.24$; $SD = 1.07$) endorsed benevolent sexism more than did White participants ($M = 1.93$; $SD = 1.03$) $t(221) = .02$, $p = .048$, which is consistent with prior research (Robnett, Anderson, & Hunter, 2012). Therefore, ethnicity served as a covariate in the forthcoming analyses. For all analyses, ethnicity was entered as a control variable where White was coded as 1 and all other ethnicities were coded as 0.

Hypotheses 1 and 2: Factors Influencing Women's Preferred Relationship Maintenance Strategies

The first set of analyses tested Hypotheses 1 and 2, which predicted that women's preferred relationship maintenance strategies would vary according to (a) their endorsement of benevolent sexism and (b) the experimental condition. To test these hypotheses, I conducted a mixed 2 (benevolent sexism level: high and low) X 3 (partner condition: benevolent, hostile, and control) X 3 (relationship maintenance strategies: positive, negative, dissolution) ANCOVA.

Within-subjects variables included the Positive Relationship Maintenance strategies, Negative Relationship Maintenance strategies, and Relationship Dissolution measures. Between-subjects variables included benevolent sexism level and experimental condition. The mean levels of each Relationship Maintenance measure served as the dependent variable.

All main effects and interactions from the ANCOVA are presented in Table 3. Mauchly's test of sphericity was violated, so all results are reported with Greenhouse Geisser. The main effect for the covariate ethnicity was nonsignificant, and it did not significantly interact with the outcome variable. Inconsistent with Hypotheses 1 and 2, the 3-way interaction between participants' benevolent sexism endorsement, the experimental condition, and relationship maintenance strategies was nonsignificant. Thus, women's benevolent sexism endorsement and the hypothetical male partner's sexism did not interact to influence their endorsement of relationship maintenance strategies. Findings, however, did reveal a significant Condition X Relationship Maintenance Strategy interaction, which indicates that the condition to which participants were assigned influenced their relationship maintenance strategy endorsement. This result was partially consistent with expectations; therefore, I proceeded to probe the interaction through post-hoc pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction. I probed the interaction in two different ways to examine differences *within* each condition and *across* conditions. The interaction probes are presented in Table 4 and Figure 2.

Table 3. Analysis of Covariance Testing Hypotheses 1 and 2.

| Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Partial Eta Squared
RM Strategy	.53	1.65	.32	.24	.00
RM Strategy X Ethnicity	2.38	1.65	1.44	1.07	.01
RM Strategy X BS-level	4.70	1.65	2.84	2.11	.01
RM Strategy X Condition	16.23	3.31	4.91	3.64*	.03
RM Strategy X BS-level X Condition	1.06	3.31	.32	.24	.00
Error	454.50	337.13	1.35		
Ethnicity	1.77	1	1.77	1.66	.01
BS-level	3.90	1	3.90	3.81	.02
Condition	1.62	2	.81	.80	.01
BS-level X Condition	1.77	2	.89	.87	.01
Error	208.67	204	1.02		

Note. BS = Benevolent Sexism, RM = Relationship Maintenance. $*p < 0.05$.

Table 4. Bonferroni Comparisons for RM Strategies Within and Across Conditions.

	RM Strategies		
Condition	Positive	Negative	Dissolution
Benevolent	0.18 (0.94)[a]	-0.18 (1.05)[a,b]	-0.33 (0.90)[b][a]
Hostile	-0.24 (1.03)[a]	-0.02 (1.16)[a]	0.22 (1.09)[a][b.c]
Control	-0.06 (1.34)[a]	0.01 (0.92)[a]	0.12 (0.93)[a][c]

Note. RM = Relationship Maintenance. Row superscripts denote significant difference within conditions at $p < 0.05$. Column subscripts denote significant difference across conditions at $p < 0.05$. All values reflect z scores.

