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Multiple Approaches to Examining Gender Norms in Romantic Relationships

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MULTIPLE APPROACHES TO EXAMINING GENDER NORMS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

Romantic relationships are essential to the human experience, and gender stereotypes are so ingrained they can be automatic. In this dissertation, I address three empirical questions through both quantitative and qualitative research methods, all of which contribute to the growing body of literature on gender norms and romantic relationships. In Chapter 2, I present a mixed-methods study that examines how heterosexual men reason about benevolent sexism. Results revealed themes of equality in the workplace and men's roles as providers. In Chapter 4, I implemented a two-study research design to understand how heterosexual women and men reason about troubled romantic relationships. Path analyses revealed that romantic attachment, benevolent sexism endorsement, and relationship-contingent self-esteem work in conjunction to influence how heterosexual women and men might maintain a troubled romantic relationship. Finally, in Chapter 6 I present a mixed-methods approach to understanding how same-sex couples reason about their surname preferences. In contrast to prior research (Clarke et al., 2008), the participants in this study were more likely to want to change their surname, although surname preferences were varied. Thematic analysis revealed themes of establishing a sense of family and how having children might influence participants' surname preferences. Overall, the results of these three studies demonstrate the ubiquitous nature of gender norms within romantic relationships.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the season finale of *90 Day Fiancé: Happily Ever After*, a reality TV show that follows the relationships and subsequent marriages of a group of individuals pursuing a fiancé visa, the featured couples discussed one couple's experience as the wife decided to change her name back to her familial surname, as was the custom in her culture. Her explanation for returning to her familial surname centered on a loss of identity and feeling disconnected from her past. Other contestants' opinions on her surname change focused on her disrespecting her husband, and he appeared hurt that she would change her name back to her familial surname. These comments suggested that the husband's masculinity was at stake because his wife had abandoned his surname. This example illustrates the damaging implications of both defying gender norms and adhering to gender norms within a romantic relationship. A decision that seems as simple as a woman changing or retaining her surname is complex and includes multiple layers of expectations and considerations for others' opinions. Not only did the woman in this example feel pressure from her husband and others to adopt his surname, but she also wrestled with cultural and familial implications of her surname decision.

There are many external pressures women face when grappling with a surname decision such as her partner's wishes, as others may view him as possessing more feminine traits if she retains her surname (Robnett et al., 2018), or she may be viewed as not committed to the relationship (Robnett et al., 2016). In addition to her partner's expectations and how others might view her as less committed to the relationship, there are also institutional factors that influence women's surname decisions. For example, women reference professional stability (Kline et al., 1996; Mills, 2003) and their experience with the "bureaucratic hassle" of surname changing (Ceynar & Gregson, 2012).

In these examples, it is clear that women face many external pressures when deciding whether to retain or change their surname. A surname decision is just one of many stereotypes that women navigate throughout their lives. Within romantic relationships, women must also face the consequences of adhering to or rejecting other traditions such as dating scripts, or the expectation that women support their partners and invest in their romantic relationship.

Research Agenda

In the aforementioned example from *90 Day Fiancé: Happily Ever After*, the contestants' reactions to a woman's nontraditional name choice illustrates how defying gender norms can lead to others' disapproval. More importantly, it can promote questions of who holds the power in the relationship as men may feel as if a woman changing her surname is a slight against his authority. The overarching objective of my research program is to understand connections between gender-role norms and gendered power dynamics in romantic relationships.

Heterosexual relationships tend to be characterized by many gendered practices such as a gendered division of labor and gendered dating norms. When people *defy* these heterosexual relationship norms, they often experience negative feedback such as the backlash the husband and wife both experienced in the TV show. Likewise, people can also experience negative outcomes when they *adhere to* traditional gender norms. For example, the woman from the TV show indicated that adopting her husband's name made her feel disconnected from her family and culture. Given that romantic relationships are an important part of human nature (Meier & Allen, 2008), it is important to understand relationship norms and the challenges surrounding these norms more fully.

My research program can be divided into four goals. *My first goal is to understand negative implications of adhering to and defying gender roles.* This line of research illustrates

how gender norms create a double bind in which people face challenges for adhering to gender norms as well as defying them. I demonstrated that people who adhere to gender norms experience negative outcomes because they are constrained into a particular role. For example, in Underwood and Robnett (2023) we demonstrated that having a partner who endorses benevolent sexism may encourage women to maintain negative romantic relationships. This study provides an example of the negative outcomes women experience from adhering to gender norms. My research has also demonstrated that rejecting gender norms can lead to negative outcomes. For example, in Robnett et al. (2016), we demonstrated that women who chose to retain their surnames were viewed as less committed to their marriage relative to women who adopted their husbands' surnames. Thus, these two studies illustrate how adhering to gender norms or rejecting gender norms can have negative outcomes for women.

My second research goal is to understand ideologies that contribute to power dynamics in romantic relationships. I demonstrated that people perpetuate gender norms in their romantic relationships, which have further implications for power dynamics. For example, in Underwood and Robnett (2023) we demonstrated that women prefer to maintain a negative romantic relationship with a partner who endorses benevolent sexism. This reflects my goal because benevolent sexism is an ideology that promotes men's power and women's subordination in relationships. Underwood and Robnett (2023) demonstrated that women and men endorse benevolent sexism, an ideology that reduces women's power, to such an extent that they are willing to maintain a negative relationship characterized by benevolent sexism.

My third goal is to give a voice to populations that are typically understudied in romantic relationships. For example, in Underwood and Robnett (2019) I examined surname trends and rationales of individuals in same-sex relationships. Findings showed that, in contrast to

heterosexual couples, same-sex couples provide varied responses on how to decide on a surname. In another study, I used qualitative methods to understand how men reason about benevolent sexism (Underwood, Robnett, & John, 2023). Men's views of benevolent sexism have been largely ignored, and the majority of benevolent sexism research is from women's perspectives. In particular, men of color are often left out of the literature, so we employed a diverse sample of men from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Although women's perspectives are inherently valuable when studying benevolent sexism, it is also critical that we understand men's experiences since benevolent sexism also promotes specific guidelines for men to uphold. Additionally, heteronormativity and masculinity create a set of ideal guidelines for men, so it is important to understand how men deal with these constraints. Collectively, these findings illustrate that men shared disparate reasons for endorsing benevolent sexism that centered on promoting equality and providing for women.

Finally, my fourth goal is to understand how heteronormativity constrains people from all backgrounds. Throughout my dissertation, I argue that societal structures such as heteronormativity are responsible for perpetuating relationship norms. Specifically, the negative outcomes that people experience in romantic relationships stem from heteronormative expectations and are perpetuated through heteronormativity. For example, my research illustrates that, although benevolent sexism is associated with multiple negative outcomes (e.g., relationship dissatisfaction [Hammond & Overall, 2013], rape myth acceptance [Durán et al., 2010], and sexual objectification [Fitz & Zucker, 2015]), heteronormativity upholds benevolent sexism as an ideal relationship norm. Consistent with this point, in Underwood, Robnett, and John (2023) I examined men's beliefs regarding benevolent sexism. In this study, some men indicated that they felt pressured to uphold the tenets of masculinity. Similarly, in Underwood

and Robnett (2023) we found that women and men felt compelled to remain in negative romantic relationships as long as the relationship partner reflected the culturally appropriate masculine and feminine traits. Finally, in Underwood and Robnett (2019) we examined same-sex couples' surname preferences. Whereas surname preferences of heterosexual individuals have been widely studied, my overall goal of this project was to understand surname preferences of the LGB community. This was an especially important goal in order to combat the heteronormativity that is present in most psychological research and in society in general. For example, several participants explained how they grappled with their surname decision because of the heteronormative history of name changing.

In sum, my dissertation and research agenda aim to understand the challenges surrounding gender adherence to relationship practices. The research I have conducted has important basic and applied implications. For example, the qualitive research I have conducted on men's reasoning about benevolent sexism (Underwood, Robnett, & John, 2023) serves as an example of basic research that could pave the way for additional future research; perhaps this study could serve as a starting point for future researchers to develop a new measure of benevolent sexism that incorporates ideologies related to masculinity and culture. The research I have conducted on gender norms illustrates that these attitudes are pervasive and fundamental to human existence. The surname conversation at the beginning of the chapter provides a clear example of the applied nature of this research and that people grapple with how gender norms such as surname practices might reflect their relationships.

Overview of Manuscripts

In my first dissertation manuscript (Underwood, Robnett, & John, 2023), we used qualitative methods to understand how men reason about benevolent sexism. This was important

because there is a substantial amount of research regarding women's experiences with benevolent sexism, but men's experiences and beliefs have not yet been examined. Furthermore, there is a lack of research regarding how men of color reason about benevolent sexism. Because benevolent sexism leads to so many negative outcomes, it is important to understand how men reason about benevolent sexism so we can see a fuller picture of why benevolent sexism is so pervasive, despite its negative implications. In order to accomplish this, we presented participants a prompt reflecting protective paternalism, one of the subscales of the benevolent sexism portion of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and asked participants to respond to how they felt about the prompt. Qualitative results indicated that men who measured low in benevolent sexism discussed themes that focused on equality, whereas men who measured high in benevolent sexism discussed themes that focused on providing for their family. Quantitative results indicated that protective paternalism was the only facet of benevolent sexism that was endorsed higher than a neutral amount.

In my second dissertation manuscript (Underwood & Robnett, 2023), we developed two studies to investigate how people respond to benevolent sexism within the context of a romantic relationship. In Study 1, women read a prompt of a negative romantic relationship, and then they were randomly assigned to read a profile of the male target in the prompt who either endorsed benevolent sexism or a control. We found that women were more likely to maintain the relationship when the male target was described as endorsing benevolent sexism. In Study 2, men read the same prompt, but it depicted a woman who endorsed benevolent sexism toward men. We found that romantic attachment patterns worked in concert with benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem to predict how men and women might maintain a problematic romantic relationship with a hypothetical partner who is described as endorsing

benevolent sexism. Whereas my first dissertation manuscript reflected men's thoughts concerning benevolent sexism, my second dissertation manuscript examined men and women's decisions concerning how they would respond to a partner who endorsed benevolent sexism.

In my third dissertation manuscript (Underwood & Robnett, 2019), I examined a different gender norm, surname preferences, within the context of same-sex relationships. In order to accomplish this, I presented participants with a prompt asking them what their plans were for their surname. I found that, relative to previous research, it was somewhat more common for participants to report wanting to share a surname with their partner. People often cited children or creating unity as a reason for wanting to share a surname. Whereas my first two manuscripts focused on heterosexual individuals' relationship norms, this manuscript focused on relationship norms of individuals within the LGB community.

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“I Think Men Should Work More Because Women Help More in the Home Setting.”

Men’s Perceptions of Benevolent Sexism

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Abstract

Benevolent sexism is a multifaceted heterosexual gender-role attitude that undermines women's agency in heterosexual romantic relationships and society more generally. Research is clear in demonstrating that men often display higher levels of benevolent sexism than do women, yet little research has examined the reasoning that men provide for endorsing the core tenets of benevolent sexism. Even less common is research that considers perceptions of benevolent sexism among men from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Therefore, the current study used a mixed-methods approach to (1) test for ethnic differences in men's endorsement of benevolent sexism and (2) explore the reasoning underlying men's endorsement of benevolent sexism. Participants were 189 undergraduate men from a range of ethnic backgrounds. In contrast to prior research that has conceptualized benevolent sexism as a monolithic construct, quantitative analyses focused on men's endorsement of three facets of benevolent sexism: protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy. Of these three facets, findings demonstrated that participants most strongly endorsed protective paternalism. Accordingly, the qualitative analyses sought to provide deeper insight into the reasons men provide for endorsing protective paternalism and whether these reasons vary by ethnicity. Results revealed that men discussed equality and their responsibility to care for the woman or children in their life when they were asked to reason about protective paternalism. Implications focus on how precarious masculinity or men's motivations to act as allies against sexism might influence how men reason about protective paternalism.