Figure 2.
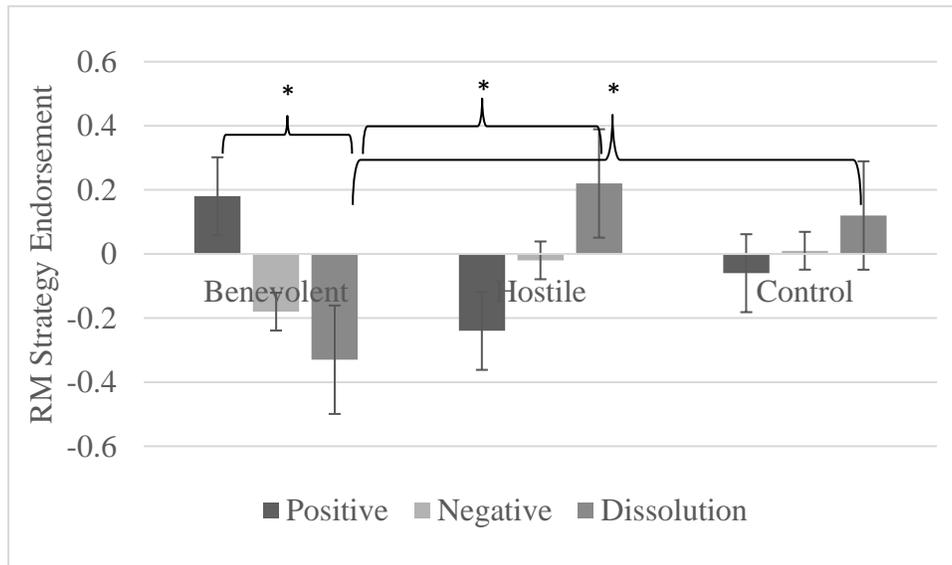
Relationship maintenance strategies across and within conditions. RM = Relationship Maintenance. All values reflect z scores. Significant differences reported at $p < .05$

Relationship maintenance strategies within each condition. All means and standard deviations from the pairwise comparisons are presented in Table 4. In the first interaction probe, I examined the rank-order of relationship maintenance strategies *within* each condition. Within the benevolent partner condition, participants were significantly more likely to endorse positive relationship maintenance strategies (*M* = .18, *SE* = .11), than they were to endorse dissolution (*M* = -.33, *SE* = .11). This illustrates that regardless of women's own benevolent sexism endorsement, they endorsed positive relationship maintenance strategies more strongly than dissolution when the hypothetical male partner endorsed benevolent sexism. There were no differences of relationship maintenance strategy in the hostile partner or control conditions.

I used a one sample *t*-test to examine whether participants' endorsement of positive relationship maintenance strategies in the benevolent partner condition was significantly different from the mid-point of the scale. The test was significant, *t*(75) = 23.19, *p* < .001. Therefore, women in the benevolent partner condition endorsed positive relationship maintenance strategies significantly more than a neutral amount.

Relationship maintenance strategies across conditions. In the second interaction probe, I examined mean differences in relationship maintenance strategies *across* conditions (see Table 4). Results revealed that relationship dissolution endorsement varied by condition such that participants were more likely to endorse it in the hostile partner condition (*M* =.22, *SE* =.12), as compared to participants in the benevolent partner condition (*M* = -.33, *SE* = .11). Furthermore, participants in the control condition (*M* = .12, *SE* = .11) were significantly more likely to endorse relationship dissolution, as compared to participants in the benevolent partner condition (*M* = -.33, *SE* =.11, *p* = .02). These results illustrate that participants were most likely

to endorse dissolution in the hostile partner and control conditions, and they were least likely to endorse dissolution in the benevolent partner condition.

In sum, although the hypothesized three-way interaction was not significant, a meaningful two-way interaction emerged between the experimental condition and relationship maintenance strategies, which demonstrates that the hypothetical male partner's endorsement of sexism influenced women's endorsement of relationship maintenance strategies. Specifically, the interaction illustrated that when the hypothetical male partner endorsed benevolent sexism, participants endorsed positive relationship maintenance more than dissolution. The interaction also revealed that dissolution was more prominent in the hostile and control conditions than it was in the benevolent condition. That is, participants were less likely to endorse dissolution when the male partner endorsed benevolent sexism, even though the relationship was described as troubled.

Hypothesis 3: Mediation

A second set of analyses tested Hypothesis 3 which predicted that relationship-contingent self-esteem would mediate the association between benevolent sexism and relationship maintenance strategies, specifically positive relationship maintenance strategies and negative relationship maintenance strategies. I tested two mediation models. In the first mediation model, I anticipated that women with higher endorsement of benevolent sexism would also report higher endorsement of relationship-contingent self-esteem, which in turn would be associated with higher endorsement of positive relationship maintenance strategies. In the second mediation model, I anticipated that women with higher endorsement of benevolent sexism would report higher endorsement of relationship-contingent self-esteem, which in turn would be associated with higher endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies. The mediation models

were tested in Mplus version 7.4 (Muthén and Muthén 1998–2013). Results of these analyses are

presented in Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3.
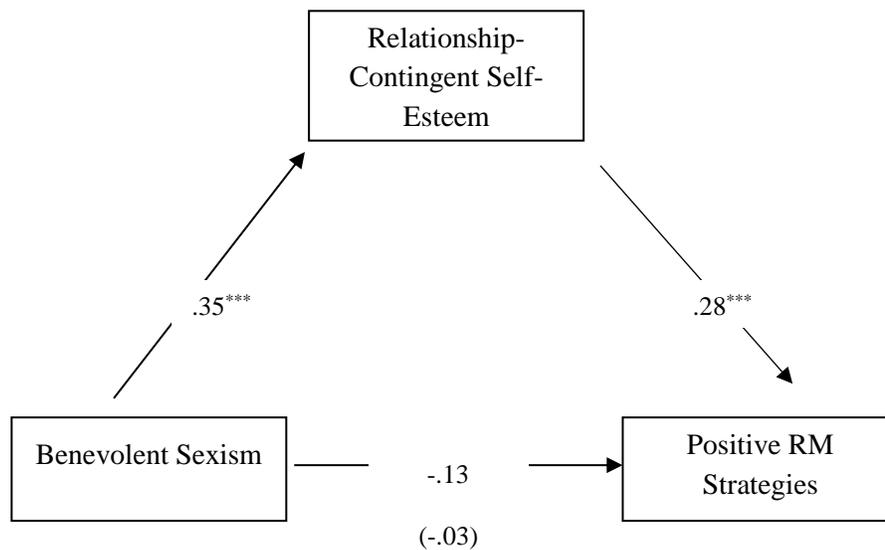
Mediation model depicting associations among benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and positive relationship maintenance strategies. RM = relationship maintenance. $^*p <$ .05 $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$.
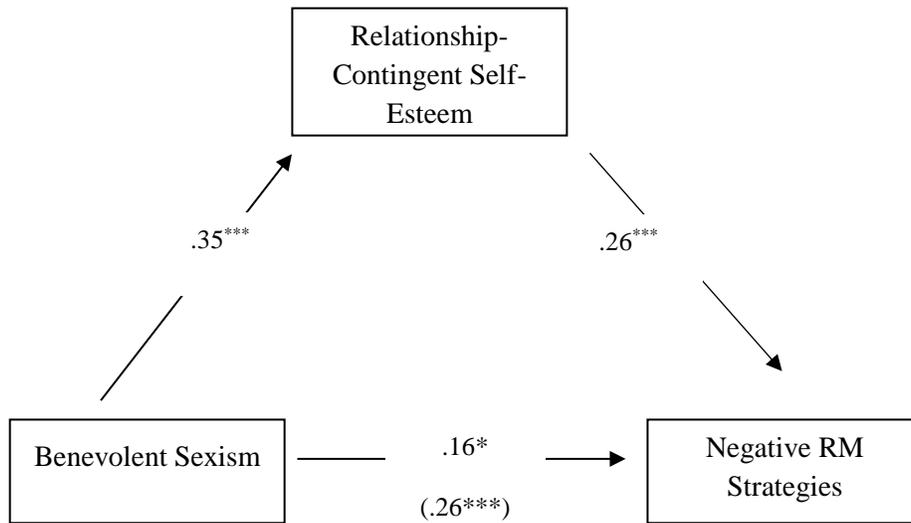
Figure 4.