Chapter 2: Introduction

Ambivalent sexism is a heteronormative gender-role ideology that encompasses both hostile and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism is an overtly negative type of sexism that punishes women who defy traditional gender norms. Benevolent sexism is a more subtle, seemingly positive type of sexism that prescribes that women who fulfill traditional feminine gender roles will be rewarded with adoration and protection from men. Benevolent sexism's seemingly positive nature makes it difficult to combat. Indeed, despite its negative consequences for individual women and structural gender equity, many heterosexual women nonetheless perceive benevolent sexism as desirable courtship behavior (Bohner et al., 2010). Although the courtship behaviors characteristic of benevolent sexism often occur within same-sex relationships (e.g., paying for a date's meal or holding the door), benevolent sexism is an inherently heteronormative ideology.

Although there is a large body of research examining women's beliefs and experiences regarding benevolent sexism, research on men's beliefs regarding benevolent sexism is limited. In a recent review of ambivalent sexism, Connor and colleagues (2016) called for additional research that seeks to understand why heterosexual men endorse benevolent sexism. This is because men's gender-role attitudes play a central role in maintaining patriarchal social systems. Therefore, the purpose of this mixed-methods study is to attain a deeper understanding of how men reason about benevolent sexism. Specifically, we use quantitative data to examine the degree to which heterosexual men endorse different facets of benevolent sexism. Then we turn to qualitative data to more deeply understand how men reason about specific ideologies that are inherent in benevolent sexism. As detailed below, we also filled a gap in existing work by testing for ethnic variation in men's attitudes toward benevolent sexism.

Men's Endorsement of Benevolent Sexism

Although a variety of studies have examined heterosexual women's endorsement of benevolent sexism (e.g., Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Bohner et al., 2010; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998), relatively few have focused on heterosexual men. The limited research that does exist has demonstrated that heterosexual men benefit from endorsing benevolent sexism in several regards. In particular, men who endorse benevolent sexism report feeling as if their relational needs are fulfilled (Hammond & Overall, 2015). This likely occurs because men's benevolent sexism endorsement corresponds to their romantic partners endorsing higher levels of benevolent sexism over time (Hammond et al., 2016). As women endorse benevolent sexism more, they provide more relationship-oriented support to their romantic partners (e.g., emphasizing to their boyfriend or husband that the relationship is a secure place to pursue goals), which leads to men feeling more intimacy in their relationship and a sense of relational fulfillment (Hammond & Overall, 2015).

Men may also endorse benevolent sexism because it facilitates their ability to hold more power than women in their romantic relationships. Specifically, benevolent sexism makes it difficult for women to establish a sense of competence and autonomy in both personal and professional spheres (Robnett et al., 2019). For instance, when men endorse benevolent sexism, they tend to offer solutions for their romantic partner rather than encouraging her to find her own solution (Hammond & Overall, 2015). This type of dynamic can lead to women feeling less competent in their personal lives. Benevolent sexism also encourages men to prioritize their careers so that they can provide for their family, which can contribute to women's careers being a lower priority within the family (Hammond & Overall, 2015). Indeed, research shows that if a woman wants to obtain a higher-paying or more prestigious career, her romantic partner may be

less likely to support her if he is high in benevolent sexism (Chen et al., 2009; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Relatedly, men and women who endorse benevolent sexism tend to believe that women should sacrifice their career success for relationship security (Overall & Hammond, 2017). These factors work together to undermine women's sense of competence and enhance their psychological and material dependence on their romantic partners.

Although endorsing benevolent sexism confers advantages to men in heterosexual romantic relationships, benevolent sexism can also present challenges for men. For instance, women tend to report that they expect men to engage in behavior that aligns with protective paternalism, a facet of benevolent sexism, within romantic relationships (Sarlet et al., 2012). This expectation can put pressure on men to make decisions on women's behalf and be responsible for their well-being. Moreover, as with any gender-role norm, failing to comply with the tenets of benevolent sexism can lead to men experiencing role strain and backlash (Hammond & Overall, 2017). As an illustrative example, benevolent sexism encourages chivalrous courtship behavior such as the man paying for the woman's dinner while on a date (Paynter & Leaper, 2016). If a man rejects this tradition and instead requests that the couple split the bill, he may encounter resistance, hostility, or decreased romantic interest from the woman. Hence, men who do not endorse benevolent sexism can be put in a challenging double-bind in courtship scenarios.

Individual Variation in Men's Benevolent Sexism Endorsement

Several studies have identified sources of individual variation in men's benevolent sexism. These sources of individual variation include personality traits, religiosity, and level of education (e.g., Fisher & Hammond, 2019; Glick et al., 2002; Sibley et al., 2007). Ethnicity may be another source of individual variation in benevolent sexism endorsement; however, one major gap in the ambivalent sexism literature is the lack of research regarding intersectional identities

and sexist attitudes. One of the few studies that does exist suggests that the ambivalent sexism inventory does not capture the experiences of African American and Latinx individuals in a psychometrically sound manner (Hayes & Swim, 2013). It is possible that cultural differences are responsible for the scale's poor reliability among participants of color, but research has yet to systematically document variation in how men from diverse backgrounds reason about benevolent sexism. More research is needed to understand whether benevolent sexism holds the same meaning for men across different sociodemographic groups.

Benevolent Sexism Facets

Another objective of the current research is to build on research that has conceptualized benevolent sexism as a monolithic construct by examining it in a more nuanced manner. More specifically, benevolent sexism is typically measured through the ambivalent sexism inventory (see Glick & Fiske, 1996), which conceptualizes benevolent sexism as having three components: protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy. *Protective paternalism* is the notion that men should care for women in the way a father would; *complementary gender differentiation* is the notion that men and women hold different but complementary personality traits (i.e., men are naturally strong and authoritative, whereas women are naturally soft and good listeners); and *heterosexual intimacy* is the notion that women are sexually pure and suggests that romantic intimacy is a necessity for men that only a woman can fulfill.

Although the three facets of benevolent sexism reflect different manifestations of sexism, empirical research tends to use them to create a composite "benevolent sexism" scale. Only a handful of studies have examined benevolent sexism at the subscale level (i.e., Burn & Busso, 2005; Kuchynka et al., 2018; Oswald et al., 2018; Salomon et al., 2020; Sarlet et al., 2012). Of

these papers, most have focused on women. This work tends to show that women encounter behaviors that align with protective paternalism more often than behaviors that align with the other two subscales (e.g., Salomon et al., 2020), and that experiencing acts of protective paternalism is associated with higher levels of self-doubt and lower levels of self-esteem and psychological well-being (Oswald et al., 2018). In the present study, the qualitative analyses focus on how men reason about protective paternalism because it is the facet of benevolent sexism that women report experiencing most often and because it appears to be associated with deleterious outcomes.

The Present Study

The present study aimed to fill three gaps in the literature. First, we sought to understand men's rationales for endorsing benevolent sexism, which is important because men play a prominent role in perpetuating benevolent sexism. Second, we collected data from an ethnically diverse sample in order to more deeply understand attitudes among men from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. In this regard, the current study responds to a call from Hayes and Swim (2013) to conduct more research that examines ethnic variation in benevolent sexism. Third, rather than examining benevolent sexism as a monolithic construct, we instead examined it at the subscale level. Although some research has illustrated that women differentially respond to the different benevolent sexism subscales (Oswald et al., 2018), corresponding work has not been carried out with men.

To accomplish these goals, we took a mixed-methods approach to understanding men's benevolent sexism endorsement. Analyses were guided by four research questions. Our first and second research questions were addressed through quantitative analyses. Specifically, Research Question 1 is as follows: *Which of the three facets of benevolent sexism (i.e., protective*

paternalism, complementary gender differentiation, heterosexual intimacy) is most strongly endorsed? From there we built on prior research (e.g., Hayes & Swim, 2013) by further examining whether there is ethnic variation in men's benevolent sexism subscale endorsement. Therefore, our second research question asked the following: *Are there ethnic differences in the degree to which participants endorse the three facets of benevolent sexism?* Research Questions 3 and 4 were addressed through qualitative data and focused specifically on how men reason about protective paternalism, which is a widely endorsed facet of benevolent sexism. Specifically, Research Question 3 asked the following: *How do men reason about protective paternalism?* Finally, Research Question 4 aimed to address the following: *Does men's reasoning about benevolent sexism vary according to participants' ethnic background?*

Method

Participants

Participants were 189 heterosexual undergraduate men. Participants were recruited from the psychology participant pool at a large public university in the Western United States. Participants' ages ranged from 18-47 (M_{age} = 20.88, *SD* = 4.66). Given the focus on ethnic comparisons, analyses focused on participants who identified as White (35%, *n* = 66), Hispanic/Latinx (33%, *n* = 62), and Asian/Pacific Islander (32%, *n* = 61), which were the largest ethnic groups in the sample. Although the original sample included participants who identified with other ethnic groups and/or as multiracial, these groups were too small to include in the statistical analyses. Most participants reported that they were not currently in a committed romantic relationship (61%, *n* = 115). The majority of those who were in a committed romantic relationship reported that their relationship had lasted less than a year (34%, *n* = 25); other

participants reported longer-term relationships lasting up to one year (4%, *n* = 16), one to two years (19%, *n* = 14), two to three years (15%, *n* = 11), and more than three years (27%, *n* = 20).

Procedure

Participation took place via an anonymous online survey. Participants were compensated with partial course credit. Participants completed the ambivalent sexism inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996), a demographics questionnaire, and read the vignette described below. After reading the vignette, they responded to an open-ended question asking what they thought about the ideals described in the vignette. Data collected from this survey have not been used in any prior publications.

Benevolent sexism. Benevolent sexism was assessed using the benevolent sexism subscale of the ambivalent sexism inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The subscale is an 11-item measure, which participants endorsed using an 8-point Likert-scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 8 (*strongly agree*). 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." Cronbach's alpha obtained for this subscale in this study was acceptable (α = .71.), but when we further examined reliability by race, we found that the subscale was higher for White men (α =.79), as compared to Latino men (α = .63) and Asian American men (α = .67). Thus, Cronbach's alpha for Latino and Asian American men was slightly lower than the commonly accepted .70 threshold, which is consistent with patterns obtained in previous research with ethnically diverse samples (e.g., Hayes & Swim, 2013).

Vignette. The vignette described below was adapted from the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and reflects wording consistent with the protective paternalism component of the benevolent sexism subscale. After reading the vignette, participants responded

to an open-ended prompt indicated below, asking participants to share their thoughts about the beliefs described in the vignette. [1]

> *Protective Paternalism:* "Some people believe that men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives. For example, some people believe that a man should work an extra job or more hours so the woman in their life won't have to work as much, whereas other people believe that men and women should both work equally to make ends meet. What do you think about this belief?"

Results

Quantitative Analyses

To address Research Questions (RQ) 1 and 2, we conducted quantitative comparisons to examine which benevolent sexism subscale participants most strongly endorsed (RQ 1) and whether endorsement systematically varied on the basis of ethnicity (RQ 2). We simultaneously investigated these research questions using a 3 (subscale type: complementary gender differentiation, protective paternalism, heterosexual intimacy) x 3 (ethnicity: White, Asian American, Latinx) repeated measures ANOVA with the three subscale ratings as the dependent variables, subscale type as the within-subjects factor, and ethnicity as the between-subjects factor.

Prior to our analyses, we tested the assumption of sphericity. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had not been violated, X^2 (2) = 3.511, p = .173. As such, we proceeded with the test of within-subjects effects (Table 2.1), which indicated that there was a significant main effect of subscale type on subscale ratings, $F(2, 360) = 10.81$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .057$. The interaction between subscale type and ethnicity on subscale ratings was not significant, $F(4, 360) = 1.64$, $p = .164$, partial $\eta^2 = .018$, indicating there were no ethnic

[1] Although participants responded to three vignettes, each describing a facet of benevolent sexism, we chose to focus solely on the Protective Paternalism vignette for the purpose of this manuscript. Qualitative analyses pertaining to the other two vignettes will be included in the Appendix.

differences in subscale ratings when also accounting for subscale type. The main effect of ethnicity was not significant ($F(2, 180) = .06$, $p = .942$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$. With a Bonferroni correction, an examination of mean-level endorsement for each benevolent sexism subscale (Table 2.2) indicated that men's mean rating of the protective paternalism subscale ($M = 4.77$), the complementary gender differentiation subscale ($M = 4.49$), and the heterosexual intimacy subscale ($M = 4.34$) did not differ significantly from each other, $p = 1.000$. However, the protective paternalism subscale was the only subscale to have a mean rating significantly greater than its midpoint of 4.5, $t(184) = 3.25$, $p = .001$. Given these results, we decided to focus exclusively on men's qualitative responses regarding the protective paternalism subscale (for responses from other subscales, see appendix).