Figure 4. Mediation model depicting associations among benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and negative relationship maintenance strategies. RM = relationship maintenance. $^*p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$.

For model 1, I began by testing the direct path from benevolent sexism to positive relationship maintenance strategies. This path was nonsignificant ($\beta = -.01$, $p = .89$). There was not an association between benevolent sexism and positive relationship maintenance strategies, suggesting that there was only partial support for Hypothesis 3.

For model 2, I began by testing the direct path from benevolent sexism to negative relationship maintenance strategies. This path was significant ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001.$). Next, I tested a model that included relationship-contingent self-esteem as a mediator (see Figure 4). As expected, participants who were higher in benevolent sexism were also higher in relationship-contingent self-esteem ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$). Correspondingly, participants who were higher in relationship-contingent self-esteem were more likely to endorse negative relationship maintenance strategies ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$). Further, the indirect effect was significant ($\beta = .09$, p

<. 001), which suggests that relationship-contingent self-esteem functions as a mediator. Although including relationship-contingent self-esteem in the model reduced the direct effect of benevolent sexism on negative relationship maintenance strategies, this path was still significant ($\beta = .16$, $p = .03$). Taken together, these findings indicate that relationship-contingent self-esteem partially mediates the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies.

It is interesting to note that although the 3-way interaction did not reveal that women's benevolent sexism endorsement influenced their preferred relationship maintenance strategy, the mediation model revealed a significant association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies. I included potential explanations for these contradictory results in the discussion section.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The current research focused on why some women remain in troubled romantic relationships and how they maintain these relationships. In carrying out this research, I built on existing literature demonstrating that women who endorse benevolent sexism tend to have troubled relationships (Casad et al., 2015; Hammond & Overall, 2014; Hammond & Overall, 2013). To my knowledge, this was the first study to test for associations among benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and relationship maintenance strategies. Findings provide a novel contribution to the field by demonstrating that even women low in benevolent sexism want to maintain a troubled relationship with a partner who endorses benevolent sexism. This study also demonstrated that relationship-contingent self-esteem partially mediated the association between benevolent sexism and women's endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies. This finding suggests that women who endorse benevolent sexism tend to invest their identity in romantic relationships, which in turn leads them to maintain troubled relationships through negative strategies.

Hypotheses 1 and 2: Factors Influencing Women's Preferred Relationship Maintenance Strategies

Results of this study built on prior research demonstrating the appeal of benevolent sexism (Glick et al., 2000); it was not surprising that women endorsed dissolution more strongly in the hostile partner and control conditions than they did in the benevolent partner condition. However, it was surprising that women's own benevolent sexism did not play a role in this effect. Prior research on attitude similarity effect shows that people tend to like others who share similar attitudes (e. g., Byrne, 1971); based on this effect, it seems likely that women who endorse benevolent sexism would like a partner who also endorses benevolent sexism, and

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women who do not endorse benevolent sexism would not like a partner who endorses benevolent sexism. Prior research on partner attraction and likability, has illustrated that even high-feminist and low-feminist women rated high benevolent sexism profiles of men as more attractive and likable than profiles of men low benevolent sexism (Bohner, Ahlborn, & Steiner, 2010.) Something similar may be occurring in the current study because even women low in benevolent sexism indicated that they would rather continue a troubled relationship with a partner who endorses benevolent sexism than dissolve the relationship. It is unclear why I did not receive support for the interaction, but it is possible that women both high and low in benevolent sexism alike prefer partners who endorse benevolent sexism. Still, there is also a methodological explanation for why I did not receive support for women's own benevolent sexism interacting with the partner's sexism to influence relationship maintenance strategies. Specifically, it is also possible that this interaction was not significant because I assessed benevolent sexism using a median split which may have reduced the power too much to detect the hypothesized associations.

Hypothesis 1 examined women's relationship maintenance strategies in the benevolent partner condition. Prior research illustrates that women who adhere to traditional gender roles are likely to use positive relationship maintenance strategies to maintain a relationship (Stafford et al., 2000). Prior research also finds that women low in benevolent sexism proscribed negative traits for an ideal partner (Lee et al., 2010), indicating that women who do not endorse benevolent sexism would be more likely to dissolve than maintain a troubled relationship. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 predicted that when a hypothetical male partner endorsed benevolent sexism, women high in benevolent sexism would endorse positive relationship maintenance strategies most strongly, whereas women low in benevolent sexism would endorse dissolution

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most strongly. This hypothesis was not fully supported because women's benevolent sexism did

not influence their relationship maintenance strategy endorsement as predicted. However, this

hypothesis received partial support in that women in the benevolent partner condition endorsed

positive relationship maintenance strategies more strongly than negative relationship

maintenance strategies and dissolution. Similar to Bohner et al. (2010), this finding indicates that

benevolent sexism is so appealing that a partner who endorses benevolent sexism is attractive

even to women who do not strongly endorse benevolent sexism themselves. Examining

relationship maintenance strategies across conditions revealed that if the partner endorsed hostile

sexism or was nonsexist, women recognized the relationship as troubled and believed that exiting

it was a better choice than maintaining the relationship.

Hypothesis 2 examined women's relationship maintenance strategies in the hostile

partner condition. Prior research shows that women high in benevolent sexism respond with

negativity when they are in a relationship with a man who does not endorse benevolent sexism

(Overall et al., 2011). However, there was no difference in the endorsement of relationship

maintenance strategies in the hostile partner condition. Therefore, this hypothesis was not

supported. A possible explanation for why this hypothesis did not receive support is because

hostile sexism is unappealing alone; women often accept hostile sexism only when it is

accompanied by benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001). This is because benevolent sexism

assures women of being adored and protected. Therefore, accepting hostile sexism can be viewed

as a trade-off that women are willing to accept if their partner also endorses benevolent sexism.

If benevolent sexism is not present and there is no promise of adoration from the partner, women

are likely to view hostile sexism as unacceptable. Consistent with this possibility, dissolution

was endorsed more strongly in the hostile partner condition than the benevolent partner condition.

Hypothesis 3: Mediation

The purpose of Hypothesis 3 was to understand what the motivating factor was for women to remain in a troubled relationship. Prior research on benevolent sexism has illustrated that women who endorse benevolent sexism invest a significant amount of effort and personal identity into their romantic relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Based on research on contingent self-esteem, women who invest a large part of their identity into their relationship would be unlikely to leave a troubled relationship because dissolving a relationship would hurt their self-esteem (Park et al., 2011). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 predicted that relationship-contingent self-esteem would mediate the association between benevolent sexism and relationship maintenance strategies. In other words, women with higher benevolent sexism would more strongly endorse positive and negative relationship maintenance strategies *because* they have relationship-contingent self-esteem.

I obtained partial support for Hypothesis 3. Results of the first mediation model revealed that relationship-contingent self-esteem did not mediate the association between benevolent sexism and positive relationship maintenance strategies. However, results from the second mediation model showed that relationship-contingent self-esteem partially mediated the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies. These results suggest that within troubled relationships, women high in benevolent sexism engage in negative relationship maintenance strategies in part because of their relationship contingent self-esteem. This finding adds to research demonstrating the damaging nature of benevolent sexism

in romantic relationships (Hammond & Overall, 2013; Hammond & Overall, 2014; Overall et al., 2011).