Table 2.1

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance

Source	**Sum of Squares**	***df***	**Mean Square**	***F***	**Sig.**	**Partial Eta Squared**
Subscale	17.73	2	8.86	10.81	< .001	.06
Subscale X Ethnicity	5.38	4	1.34	1.64	.164	.02
Error	295.30	360	.82			

Table 2.2

Means and Standard Deviations of the Benevolent Sexism Subscales

Subscale	Mean	Standard Deviation
Complementary Gender Differentiation	4.49	1.17
Protective Paternalism	4.77	1.17
Heterosexual Intimacy	4.34	1.29

Qualitative Analyses

Data Preparation. To address RQ 3 and RQ 4, which relied on qualitative data, we conducted two preliminary steps. First, we used a median split on each of the quantitative subscales to classify participant responses as either *high* or *low* in *protective paternalism.* Using a median split allowed us to generate a separate set of codes for participants who endorse benevolent sexism to greater versus lesser degrees. All participants who scored at the median were randomly assigned to either the high or low category. The median for Protective Paternalism was 4.75 (scale range 1-8; low protective paternalism, $n = 89$; high protective paternalism, $n = 58$).

Qualitative. Analyses focused on participants' responses to the aforementioned open-ended vignette. Responses were coded inductively through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Specifically, the lead author began by reading through the full corpus of data several times and developing a coding manual. To test for inter-rater reliability, the lead author and a

trained research assistant double-coded 50% of the responses. Kappa values are included in each section below. The few discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus between the two coders. The themes were not mutually exclusive; participants' responses were coded for all themes that were applicable. We did not code responses that provided idiosyncratic or irrelevant rationales (e.g., "I honestly believe that unless that woman is the mans spouse, then its not his job to sacrifice his own well-being to provide for just a girlfriend that can be easily replaced ").

Low protective paternalism. Among participants who scored below the median in protective paternalism, qualitative themes reflected the following rationales: (1) *Equality*, (2) *Pick Up the Slack*, (3) *Social-Structural Issues*, (4) *This Belief is Outdated*, (5) *Faux Equality*, and (6) *Depends on the Couple*. Interrater agreement was very good (kappa = .83).

"Equality." The majority of participants (n = 71, 80%) who scored low on protective paternalism shared responses that were focused on how labor should be distributed equally in a relationship. Ultimately, they argued that both partners in the relationship should be working an equal amount. Although some participants provided short responses to this question, such as Alfred[2], who merely stated, "I believe men and women should work the same amount of time," other participants provided rich rationale for their beliefs.

One sentiment reflected that, although work should be shared equally, it is ultimately up to each couples' personal preferences. For example, James stated, "I think that the responsibility is equal among both parties. If one is ok with doing more, then so be it. It is more a matter of doing what you both want to do and coming to an agreement."

[2] All names are pseudonyms.

Another emergent rationale was that it is important for both partners to work so they can provide for themselves. For example, Rudy shared:

> Men and Women should work equally, in their careers / jobs as well as at home. At any time if one person was to pass away or walk away from the relationship there is no reason why that individual left behind shouldn't be self-sustaining.

Similarly, Jesse stated:

> I think that a man and a women should both have their own goals. Both the man and woman should be able to be independent from one another in case either of them cant work or has to pick up for their partner.

Another common subtheme that emerged is the concern that if one person works more, it may negatively affect the relationship. For example, Andrew stated, "…If a man sacrifices his own well-being who knows if that could affect the relationship entirely." Similarly, Kevin shared:

> I believe that a healthy relationship is built upon the idea that both people are giving 60 percent to the relationship. I think that both the man and woman in the relationship should work equally to make ends meet. If just one person does double the work then that would create an unbalance in the relationship, most likely resulting in conflict and problems later on.

"Pick up the Slack." A small portion of the participants (n = 16, 18%) who scored low on protective paternalism shared responses that were focused on how sacrifice is part of a relationship. However, they specified that sacrifice is not specifically a man's role; responses in this category reflected gender-neutral language. For example, John David stated:

> I believe men and women share financial responsibilities now and that it should be decision between two individuals of who needs to work more or less. Factors impacting this decision would be whose job makes more money, how much each of them wants to do it, and what is best for them as a couple.

Participants discussed how temporary circumstances might influence a person's choice to work more. Some circumstances involved raising children or pursuing education could influence decisions to work more. For example, Luis stated:

> It honestly depends on what their relationship looks like. If there is a child at home, it is up for discussion on who should stay home to take care of the baby. At the same time, it is also up for discussion based on skill set and overall goals for the family. For example, my girlfriend is about to enter medical school and I'm about to get a degree in mechanical engineering, we'll both be able to make ends meet easily, however, when it comes down to chasing our dreams, we're both open and flexible in covering for one another if necessary. I believe it comes down to the respect and trust the couple has for each other…

Illness was another temporary circumstance that participants mentioned that may influence the division of labor. For example, Marc shared, "I would say both parties should be able to contribute to the relationship, unless there is a problem. A problem being maybe a disability or maybe a tough time like a death or something."

"Social-Structural Issues." A small portion of the participants (n = 7, 8%) who scored low on protective paternalism discussed social-structural or social justice issues such as patriarchy, feminism, and gender norms and how these social-structures influence the division of labor. For example, Maxwell shared:

> I think its misguided. I believe that men and women should work equally hard, but that we must be careful to correctly identify how the amount of work being done is measured. For instance, taking care of children is a full-time job, one that traditionally and socially women are generally still expected to do, whereas men are not typically considered the primary caregiver. I think jobs such as these need to be taken into consideration when we are equalizing the "amount of work" done…

Some participants described how they rely on feminist ideals to influence how they divide their labor. For example, Richard shared:

> I think if you are a true feminist, that which subscribes to the belief that men and women should be treated equally in all manners of life, then each person in the relationship

> should be able to work so long as they are able to do so. If one partner is satisfied with being taken care of then so be it.

Similarly, Ian stated:

> I think it's idiotic and anti-feminist. The core tenant of feminism is equality of the sexes. Should it be necessary, I think the woman in the (heterosexual) relationship should need to work just as much. However, this goes without saying that the man should also contribute to child rearing and domestic work. Too often is the narrative pushed that women need to work without acknowledging the fact that men must also contribute equally to work in the home sphere.

"This Belief is Outdated." A small portion of the participants (n = 7, 8%) who scored low on protective paternalism stated that it used to be a common belief that men should work and sacrifice their well-being for the woman in their life, but they state that this belief has changed. For example, Alex shared, "I believe men and women should all work equally and not live based off old fashioned ideas where the woman stays at home and the man works." Similarly, Neil stated:

> What I think about this belief is that we should be able to do what makes us happy. Men change overtime and I get that. My dad is old school and believes men should provide for the family and do whatever it takes for them to be good without having to work. Others now a days believe otherwise as women are more involved and independent. Personally I believe it should be equal to make ends meet so both partners can in a way help the other succeed and not just one partner carry a huge burden on their back.

"Faux Equality." A small portion of the participants (n = 11, 12%) who scored low on protective paternalism mentioned that work should be divided equally between the couple; however, they then went on to describe the division of labor in a very stereotypical and gendered way, suggesting that although labor should be equal, women's duties remain in the home, whereas men's duties are in paid labor. On the surface, these responses seem progressive, but they highlight regressive ideas. Specifically, many of these responses centered on how the man should work more so that the woman can perform traditionally gendered labor such as caring for children or the home. For example, Jeremy stated:

> I think it is situational, for example if a man and a woman are both health and capable of working, then they should both work to the best of their abilities. If a woman is pregnant, or just had a kid then I feel the man should work more because a mother and child should have time together…

Similarly, Patrick shared, "I believe that men and woman should both contribute equally unless maybe you have a child and its easier for her to stay at home with the child so you don't have to pay for a babysitter."

"Depends on the Couple." Finally, the last emergent theme consisted of a considerable portion of the participants (n = 18, 20%) who scored low on protective paternalism and mentioned that the way work is divided should be situational and up to the couple to decide. For example, Corey stated:

> I believe that a man and woman should come to agree on what they want to do. At the end of the day different jobs lead to different outcomes and hours. I don't care who works the most I care if we work together to make sure we have enough to live happily.

High protective paternalism. Among participants who scored above the median in protective paternalism, qualitative themes reflected the following rationales: (1) *Man's duty*, (2) *Pregnancy/Family*, and (3) *Depends on the Couple*. Agreement was good (kappa = .81).

"Man's Duty." A sizable portion of the participants (n = 24, 41%) who scored high on protective paternalism shared responses that were focused on how it is specifically the man's duty to act as a provider. Some participants provided short responses to this question, such as Kennedy, who merely stated, "I think men should work more because women help more in the home setting." Other participants provided rich rationale for their beliefs. One sentiment reflected that, although women should be allowed to work if they wish, men do not have the option of choosing whether to work. For example, Kyle stated, "I think that men should provide

more than the woman in their lives, but woman should be able to work as much as they want if that is what they enjoy."

Another sentiment that emerged was one that aligned very closely with protective paternalism, the belief that women should not experience stress, and that women should have an easier life than men. Brian agreed with this sentiment, sharing:

> I believe that everyone including male and female is able to make their own choice as they please. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion and own thoughts. Though everyone is offered that opportunity to have their own thoughts and opinions, I believe that men should still be able to take care of women, because we should always respect and care for women and treat them as equal.

"Pregnancy/family." The next most populated theme (n = 19, 33%) of high protective paternalism included responses that were similar to "man's duty", but more specifically state that men's responsibility to provide is because of his family, whereas the previous theme focuses more generally on providing for his partner. For example, Greg stated, "A man should take the lead role when it comes to sacrifice to provide for their women/family. However, if both are able to work, men and women should attempt to work equally."

Similarly, Austin shared:

> I think that society has mostly accepted the male to be the working horse of the relationship. That being said, I think that if it comes down to it, the male should sacrifice for his significant other. Ideally it should be an equal thing and both parties should pull an equal amount of weight. Whether it be one works at home or take care of the kids, and the other actually holds a position that makes the income. This is ideal, however it is not like that majority of the time because of societies views on it…

Some participants shared that they believed the only time men should work more paid hours is in the event of pregnancy and child-rearing. For example, Keaton shared:

> I believe that a man and a woman should both work equally to provide for each other. It's not fair that a guy has to break his back while the woman just cooks and cleans, just as it wouldn't be fair if the woman was breaking her back while the man was just sitting at

> home watching T.V. The only time when a woman should work less is when she's pregnant, and later on has to raise the kid.

Interestingly, Balel cited research to support his views:

> I personally believe if said man and woman have children, the man should be held more responsible for the financial stability since according to studies a male presence isn't necessary for a childs proper development. The woman of course may still work if they so choose to but If she chooses to stay home with the children its up to the man to take care of nearly everything else.

"Depends on the Couple." Finally, the last emergent theme consisted of a portion of the participants (n = 19, 33%) who scored high on protective paternalism and mentioned that the way work is divided should be situational and up to the couple to decide, but participants agreed that they would work more so that their partner would not have to work as much. For example, Logan stated:

> As a man, I would do anything for the woman in my life. I would discuss these things with her. If she chooses not to work as much then of course I would work more to provide. It just depends on the relationship that you have. Of course it is ideal if a man and woman work equally but there could be other factors such as children. If I had a wife that wanted to stay home with the children I would figure out anyway to make that possible.