Practical Implications

This study illustrated that women were more likely to remain in a troubled romantic relationship if their partner endorses benevolent sexism. This finding suggests that benevolent sexism can negatively impact women in romantic relationships, which is a pattern that has been obtained in prior research (Casad et al., 2015; Hammond & Overall, 2013) For instance, benevolent sexism may have the potential to promote intimate partner violence. Papp, Liss, Erchull, Godfrey, and Waaland-Kreutzer (2017) found that women who endorsed romantic beliefs were likely to romanticize controlling behavior, and they were also likely to experience intimate partner violence. Therefore, encountering intimate partner violence is a potential concern for women high in benevolent sexism. This may be because women are more likely to accept hostile sexism as long as it is accompanied by benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001); that is, women may be willing to experience hostile sexism's negativity if it is accompanied by the adoration benevolent sexism provides.

Limitations and Future Directions

The conclusions drawn from the research could be strengthened through several methodological changes. First, I did not find support for the hypotheses predicting that women's benevolent sexism levels would influence the type of maintenance strategy they endorsed. This may be because the manipulation was so robust that it trumped participants' own benevolent sexism level. For example, the vignette and the manipulation may have had such a strong effect that it washed out effects of participants' own benevolent sexism level. Therefore, it would be beneficial for future research to vary the intensity of the argument described in the vignette to

understand whether women's benevolent sexism levels influence relationship maintenance strategies. As noted earlier, it is also possible that participants' benevolent sexism level did not influence relationship maintenance strategy preferences because using a median split for benevolent sexism resulted in too little variability and lower power. I used a median split in order to utilize a repeated measures ANCOVA design. Yet the mediation model, which treated benevolent sexism as a continuous variable, illustrated that benevolent sexism was associated with negative relationship maintenance strategies. Thus, it is possible that examining benevolent sexism without a median split may illustrate that participants' benevolent sexism levels do impact relationship maintenance strategies.

This study could also be improved by increasing external validity. An improvement in external validity could be achieved through instructing participants to observe real couples interacting rather than just reading about a hypothetical couple. For example, Overall et al. (2011) utilized a similar approach in which participants observed real couples' discussions. Participants were then instructed to code the interactions for hostile communication and compared the observation to each partner's hostile sexism and benevolent sexism endorsement. Future research could use this approach to examine benevolent sexism endorsement and relationship maintenance strategies by measuring each couple's endorsement of benevolent sexism and having blind coders observe their interactions for positive relationship maintenance and negative relationship maintenance. Another strategy for increasing external validity is to recruit participants currently in a romantic relationship and instruct them to respond to the relationship maintenance measures based on their own experiences. Hammond and Overall (2013) adopted a similar approach in which women who were currently in a romantic relationship were instructed to keep a diary of their relationship problems and how they

evaluated the relationship. This type of research design would provide a more realistic measure of how heterosexual women maintain romantic relationships. Furthermore, these methodological changes could provide a more accurate portrayal of behavior regarding relationship maintenance strategies because participants would be reporting behaviors they actually engaged in rather than imagining how they might behave.

Last, this study could be improved by focusing more directly on ethnic differences in benevolent sexism. I controlled for ethnicity because Women of Color reported significantly higher benevolent sexism endorsement as compared to White women (for similar patterns, see Hayes & Swim, 2013; Robnett et al., 2012), and I wanted to ensure that all differences were a product of the variables of interest. Future research should make ethnic differences a focal point to understand how benevolent sexism endorsement differentially influences relationship maintenance strategies among women from diverse backgrounds.

Conclusion

The current study found that women endorsed positive relationship maintenance strategies more than they endorsed relationship dissolution when a hypothetical male partner was described as endorsing benevolent sexism, despite the relationship being described as troubled. Additionally, this study found that relationship-contingent self-esteem mediated the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies, which illustrates that women who endorse benevolent sexism engage in maladaptive maintenance strategies because their identity is invested in their relationship. Surprisingly, participant benevolent sexism did not influence relationship maintenance strategies, but partner benevolent sexism did. This suggests that benevolent sexism is so appealing in a partner that even women who do not endorse benevolent sexism are willing to maintain a troubled relationship with a partner who

endorses benevolent sexism. Results from this study also suggest that relationship-contingent self-esteem encourages women who endorse benevolent sexism to remain in a troubled relationship as a way to bolster their self-esteem. However, these women prefer to maintain their relationship with maladaptive relationship maintenance strategies, which is likely because the relationship is not meeting their expectations.