Additionally, Frank shared:

> While I do believe that both women and men should work equally to earn pay, I think that when it will really come down to it, men, and women too, will try to earn any extra they can. I wouldn't want to point my finger at a man and say that they should be working extra for the woman, but I think that is something that they would do to themselves. I would do that to myself, were I in such a situation. It's just something that will be done. I think that a man WILL work the extra hours by their own will, but I don't think they HAVE to and must do so of they're bad people.

His statement suggests that men are inherently inclined to work more if the need arises.

Chi-Square Analyses. We ran a series of chi-square analyses to address RQ 4, which investigated whether men's reasoning about benevolent sexism varies according to participants' ethnic background. We examined how participants responded to the open-ended question about

protective paternalism. Only one significant chi-square emerged from these analyses. Specifically, white men (n = 15, 57.7%) were significantly more likely than Asian American (n = 5, 19.2%) and Latinx men (n = 6, 23.1%) to mention a "man's duty" in their responses, X^2 (2) = 6.936, p = .031, Cramer's V = .192. That is, responses from white men were overrepresented in the "man's duty" theme relative to responses from Asian American and Latinx men.

Discussion

Findings from the current study build on a small body of existing research focusing on how men reason about benevolent sexism (e.g., men who endorse benevolent sexism also tend to invest in romantic relationships and family [Good & Sanchez, 2009]). Quantitative analyses revealed that protective paternalism was the only facet of benevolent sexism that was endorsed significantly higher than the midpoint of the scale. Although ethnic differences were not obtained, this is consistent with prior research, which demonstrated that benevolent sexism scales have weaker psychometric properties for participants of color (Hayes & Swim, 2013). Thematic analysis revealed that participants provided varied rationales for protective paternalism endorsement. Most notably, men who measured low in protective paternalism discussed how women and men should work an equal number of hours, whereas men who measured high in protective paternalism discussed how it is a man's responsibility to care for his partner and family. As discussed below, men's varied reasoning may be due in part to masculine ideals such as culture of honor or their commitment to serve as an ally against sexism. Quantitative analyses further examined whether the benevolent sexism facet varied by race/ethnicity. Analyses indicated that white men were overrepresented within the "man's duty" theme. Below, we describe our findings in greater detail. We conclude by highlighting limitations and corresponding future directions.

Overview of Key Themes

Low protective paternalism. The most populated theme from the low protective paternalism group focused on issues of *equality*, in which participants shared that women and men should both work a similar amount. There is a small body of research focusing on men as allies against sexism. Although men are less likely than women to recognize sexism (Swim et al., 2001; Becker & Swim, 2011), when men stand up against sexism, they are evaluated more positively than women who stand up against sexism (Eliezer & Major, 2012). Therefore, it is important that men assume these roles as allies for women. Indeed, Conner and Fiske (2017) noted that the possibility of cultivating allyship with men is one of the main reasons why men's endorsement of benevolent sexism merits greater attention.

There are complex motivations behind men's decisions to act as allies against sexism ranging from altruistic reasons to self-serving reasons. Research addressing the self-serving motivations for men to act as allies describe the benefits men might experience when women and men work an equal amount (Warren et al., 2021). Further, research on men in male-dominated disciplines found that men who supported women's place in the workforce indicated that women's involvement at work promoted men's personal growth and work-family enrichment (Warren et al., 2021). Thus, it is possible that our participants indicated that men and women should work equally as a means to benefit themselves.

Participants may have also supported women in the workforce for altruistic reasons. A growing body of diversity and inclusion research that echoes social-justice ideals argues that women belong in the workforce because it is fair and just, and that women should be able to pursue their goals and reach their full potential (e.g., Warren et al., 2019). For example, men who are passionate about diversity and are high in inter-cultural empathy (communicating with people

from varied backgrounds) are likely to support women's presence in the workplace (Javidan et al., 2016). Consistent with these findings, some of the participants in the current study discussed how *social-structural issues* prevent women from excelling in the workforce. Javidan et al. (2016) discussed altruistic reasoning why men might promote women's presence in the workplace, whereas Warren et al. (2021) discussed self-serving motivations for why men might promote women's presence in the workplace. Future research should disentangle prosocial and self-serving motivations to understand men's roles as allies. Understanding men's varied motivations for women's workplace presence is beneficial because when gender identity is unrelated to access to resources, the potential for conflict is reduced (Nishii, 2013). That is, if men's desire for women's representation in the workplace is not due to a self-serving reason, there is less of a likelihood of workplace conflict.

A small group of participants in the current study agreed that men and women should work an equal amount; however, they employed regressive ideals, or *faux-equality*, to explain their reasoning. This paradoxical reasoning is present in the literature that investigates whether people view the gendered division of labor as fair. In a study by Koster et al. (2022), men were more likely than women to report that unequal division of household labor was fair, particularly when the household labor involved childcare. Although the authors did not speculate about why men view unequal household labor as fair, it is possible that their participants and the participants from the current study who provided *faux equality* responses reflect a shared belief: Namely, that men and women have inherently different skills, and that because women are more natural caretakers, their contribution to childcare does not count as true labor.

Whereas the majority of emergent themes in the low protective paternalism group discussed women and men's equal work as it relates to productivity and labor, a small group of

participants discussed how equal work relates to romantic relationship functioning. Specifically, these participants explained that sometimes men or women need to work additional hours and *pick up the slack* in order to care for their family. However, participants emphasized that this is not a gendered practice, and whomever is able to work more should if it is necessary in case of illness or job loss. Equity theory posits that although couples may be contributing to the relationship in different ways and at different times, in a healthy relationship, both parties feel as if they are benefiting and contributing (Dainton & Gross, 2008; Lively et al., 2010). Therefore, participants whose responses fell into the *pick up the slack* category may view picking up the slack as a means to maintain equity in the relationship. That is, the man in the relationship might work more hours at one point, but the woman may be contributing to the relationship in other ways.

High protective paternalism. Most responses in this category came from two themes that focused on *men's duty* to work more, or more specifically that men are responsible for caring for their *families* or partner if she is *pregnant*. These responses align with Connor and Fiske's (2016) argument that men may endorse benevolent sexism because it provides a prosocial way for them to display their masculinity. For example, pulling out a chair for a woman (benevolent sexism) and criticizing a woman in a leadership position (hostile sexism) are both ways that men can assert their masculinity, but the former is generally more accepted than the latter in most social circles.

The notion that men's endorsement of benevolent sexism is an outlet for their masculinity aligns well with a robust literature that focuses on the concept of precarious manhood. According to this literature, masculinity is tenuous and easily threatened; men therefore feel obligated to prove their masculinity through observable behaviors such as aggression (see Vandello et al.,

2008; Vandello & Bosson, 2013). Precarious manhood might be particularly salient within honor cultures in which men's reputation is intertwined with his ability to care for and control his family, and if a woman he is responsible for acts in a way that is considered inappropriate, he is viewed as unmanly (Bosson & Vandello, 2011). It is possible that masculine ideologies such as precarious masculinity might be driving men's belief that it is their responsibility to work more to care for their partner or family in order to protect their own reputation.

Race/Ethnicity

Quantitative results did not reveal differences in race/ethnicity. We obtained low reliability with the benevolent sexism subscales in the Asian American and Latinx samples, which is consistent prior research (Hayes & Swim, 2013). Although quantitative results did not indicate differences in racial/ethnic differences, qualitative analyses revealed that white men's responses were overrepresented in the "man's duty" theme. In light of research on the culture of familismo and individuals of Latinx ethnicities, this was a somewhat unexpected result. The culture of familismo prescribes that people of Latin America cultures should prioritize family over the self and emphasizes family interconnectedness (Campos et al., 2014). Similarly, filial piety is a concept derived from Chinese culture that emphasizes caring for family and parents (Li et al., 2021). Protective paternalism, familismo, and filial piety appear to be parallel concepts, but perhaps a specific construct measuring participants' alignment with these ideologies would shed light on whether these constructs are related.

Limitations and Future Directions

Findings from this study should be viewed in light of several limitations. First, the quantitative analyses examined whether men's self-reported ethnic identity was associated with mean differences in their benevolent sexism endorsement. Findings were nonsignificant, but this

may be because our measure of ethnicity did not include nuanced information about cultural ideologies that tend to covary with ethnicity. Accordingly, future research that seeks to understand racial-ethic differences in gender-role attitudes should employ a measure of acculturation, or the extent to which an individual adopts or identifies with a new culture There are several available scales that measure the extent to which disparate racial groups identify with their culture such as the General Ethnicity Questionnaire (Tsai et al., 2000), the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (Cuellar et al., 1995), or the Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale (Stephenson, 2000). Future research should consider examining participant endorsement of benevolent sexism alongside their level of acculturation to understand if culture is influencing whether men endorse protective paternalism.

Whereas the current research demonstrated how men reason about protective paternalism, future research should further examine antecedents for how men reason about protective paternalism. Specifically, we speculate that precarious masculinity or men's roles as allies might be responsible for how men reason about protective paternalism. In order to examine these as antecedents, future researchers should examine masculine ideologies that align with the desire to protect a partner, as well as employing measures that aim to understand men's roles as allies against sexism. Disentangling the motivations for protective paternalism will help shed light on men's views of benevolent sexism and how it relates to romantic relationship functioning.

Our sample was young with a median age of 20 years old. It is possible that with a more diverse age group, we would have found different results. Prior research has reported a positive linear relationship between men's ages and benevolent sexism endorsement within a large sample comprising a wide age range (Hammond et al., 2018). Therefore, with a more mature sample we would also expect to see higher endorsement of protective paternalism.

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Chapter 3: Bridge

In Underwood, Robnett, and John (2023), we used a mixed-methods approach to examine how heterosexual men reason about benevolent sexism. Prior research on benevolent sexism has focused mostly on women's experiences, so we chose to focus on heterosexual men's perceptions of benevolent sexism. Moreover, we collected data from a racially and ethnically diverse sample because Men of Color are often excluded from the literature and because research on benevolent sexism indicates poor psychometric properties when examined within a racially and ethnically diverse sample. Therefore, it was important to us to hear perspectives from Men and Color and to learn about how they reason about benevolent sexism.

Participants responded to a vignette that described a belief that was consistent with protective paternalism, one of the three facets of benevolent sexism. Women report experiencing this facet most often and it leads to higher levels of anxiety and lower levels of self-esteem, as compared to the other two facets of benevolent sexism. Therefore, we wanted to shed light on how men reason about protective paternalism.

Qualitative results revealed that men who measured low in protective paternalism discussed themes consistent with how men and women should both work an equal amount, whereas men who measured high in protective paternalism discussed themes consistent with how it is a man's duty to care for the woman in their life. Moreover, quantitative analyses revealed that white men were overrepresented among the "man's duty" theme.

Implications from this study focus on how individual differences such as masculine ideologies might influence whether men view it is their duty to care for women. In the next study, we examined how other individual differences influence men and women's willingness to maintain a troubled romantic relationship.

In Underwood and Robnett (2023), we examined how benevolent sexism, attachment style, and relationship-contingent self-esteem might influence whether participants indicate the desire to maintain a troubled romantic relationship with a hypothetical partner described as endorsing benevolent sexism. In study 1, an experimental design revealed that, regardless of women's own benevolent sexism endorsement, they indicated that they would use positive relationship maintenance strategies to maintain a romantic relationship with a hypothetical partner who endorsed benevolent sexism, despite the relationship being described as troubled. Results from this study revealed the insidious nature of benevolent sexism. Study 2 expanded study 1 by introducing a path analysis to simultaneously examine additional individual difference variables such as attachment style. Implications of this study center on how examining these individual difference variables provide new insight into how people reason about romantic relationships.

Associations Among Benevolent Sexism, Attachment Styles, and Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem

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Abstract

The current research investigates associations among gender-role attitudes, personal attributes, and people's reasoning about heterosexual romantic relationships. Specifically, we examined whether benevolent sexism, self-esteem, and romantic attachment help to explain variation in how people respond to a troubled romantic relationship. Study 1 (N = 155) found that when heterosexual women were presented with a hypothetical description of a troubled heterosexual romantic relationship, they reported a desire to maintain the relationship when the man in the relationship was described as endorsing benevolent sexism. Additional analyses revealed that relationship-contingent self-esteem mediated the association between women's own benevolent sexism and their desire to employ negative relationship maintenance strategies (e.g., making the partner jealous) within the context of the troubled relationship. Study 2 (N = 190) built on the findings from Study 1 in two ways. First, we examined whether romantic attachment patterns work in concert with benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem to explain how participants reason about troubled relationships. Second, we included both women and men in the sample to examine whether the hypothesized relations were moderated by gender. As expected, path analysis demonstrated that anxious attachment indirectly predicted the use of negative relationship maintenance strategies via relationship-contingent self-esteem. The magnitude of these relations was comparable for women and men. Together, findings from Study 1 and Study 2 provide insight how sexism, attachment, and self-esteem might influence romantic relationship function.

Chapter 4: Introduction

Honeymooners was a popular television show that depicted a husband and wife, Ralph and Alice, with a troubled relationship. Ralph was largely unsuccessful at his job and in his role as a breadwinner, which led to many get-rich-quick schemes. Alice offered advice on why his schemes would not work, which elicited threats and insults from Ralph. In turn, Alice would undermine Ralph's threats by responding with sarcasm.

Although Alice and Ralph are fictional characters, the fraught dynamic that characterized their relationship is commonplace. The strategies people employ to cope with a troubled relationship can have serious implications, particularly if they decide to maintain the relationship instead of dissolving it. Accordingly, the current research seeks to better understand how people reason about heterosexual relationships that are characterized by high levels of conflict. Specifically, participants read a scenario describing a troubled relationship and indicated which relationship maintenance strategies they would use if they were in that situation. We anticipated that participants' preferred relationship maintenance strategies would be associated with individual difference variables (i.e., benevolent sexism, self-esteem, and romantic attachment) as well as features of the romantic relationship described in the scenario. We examined these relations in a sample of heterosexual undergraduate women in Study 1 and a sample of heterosexual undergraduate women and men in Study 2.

Study 1[3]

Ambivalent Sexism

According to ambivalent sexism theory (Connor et al., 2016; Glick & Fiske, 1996), attitudes toward women come in two complementary forms, which are termed hostile sexism and

[3] Portions of Study 1 formed the basis of the first-author's master's thesis.

benevolent sexism. *Hostile sexism* is characterized by overtly negative feelings and behaviors directed toward women as well as the belief that women are inferior to men. In contrast, *benevolent sexism* is characterized by the assumption that women require men's protection. Benevolent sexism is often perceived as positive or desirable because it prescribes that women should be protected and adored; however, the assumption underlying benevolent sexism is that women are incapable of caring for themselves (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Together, hostile and benevolent sexism create a strict set of gender norms for how an ideal woman should behave. More specifically, hostile and benevolent sexism work together by punishing women who reject traditional gender norms (hostile sexism) and celebrating women who uphold traditional gender norms (benevolent sexism; Glick & Fiske, 2001). International research supports the premise that hostile and benevolent sexism are "two sides of the same coin" by demonstrating that the two constructs are positively correlated across a variety of nations (Glick et al., 2000).

The current research focused on the benevolent component of ambivalent sexism because benevolent sexism tends to be closely linked with heteronormative romantic relationship attitudes (Bohner et al., 2010; Gul & Kupfer, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2015). Heterosexual men and women tend to endorse benevolent sexism within the context of their romantic relationships, and levels of benevolent sexism tend to be similar for women and men; however, women in countries with high levels of gender inequality often show higher levels of benevolent sexism relative to the men in these countries (Glick et al., 2000). This is likely because the women in these countries are willing to accept the negative outcomes of benevolent sexism (e.g., reduced autonomy) in exchange for the adoration and protection that benevolent sexism affords (Cross, 2018; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Although behaviors consistent with benevolent sexism may exist within a same-sex relationship (i.e., holding the door for a partner or paying for their meal),

the term *benevolent sexism* is reserved for attitudes and behaviors that afford women less power and status than men in society overall and in romantic relationships.

In addition to undermining women's agency within romantic relationships, benevolent sexism can also present more general challenges in romantic relationships. This is because women who endorse benevolent sexism tend to idealize the relationship, which leads to a discrepancy between expectations and reality. For instance, Casad et al. (2015) found that women who endorsed benevolent sexism reported relationship dissatisfaction because the reality of their relationship fell short of their high expectations. Furthermore, women who endorse benevolent sexism also tend to respond to their partners with negativity when their partners do not endorse benevolent sexism's ideals (Overall et al., 2011). This suggests that 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 that people use to prolong their romantic relationships (Canary & Stafford, 1992). The specific types of maintenance strategies that people employ are predictive of satisfaction, commitment, and love in romantic relationships (Stafford & Canary, 1991). Typically, relationship maintenance strategies are classified as either positive or negative actions (Goodboy, & Bolkan, 2011). Positive relationship maintenance strategies consist of prosocial actions that people utilize to strengthen the relationship such as communicating with the partner in a pleasant manner, using affirmations to communicate affection for the partner, and developing relationships with the partner's friends and family (see Stafford & Canary, 1991).

Although 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 utilize with the intent of restoring a relationship to a desired state (Dainton & Gross, 2008). These strategies include attempting to elicit jealousy in the romantic partner, arguing with and trying to control the partner, and refusing to interact with a partner if conflict is inevitable. People's use of negative relationship maintenance strategies may arise from relationship dissatisfaction (Dainton & Gross, 2008). This possibility is consistent with equity theory, which proposes that people who believe they are under-benefited in their relationship will attempt to restore equity in the relationship through maladaptive behaviors (Hatfield et al., 1985; Sprecher & Schwartz, 1994). In theory, under-benefited partners are motivated to restore equity because they feel as if they are investing more in the relationship than they are receiving from it, which causes relationship dissatisfaction (Sprecher, 1992). For instance, partners who perceive themselves as under-benefitted have a tendency to express anger in a destructive manner (e.g., attacking the partner), and they are unlikely to apologize when they feel guilty (Guerrero et al., 2008).

Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem

In the current research, we anticipated that relationship-contingent self-esteem would mediate the association between benevolent sexism and relationship maintenance strategies. 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. Being low in competency, autonomy, and relatedness appears to be both a cause and consequence of relationship-contingent self-esteem (Knee et al., 2008). For example, individuals may feel

incompetent in their relationship if they believe that the relationship is failing. A lack of *autonomy* in a relationship develops when a person perceives aspects of the relationship to be outside of their control. Not feeling *related* to the partner reflects 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 (Knee et al., 2013).

Benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem. In the current research, we anticipate that relationship-contingent self-esteem will work in concert with benevolent sexism to explain why some people—perhaps women in particular—maintain troubled relationships instead of exiting them. More specifically, benevolent sexism encourages women to be highly relationship-oriented and, relatedly, encourages women to derive their self-concept from their romantic relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee et al., 2010). This implies that benevolent sexism may foster relationship-contingent self-esteem, which may in turn encourage women to maintain (vs. dissolve) troubled romantic relationships. The hypothesized link between benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem is consistent with Sanchez and Crocker (2005), which found that contingent self-esteem mediated the association between women's gender-role adherence and their wellbeing. In other words, women who strove for gender-role adherence had lower levels of wellbeing because their self-esteem was contingent on how well they could fit the mold of stereotypical gender roles. Similarly, we expected that women who more strongly endorse benevolent sexism, a specific type of gender role, would also show heightened relationship-contingent self-esteem.

Relationship-contingent self-esteem and negative relationship maintenance strategies. When a poor relationship threatens relationship-contingent self-esteem, people may

engage in negative (i.e., maladaptive) relationship behaviors in order to improve their relationship. Crocker and Park (2003) pointed out that people with relationship-contingent self-esteem tend to have negative perceptions of their 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; Park et al., 2006.) In a study that took a dyadic approach, Knee et al. (2008) found that when both romantic partners were high in relationship-contingent self-esteem, they often reported that they were committed to the relationship despite not finding the relationship satisfying. This implies that the couples were clinging to an unsatisfactory relationship because their self-esteem was deeply invested in the relationship continuing.

Current Study

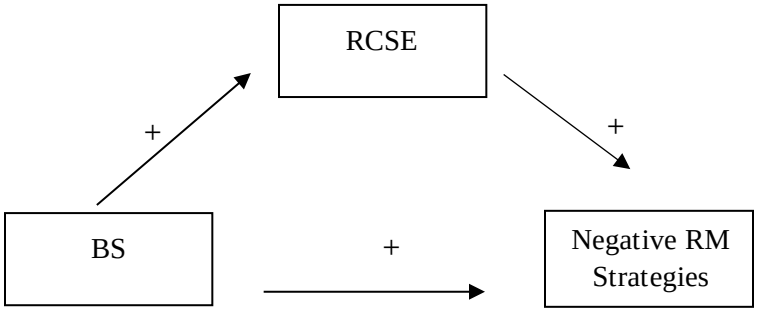
The overarching goal of Study 1 was to understand how women reason about troubled romantic relationships. To our knowledge, research has yet to examine whether individual difference variables work in concert with features of the relationship to explain how women respond when confronted with a troubled relationship. This is surprising in light of theoretical support for a link between benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and relationship maintenance strategies.

Drawing from ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), we began by examining whether women's response to a troubled relationship is influenced by whether the man in the relationship endorses benevolent sexism. Specifically, we presented participants with a vignette that described a high-conflict heterosexual romantic relationship. Then we manipulated whether

the man in the vignette endorsed benevolent sexism. **Hypothesis 1** predicted that women who read the "benevolent partner" vignette would be more likely than participants in the control condition to endorse positive (i.e., prosocial) romantic relationship strategies when asked how they would respond to the troubled romantic relationship described in the vignette.

We also examined whether relationship-contingent self-esteem would mediate the association between women's benevolent sexism and their preferred relationship maintenance strategies. Specifically, **Hypothesis 2** predicted that women with higher levels of benevolent sexism would show higher levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem, which would in turn predict stronger endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies (see Figure 4.1). As detailed earlier, women who endorse benevolent sexism tend to invest a large part of their identity in their romantic relationships (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996). Thus, women high in benevolent sexism may attempt to preserve their self-esteem by prolonging (vs. exiting) a troubled relationship (Park et al., 2011; Sprecher, 1992). Given that these women are choosing to remain in an unsatisfying relationship, equity theory indicates that they will attempt to prolong the relationship through the use of negative (i.e., maladaptive) relationship maintenance strategies (e.g., Park & Crocker, 2003).

Figure 4.1.



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

Study 1 Method

Participants

Participants were 155 heterosexual undergraduate women[4] (*M*age = 20.20, *SD* = 4.36, 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 large public university in the Western United States. Participants identified as Latina (30%, *n* = 47),

[4] In the original study, there were 223 participants and three conditions, one of which depicted a man who endorsed hostile sexism. We excluded the hostile sexism condition in the current set of analyses because it did not yield enough variation.

European American (28%, *n* = 43), East Asian (17%, *n* = 26), African American (10%, *n* = 16), Native American/Pacific Islander (5%, *n* = 8), South Asian (1%, *n* = 2), Middle Eastern (3%, *n* = 4), and Other (6%, *n* = 9). Most participants reported that they were currently in a committed romantic relationship (56%, *n* = 87), which they reported had lasted less than a month (9%, *n* = 8), one to six months (18%, *n* = 16), seven months to one year (21%, *n* = 18), one to two years (20%, *n* = 17), and more than two years (32%, *n* = 28). Nearly all participants were unmarried (97%, *n* = 150).

Procedure

Participation took place through an online survey. We randomly assigned participants to read one of two 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 et al., 1991), which were counterbalanced 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 et al., 2001), which were counterbalanced to account for order effects. The last measure participants completed was the demographic questionnaire.