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2016-2017   Instructor, Department of Psychology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2015-2016   Graduate Assistant, Department of Psychology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2014-2015   Graduate Assistant, Department of Psychology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2013-2014   Graduate Assistant, Department of Psychology, University of Dayton

2012-2013   Graduate Assistant, Department of Psychology, University of Dayton

AWARDS & HONORS

2017-2018   UNLV Graduate College Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship

2017   UNLV Graduate College Summer Session Scholarship

2017   Graduate and Professional Student Association Research Forum Presentation Award- Honorable Mention

2016   Graduate and Professional Student Association Travel Award

2016-2017   UNLV Graduate College Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship

2016   College of Liberal Arts Ph.D. Student Summer Faculty Research Stipend

2016	Graduate and Professional Student Association Research Forum Presentation Award- First Place
2015	Graduate and Professional Student Association Travel Award
2009-2012	Summa Cum Laude, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Personality and Social Psychology
American Psychology Association- Division 35

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Robnett, R. D., **Underwood, C. R.,** Nelson, P. A., & Anderson, K. J. (2016). "She might be afraidof commitment": Perceptions of women who retain their surname after marriage. *Sex Roles, 75*, 500-513.

MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED OR IN PREPARATION

Robnett, R. D., Buck, J. E., **Underwood, C. R.,** & Thoman, S. E. (2017). *Sexism and gender stereotyping.* Invited submission under review.

Underwood, C. R., & Robnett, R. D. (2017). *Redefining tradition: Generational differences in same-sex couples' surname decisions.* Manuscript in preparation.

Underwood, C. R., & Robnett, R. D. (2017). *Associations among benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and relationship maintenance strategies in heterosexual women.* Manuscript in preparation.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Underwood, C. R., & Robnett, R. D. (2018, March). *"But he treats me like a princess.": Benevolent sexism and women's relationship maintenance strategies.* Poster to be presented at the meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, GA.

Thoman, S. E., **Underwood, C. R.,** Stephens, A. K., Buck, J. E., & Robnett, R. D. (2016, October). *Test tubes or soccer practice: Retention and work-life balance among women in STEM.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Gender Development Research Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Underwood, C. R., Thoman, S. E., Buck, J. E., Robnett, R. D., & Barakat, M. (2016, October). *Redefining tradition: Generational differences in same-sex couples' surname decisions.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Gender Development Research Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Luu, N., **Underwood, C. R.,** & Robnett, R. D. (2016, January). *Anything you can do, I can do too: Attitudes toward couples who violate marriage proposal traditions.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.

Underwood, C. R., Luu, N., & Robnett, R. D. (2016, January). *Mrs?: Perceptions of women who do not change their surname after marriage.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.

Underwood, C. R., & O'Mara, E. M. (2014, February). *Women's endorsement of benevolent sexism varies across the menstrual cycle.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Austin, TX.

Underwood, C. R., Brady, E. A., Indriolo, C. A., Lenze, C. M., O'Mera, B. K., & O'Mara, E. M. (2013, April). *Is chivalry really dead? It depends on when you ask: Women's reception of benevolent sexism changes across the menstrual cycle.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Brother Joseph W. Stander Symposium at the University of Dayton, Dayton, OH.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor
  PSY 101: Introduction to Psychology (Fall 2016-Spring 2017)

SERVICE

INTRAMURAL
2017-2018   UNLV Experimental Student Committee- Treasurer
2016-2017   Outreach Undergraduate Mentorship Program- Graduate Student Mentor
2016-2017   UNLV Experimental Student Committee- Vice President
Spring 2016   UNLV Women in STEM Discussion Group- Founding Member
2015-2016   UNLV Experimental Student Committee- Quantitative Emphasis Representative

EXTRAMURAL
Fall 2016   Invited Panel at Nevada State College- Graduate School Admissions
2016-2017   Psychology of Women Quarterly Student Editorial Board
2015-2016   Psychology of Women Quarterly Student Editorial Board