Vignettes. 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 both conditions, participants read about a couple in an argument (Exposito et al., 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. In the **benevolent partner** condition, they read the below information after the vignette. We derived the manipulation from a similar study that examined how people respond to benevolent sexism (see Duran et al., 2014). The passage read as follows:

> "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."

Measures. After reading the vignette, participants in both conditions completed a self-report survey that includes the scales listed below.

Positive Relationship Maintenance Strategies. Positive relationship maintenance strategies were assessed using the relationship maintenance strategy measure (Canary & Stafford, 1992), a 29-item measure of positive relationship maintenance strategies. Participants endorsed items on the scale using a 7-point Likert-scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). To better fit the purpose of the current study, we altered the instructions. Instead of asking for the *frequency* in which participants engaged in maintenance strategies, we 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." Cronbach's alpha obtained for this measure in this study was excellent (α = .97).

Negative Relationship Maintenance Strategies. Negative relationship maintenance strategies were assessed using the negative maintenance scale (Dainton & Gross, 2008), a 20-

item measure of negative relationship maintenance strategies. Participants endorsed items on the scale 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, we slightly rephrased items and instructions to capture what participants *would* do in this situation, rather than what they have done in the past. Furthermore, we altered the scale to reflect how *likely* participants are to engage in these responses rather than how *often*. Cronbach's alpha obtained for this measure in this study was good ($\alpha = .87$).

Relationship Dissolution. Relationship dissolution was assessed using the willingness to dissolve the relationship subscale of the accommodation instrument used to assess exit strategies in response to negative relationship experiences (Rusbult et al., 1991). The subscale is a 4-item measure, which participants responded to 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, we slightly rephrased items and instructions to capture what participants *would* do in this situation, rather than what they have done in the past. Furthermore, we altered the response scale to reflect how *likely* participants are to engage in these responses rather than how *often*. Cronbach's alpha obtained for this measure in this study was acceptable ($\alpha = .76$).

Benevolent Sexism. Benevolent sexism was assessed using the benevolent sexism subscale of the ambivalent sexism inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The subscale is an 11-item measure, which participants endorsed using a 7-point Likert-scale from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). 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." Cronbach's alpha obtained for this subscale in this study was good (α = .86.)

Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem. Relationship-contingent self-esteem was assessed using the relationship-contingent self-esteem scale, an 11-item measure assessing participants' levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem (Knee et al., 2001). Participants endorsed items on the scale 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." Cronbach's alpha obtained for this measure in this study was excellent (α = .93).

Study 1 Results

Overview of Analyses

We conducted two sets of analyses. The goal of the first set of analyses was to investigate whether a hypothetical male partner's gender-role attitudes—namely, endorsement of benevolent sexism or no endorsement of sexism—influenced women's endorsement of positive relationship maintenance strategies, negative relationship maintenance strategies, and relationship dissolution in response to the troubled relationship vignette (Hypothesis 1). The second set of analyses used path analysis to test whether relationship-contingent self-esteem mediates the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies in the "benevolent partner" condition (Hypothesis 2).

Preliminary Analyses

Table 4.1 presents bivariate correlations among the continuous variables. The association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies was significant. In addition, the association between benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem was

significant, and relationship-contingent self-esteem was significantly correlated with negative relationship maintenance strategies. Together, these correlations provide preliminary support for the prediction that relationship-contingent self-esteem would mediate the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies. Although many of these correlation coefficients indicate statistical significance, the strength of the coefficients reflects weak to moderate associations and should be interpreted with caution (Okoglu, 2018).

Table 4.1. Bivariate Associations Among Continuous Variables.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. BS	--				
2. RCSE	.34**	--			
3. Positive RM	-.03	.23**	--		
4. Negative RM	.22**	.40**	-.10	--	
5. Dissolution	.04	.15	-.29**	.45**	--
Mean	2.16	3.30	5.72	2.43	1.76
Standard Deviation	1.01	.99	1.08	.80	1.57
Range	0-6	1-5	1-7	1-7	0-8

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

Hypothesis 1: Factors Influencing Women's Preferred Relationship Maintenance Strategies

Hypothesis 1 predicted that women's preferred relationship maintenance strategies would vary according to the experimental condition. To test the hypothesis, we conducted a mixed 2 (partner condition: benevolent, control) X 3 (relationship maintenance strategies: positive, negative, dissolution) ANOVA. The relationship maintenance strategies were measured within-

subjects, whereas experimental condition was measured between-subjects. The mean levels of each relationship maintenance strategy served as the dependent variable.

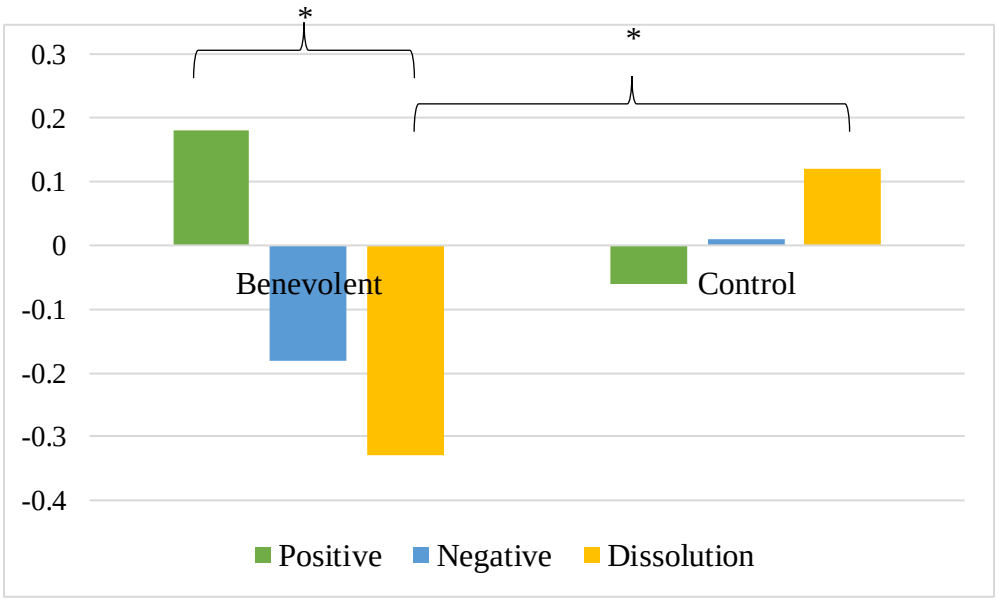
All main effects and interactions from the ANOVA are presented in Table 4.2. Mauchly's test of sphericity was violated, so all results are reported with Greenhouse Geisser. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, the interaction between the experimental condition and relationship maintenance strategies was significant, which indicates that the condition to which participants were assigned influenced their relationship maintenance strategy endorsement. Therefore, we proceeded to probe the interaction through post-hoc pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction. We probed the interaction in two different ways to examine differences *within* each condition and *across* conditions. The interaction probes are presented in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2. Although the interaction between the experimental condition and relationship maintenance strategies was significant, the partial eta squared value indicates a small effect size and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 4.2. Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Testing Hypothesis 1

Source	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Partial Eta Squared
RM Strategy	4.47	1.60	1.71	1.71	.01
RM Strategy X Condition	6.82	1.60	4.27	3.37*	.02
Error	295.61	233.22	1.27		
Condition	1.58	1	1.58	1.51	.01
Error	152.463	146	1.04		

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

Figure 4.2.



Relationship maintenance strategies across and within conditions. All values reflect *z* scores. Significant differences reported at $p < .05$.

Relationship maintenance strategies within each condition. In the first interaction probe, we examined the rank-order of relationship maintenance strategies *within* each condition. There were no significant differences in preferred relationship maintenance strategies among participants in the control condition. Within the benevolent partner condition, however, participants were significantly more likely to endorse positive relationship maintenance strategies ($M = .18$, $SE = .11$) compared to dissolution ($M = -.33$, $SE = .11$). That is, consistent with expectations, participants endorsed positive relationship maintenance strategies more strongly than dissolution when the hypothetical male partner endorsed benevolent sexism.

To follow up on this pattern, we 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, $t(75) = 23.19$, $p < .001$. This illustrates that women's mean endorsement of positive relationship maintenance strategies was significantly higher than the "neutral" scale midpoint.

Relationship maintenance strategies across conditions. In the second interaction probe, we examined mean differences in relationship maintenance strategies *across* conditions. Results revealed that relationship dissolution endorsement varied by condition such that 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 ($M = -.33$, $SE = .10$, $p = .003$). Thus, as expected, when the hypothetical partner was described as endorsing benevolent sexism, as compared to the control condition, participants reported that they would be more likely to maintain the relationship.

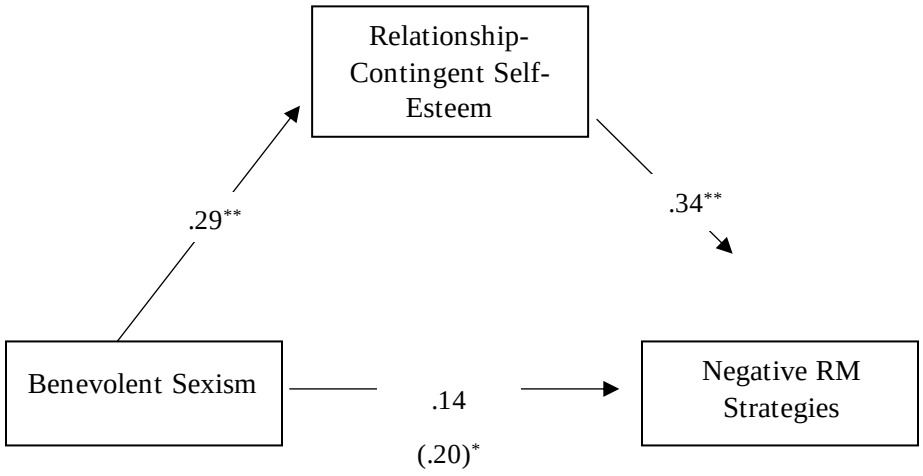
In sum, the first set of analyses demonstrated that the hypothetical male partner's endorsement of benevolent sexism influenced women's preferred relationship maintenance strategies. Specifically, a 2-way interaction illustrated that when the hypothetical male partner endorsed benevolent sexism, women endorsed positive relationship maintenance more than relationship dissolution. The interaction also revealed that relationship dissolution was more strongly endorsed in the control condition than it was in the benevolent condition. Together, these findings suggest that women's anticipated response to a troubled relationship is influenced in part by whether their partner endorses benevolent sexism. It is important to keep in mind, however, that these effects are small in magnitude.

Hypothesis 2: Mediation

A second set of analyses tested Hypothesis 2, which predicted that relationship-contingent self-esteem would mediate the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies. Specifically, we 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 negative relationship maintenance strategies. As detailed earlier, these analyses focused on women who were assigned to the benevolent partner condition (n = 80). The mediation model was tested in Mplus version 7.4 (Muthén and Muthén 1998–2013). Results of these analyses are presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3.



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

We began by testing the direct path from benevolent sexism to negative relationship maintenance strategies. This path was significant (β = .20, p =.032). Next, we tested a model that

included relationship-contingent self-esteem as a mediator (see Figure 4.3). As expected, participants who were higher in benevolent sexism were also higher in relationship-contingent self-esteem (β = .29, p = .004). Correspondingly, participants who were higher in relationship-contingent self-esteem were more likely to endorse negative relationship maintenance strategies (β = .34, p = .001). Further, the indirect effect was significant (β = .11, p =.037), which suggests that relationship-contingent self-esteem functions as a mediator. Including relationship-contingent self-esteem in the model reduced the direct effect of benevolent sexism on negative relationship maintenance strategies such that this path was no longer significant (β = .14, p =.184). Taken together, these findings indicate that relationship-contingent self-esteem (R^2 = .09) mediates the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies. In total, the model accounted for 17% of the variance in women's endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies (R^2 = .17).

Study 1 Discussion

Study 1 had two key findings. First, it revealed that women were more likely to endorse positive relationship maintenance strategies than relationship dissolution when presented with a hypothetical partner who endorses benevolent sexism. This was the case even though the relationship was described as high in conflict. Second, it revealed that relationship-contingent self-esteem mediates the association between benevolent sexism and women's endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies.

These findings replicate prior research by illustrating that benevolent sexism may influence women's willingness to remain in a troubled romantic relationship (e.g., Cross & Overall, 2019; Gul & Kupfer, 2019). However, we extended previous research by illustrating that relationship-contingent self-esteem helps to explain *why* women who endorse benevolent

sexism might engage in negative relationship maintenance strategies. This is perhaps because benevolent sexism encourages women to be relationship-oriented (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hence, women who endorse benevolent sexism invest their self-esteem into fulfilling relational roles. To our knowledge, our study is the first to link benevolent sexism, relationship maintenance strategies, and relationship-contingent self-esteem together.

Although our findings were largely consistent with hypotheses, Study 1 was limited in two significant ways. First, Study 1 focused solely on a sample of women. Accordingly, we cannot rule out the possibility that the patterns we observed are general human tendencies as opposed to tendencies that are unique to women. Put differently, it is possible that benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem encourage people to remain in troubled relationships regardless of whether they are women or men. Second, the results from Study 1 revealed quite a bit of unexplained variance in women's preferred relationship maintenance strategies, which indicates that variables beyond benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem help to explain why people remain in troubled romantic relationships. One strong candidate is romantic attachment, which has been linked to benevolent sexism (see Fisher & Hammond, 2019 for overview) and relationship maintenance strategies (Edenfield et al., 2012; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011). In Study 2, we draw from attachment theory to argue that romantic attachment likely works in concert with benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem to explain how participants reason about troubled relationships.

Study 2

The first objective of Study 2 was to examine whether gender moderates the association among benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and negative relationship maintenance that was obtained in Study 1. Previous research indicates that benevolent sexism

has implications for both women and men's behavior in romantic relationships, but these implications can differ in key ways (e.g., de Lemus et al., 2010; Maimon & Sanchez, 2022; Paynter & Leaper, 2016). For example, men's endorsement of benevolent sexism is often characterized by provider behaviors (e.g., sacrificing their well-being to provide for their family), whereas women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is often characterized by dependent behaviors (e.g., receiving dependency-oriented support; see Hammond & Overall, 2017). This implies that there may be gender differences in how benevolent sexism relates to relationship-contingent self-esteem and relationship maintenance strategies.

Second, we extended the Study 1 findings by examining whether anxious and avoidant attachment styles would work in conjunction with benevolent sexism to explain additional variation in relationship-contingent self-esteem and relationship maintenance strategies (see Figure 4.4 for a depiction of the conceptual model). Research suggests that anxious and avoidant attachment styles have implications for people's behavior in romantic relationships (Li & Chan, 2012). Further, similar to benevolent sexism, anxious attachment may contribute to people's decisions to remain in negative romantic relationships (Slotter & Finkel, 2009). These findings suggest that examining both benevolent sexism and attachment in the same model will provide more holistic insight into individual variation in participants' relationship-contingent self-esteem and their preferred relationship maintenance strategies. Below, we outline theory and research that informed the predictions we advanced in Study 2.

Men's Benevolent Sexism

As discussed earlier, benevolent sexism works in concert with hostile sexism to confine women to traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Glick et al., 2000). Women who inhabit these traditional roles experience a tradeoff: They receive men's protection and adoration at the

expense of their power and agency (Hammond & Overall, 2017). Therefore, benevolent sexism creates a cycle of power dynamics in which men benefit within their relationships (and society more generally), whereas women remain in a position of subordination. For instance, men who endorse benevolent sexism tend to experience desired outcomes such as intimacy and support within their relationships, but these outcomes often hinge on their female partners making sacrifices such as reducing their workforce participation (Dumont et al., 2010).

In addition to providing intimacy for men, benevolent sexism also ensures men's control in the relationship. For instance, Overall et al. (2011) found that men who endorse benevolent sexism tend to be skilled at persuading their partner during arguments. Although the research does not speak to mechanisms that could be driving this finding, the authors postulated that men who endorse benevolent sexism tend to behave in a more prosocial manner, which in turn may have disarming effects on women. Furthermore, men who endorse benevolent sexism are also more likely to unilaterally provide solutions for their partner's challenges, rather than working with their partner to come to a solution (Hammond & Overall, 2015). For example, Hammond and Overall (2015) found that during video-recorded discussions of relationship partners' personal goals, men who endorsed benevolent sexism provided more solutions for their partner, rather than focusing on her abilities, which led to lower levels of competency in female participants. This type of "support" enhances women's dependency on their romantic partner and relationship (Hammond & Overall, 2017).

Taken together, this body of research implies that benevolent sexism differentially influences men's and women's behaviors in a romantic relationship. Furthermore, endorsing benevolent sexism confers benefits to men within a romantic relationship and within society at

large. Therefore, it is important to include men in research that seeks to understand how benevolent sexism shapes attitudes in heterosexual romantic relationships.

Adult Romantic Attachment

Infant attachment theory seeks to understand how infants develop trust in their caregiver and how this trust influences the child's subsequent development (Bowlby, 1969). Adult attachment theory suggests that adults and children have similar innate systems that influence their views on interpersonal relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). That is, children's attachment styles influence views of a primary caregiver, whereas adult attachment styles can influence views of a romantic partner. Although the research has been mixed regarding whether infant attachment styles are stable into adulthood, there is at least some evidence that individuals who are in secure relationships recall the relationship with their primary caregiver as secure as well (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Scholarship in the attachment literature tends to focus on three attachment styles: secure attachment, anxious attachment, and avoidant attachment (e.g., Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Although previous theory and research conceptualized attachment styles as categorical (e.g., Bartholemew & Horowitz, 1991), more recent research suggests that attachment styles are dimensional and occur along a spectrum (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Fraley, Hudson, Heffernan, & Segal, 2015). When people have low levels of anxiety or avoidance, they are considered securely attached within their romantic relationships. *Securely attached* individuals often experience relationships that are characterized by longevity, satisfaction, and trust; these individuals typically feel comfortable both depending on and becoming emotionally close to their partner (e.g., Feeney et al., 1994). When people are *anxiously attached*, they have a deep desire for approval and intimacy, which may lead to over-

dependence on their romantic partners (Pietromonaco, & Barrett, 1997). These individuals often find themselves concerned that their partner does not love them and might abandon them. When people are *avoidantly attached*, they tend to be distrusting of their partners and avoidant of intimacy (Birnbaum et al., 2006). These individuals typically engage in behavior that prevents them from depending on their partner. Men tend to measure higher in avoidant attachment and women tend to measure higher in anxious attachment, although the magnitude of these associations is small (del Giudice, 2019).

Anxious attachment. Anxious attachment has several intriguing parallels with benevolent sexism within the context of heterosexual romantic relationships. Specifically, anxiously attached people are likely to value the high level of relational interdependence that benevolent sexism encourages (Hart et al., 2013; Hart et al., 2012). Consistent with this point, one study showed that women who were anxiously attached rated men who endorsed benevolent sexism as higher in attractiveness than men who endorsed hostile sexism or men who were egalitarian (Cross & Overall, 2017). Further, a recent meta-analysis revealed a moderate positive association between anxious attachment and benevolent sexism endorsement (Fisher & Hammond, 2018).

Given the similarities between benevolent sexism and anxious attachment, we anticipated that both would be positively associated with relationship-contingent self-esteem in Study 2. Indirect support for this prediction comes from a meta-analysis focusing on relationship-contingent self-esteem (Knee et al., 2008). Specifically, findings from the meta-analysis demonstrated that people with higher levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem (a) often show higher levels of distress at the conclusion of a romantic relationship and (b) tend to be especially concerned with their partner's disapproval or rejection. The authors posited that, similar to

anxious attachment, people with high levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem may obsessively seek reassurance and closeness from their partner (Knee et al., 2008).

There is also reason to believe that anxious attachment will be associated with people's use of negative relationship maintenance strategies. Most notably, Goodboy and Bolkan (2011) surveyed participants who were currently in a romantic relationship and found that those with an anxious attachment style were likely to engage in negative relationship maintenance strategies. Moreover, research focusing on attachment style and jealousy induction, a particular type of negative relationship maintenance strategy, indicates that individuals who are anxiously attached tend to induce jealousy in their partners to bolster their own self-esteem or to test their partner's commitment (Barbaro et al., 2016; Mattingly et al., 2012). Individuals with an anxious attachment style may engage in these negative maintenance strategies to reassure themselves that the partner is committed. Consistent with this body of research, we anticipated that anxious attachment would be positively associated with negative relationship maintenance strategies.

Avoidant attachment. Compared to anxious attachment, the role of avoidant attachment in our hypothesized mediation model is less clear. Limited research suggests that men's attachment avoidance is negatively associated with their level of benevolent sexism (Fraley et al., 2000; Simpson & Rholes, 2012). This is perhaps because avoidant attachment and low levels of benevolent sexism often correspond to a preference for relationships that are characterized by independence. Avoidant attachment styles are also negatively associated with relationship-contingent self-esteem (Knee et al., 2008) and positive relationship maintenance strategies (Dainton, 2007; Guerrero & Bachman, 2006). Similar to the findings for benevolent sexism, these negative associations may occur because people who are avoidantly attached strive for emotional space and independence. Therefore, we anticipated that avoidant attachment would

have a negative association with relationship-contingent self-esteem and a positive association with relationship maintenance strategies.

Current Study

The purpose of Study 2 was to replicate and extend the findings from Study 1. Namely, we sought to understand how attachment styles and benevolent sexism relate to relationship-contingent self-esteem and participants' preferred relationship maintenance strategies. We were also interested in whether there were gender differences in these associations (i.e., gender moderation effects). We used path analysis to test the hypotheses (see Figure 4.4), which provided a parsimoniuos way to test the hypothesized associations and test for gender moderation.

Our first set of hypotheses pertain to associations among attachment styles, benevolent sexism, and relationship-contingent self-esteem. Guided by the results of Study 1 and prior research (e.g., Sanchez & Crocker, 2005), we advanced the following prediction:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Benevolent sexism will be positively associated with relationship-contingent self-esteem.

Further, on the basis of prior research (e.g., Knee et al., 2008), we anticipated that avoidant attachment and anxious attachment would be associated with relationship-contingent self-esteem:

> **Hypothesis 2:** Avoidant attachment will be negatively associated with relationship-contingent self-esteem.
>
> **Hypothesis 3:** Anxious attachment will be positively associated with relationship contingent self-esteem.

Our next set of hypotheses pertains to associations among relationship-contingent self-esteem and relationship maintenance strategies. Based on the results of Study 1, we expected relationship-contingent self-esteem to be associated with relationship maintenance strategies and relationship dissolution:

Hypothesis 4: Relationship-contingent self-esteem will be positively associated with negative relationship maintenance strategies.

Hypothesis 5: Relationship-contingent self-esteem will be positively associated with positive relationship maintenance strategies.

Hypothesis 6: Relationship-contingent self-esteem will be negatively associated with relationship dissolution.

Finally, we drew from Study 1 and prior research (e.g., Crocker & Park, 2004; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011; Knee et al., 2008; Park et al., 2006) to advance the following prediction pertaining to mediation:

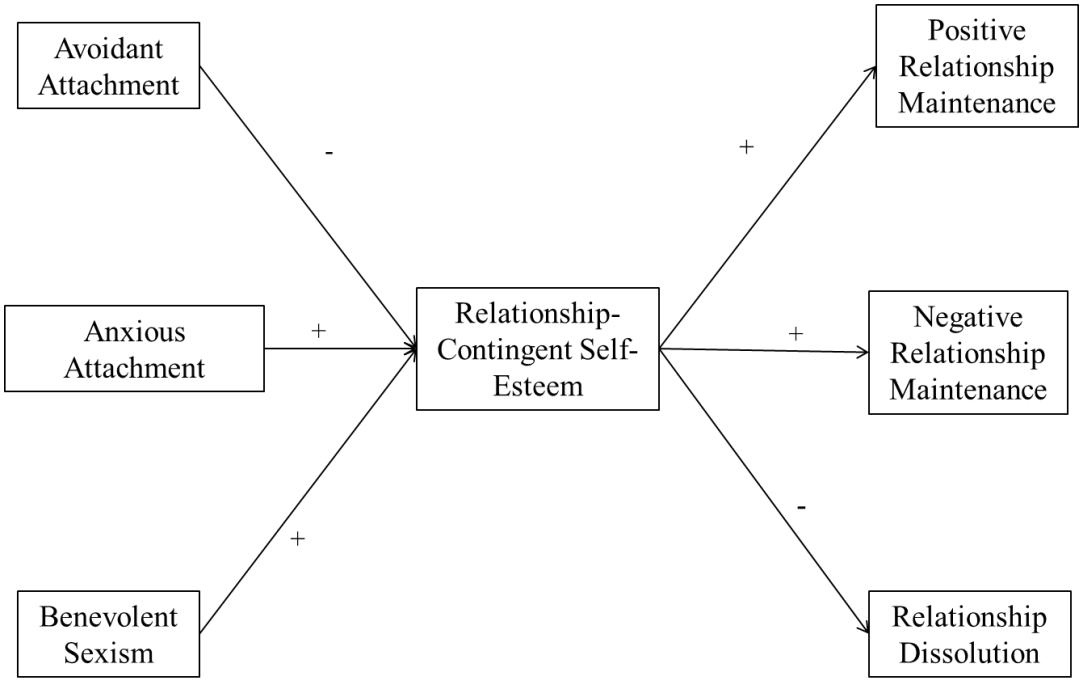
Hypothesis 7: Relationship-contingent self-esteem will mediate the association between negative relationship maintenance strategies and anxious attachment.

We were also interested in exploring whether gender moderated the hpyothesized mediation model:

Research Question 1: Does gender moderate the paths in the hypothesized mediation model?

Although prior research does not give us reason to believe that the paths in the model will be moderated by gender, testing for gender differences seemed reasonable given that sexism and its correlates sometimes operate differently for women versus men (e.g., Sibley & Overall, 2011).

Figure 4.4.



Hypothesized path model depicting associations among avoidant attachment, anxious attachment, benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and relationship maintenance strategies.

Study 2 Method

Participants

Participants were 190 heterosexual undergraduates (*M*age = 19.74, *SD* = 2.56, range = 18–32) who were recruited from the psychology participant pool at the same university as participants in Study 1. The majority of participants were women (73%, *n* = 138), and participants identified as Latinx (23%, *n* = 44), Multiracial (21%, *n* = 39), European American (18%, *n* = 35), East Asian (14%, *n* = 27), African American (10%, *n* = 19), Native American/Pacific Islander (6%, *n* = 12), South Asian (4%, *n* = 7), and Middle Eastern (4%, *n* =

7). Nearly all participants were unmarried (97%, *n* = 184), and nearly half the participants reported that they were not currently in a committed romantic relationship (55%, *n* = 104). Participants who were in a romantic relationship (45%, *n* = 86) reported that the relationship had lasted less than a month (8%, *n* = 7), one to six months (17%, *n* = 15), seven months to one year (14%, *n* = 12), or one to two years (26%, *n* = 22).

Procedure

The procedure was identical to the one described in Study 1, except all participants were assigned to the **benevolent partner** condition. Participants responded to all the previous measures plus the experiences in close relationships-revised questionnaire (see below; Fraley et al., 2000) to measure attachment styles.

Vignette. All participants read the Study 1 vignette that describes a couple in a heated argument (see Exposito et al., 2010). After reading the vignette, the women in the sample read the Study 1 "benevolent partner" description, wherein the man in the relationship was described as endorsing benevolent sexism (see Duran, Moya, & Megias, 2014). As in Study 1, the women were instructed to imagine that they were the woman in the heated argument scenario before responding to the questions about relationship maintenance strategies.

The men in the sample followed a parallel procedure. After reading the Study 1 vignette about a couple in a heated argument, the men read a "benevolent partner" description, wherein the woman in the relationship was described as endorsing benevolent sexism. The manipulation that men were exposed to was derived from the benevolent items on the ambivalence toward men inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1999) and read as follows:

> Chloe is a dedicated homemaker. Chloe is a woman who thinks that a woman will never be truly fulfilled in life if she doesn't have a committed, long-term relationship with a man. According to her, every woman should have a man to love and be happy with. Chloe thinks that even if both members of a couple work, the woman ought to be more

> attentive to taking care of her man at home. In fact, she has always believed that women ought to take care of their men at home, because men would fall apart if they had to fend for themselves.

Similar to the women in the study, the men were instructed to imagine that they were the man in the heated argument scenario before responding to the questions about relationship maintenance strategies.

Measures. After reading the vignette, participants responded to the same measures as in Study 1. Consistent with Study 1, these measures included the relationship maintenance strategy measure (Canary & Stafford, 1992) ($\alpha = .92$), negative maintenance scale (Dainton & Gross, 2008) ($\alpha = .81$), benevolent sexism subscale (Glick & Fiske, 1996) ($\alpha = .82$), and relationship-contingent self-esteem scale (Knee et al., 2001) ($\alpha = .83$). Cronbach's alpha for these scales ranged from good to excellent. We also introduced one new measure to study 2 and altered one measure from Study 1 described below.

Relationship Dissolution. Relationship dissolution was assessed using one item from the willingness to dissolve the relationship subscale of the accommodation instrument used to assess exit strategies in response to negative relationship experiences (Rusbult et al., 1991). We chose to retain only one item from this measure because Cronbach's alpha in Study 2 was unacceptable ($\alpha = .67$). The item we chose read "I would walk right out the door," and participants responded using a 9-point Likert-scale from 0 (*very unlikely*) to 8 (*very likely*).

Anxious and Avoidant Attachment Styles. Romantic attachment styles were assessed using the experiences in close relationships-revised questionnaire (Fraley et al., 2000), a 36-item measure of anxious and avoidant adult attachment styles. Participants endorsed items on the scale using a 7-point Likert-scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Example items include "I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me," (anxious attachment)

and “I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners,” (avoidant attachment). Cronbach’s alpha values for the anxious attachment (α = .93). and avoidant attachment (α = .94). subscales were excellent.

Study 2 Results

Preliminary Analyses

Table 4.3 presents bivariate correlations among the continuous variables. We replicated Study 1’s significant correlations between benevolent sexism and relationship-contingent self-esteem; benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies; and relationship-contingent self-esteem and negative relationship maintenance strategies. Further, the significant associations among benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, negative relationship maintenance strategies, anxious attachment, and avoidant attachment were all in the hypothesized direction, which provides preliminary support for the hypothesized mediation model (see Figure 4.4). It also merits noting that anxious and avoidant attachment had a significant positive association with each other, which provides support for the dimensional (vs. categorical) approach to measuring attachment that we employed. These correlation coefficients reflect weak to moderate associations (Okoglu, 2018).

Table 4.3. Bivariate Associations Among Continuous Variables.

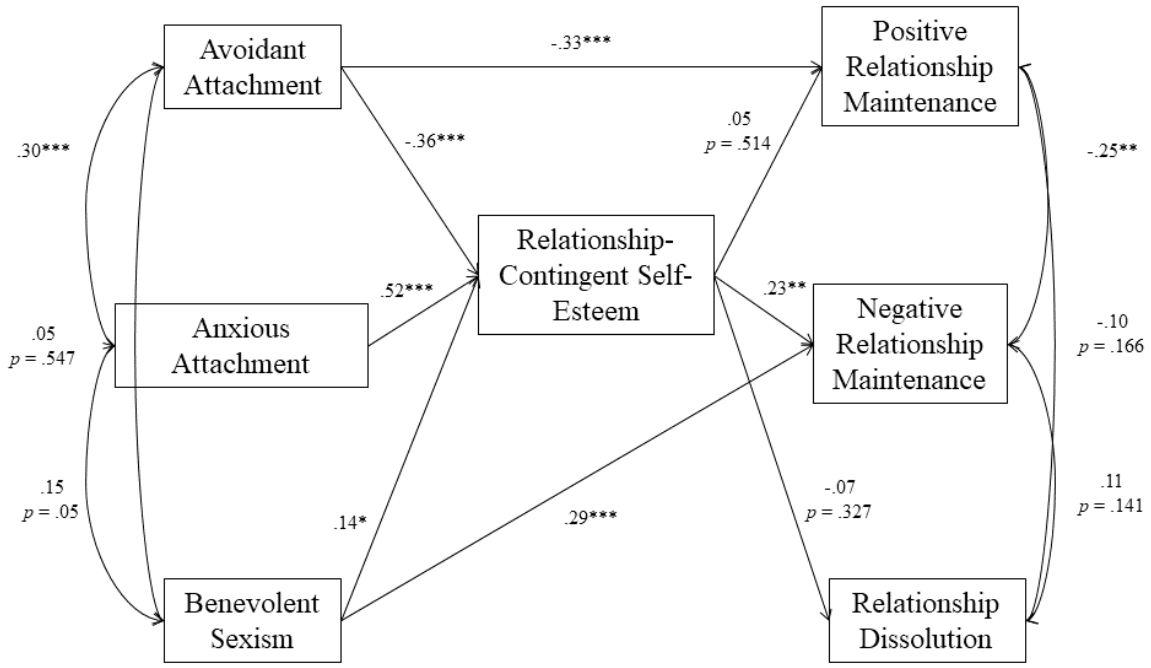
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. BS	--						
2. RCSE	.21**	--					
3. Positive RM	.12	.11	--				
4. Negative RM	.32**	.30***	-.19*	--			
5. Dissolution	.04	-.07	-.14	.10	--		
6. Anxious Attachment	.14	.44***	-.22**	.36***	.06	--	
7. Avoidant Attachment	.04	-.19*	-.38***	.10	.12	.30***	--
Mean	2.18	3.57	5.97	2.65	2.91	3.69	2.88
Standard Deviation	.89	.68	.66	.72	2.17	1.24	1.14
Range	0-6	1-5	1-7	1-7	0-8	1-7	1-7

Note. BS = Benevolent Sexism, RCSE = Relationship-Contingent Self-Esteem, RM = Relationship Maintenance.
$^{*}p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$

Path Model

We used path analysis to address the aims of Study 2. We carried out analyses in Mplus version 8 (Muthen & Muthen, 2017). We hypothesized a path model in which (a) higher levels of benevolent sexism, (b) higher levels of anxious attachment, and (c) lower levels of avoidant attachment would predict higher levels of relationship-contingent self-esteem. In turn, we expected higher relationship-contingent self-esteem would be associated with stronger endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies. We also conducted exploratory analyses to examine whether gender moderated any of the paths in the model.

Figure 4.5.



Path model depicting associations among avoidant attachment, anxious attachment, benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, positive relationship maintenance, negative relationship maintenance, and relationship dissolution. $^{*}p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$

The results of the path analysis are summarized in Figure 4.5. We began by testing the hypothesized model with men and women grouped together. Fit for the fully mediated model was poor. Examination of the modification indices suggested that two direct paths were missing from the model: (1) benevolent sexism to negative relationship maintenance ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) and (2) avoidant attachment to positive relationship maintenance ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .001$). Given that these direct associations are consistent with patterns obtained in prior work (e.g., Dainton, 2007;

Edenfield et al., 2012; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011; Guerrero & Bachman, 2006), it seemed reasonable to add them to the model. After adding these paths, model fit improved, but was nonetheless mediocre, $X^2(7) = 21.95$, $p = .002$, RMSEA = .11 (90% CI: .058, .158), CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.74. Although we could have improved fit by adding additional paths to the model, we did not do so given that these paths were not theoretically tenable.

Overall, the model accounted for 33.2% of the variance in relationship-contingent self-esteem, 16.3% of the variance in negative relationship maintenance strategies, and 11.8% of the variance in positive relationship maintenance strategies. Consistent with Hypotheses 1 through 3, benevolent sexism ($\beta = .14$, $p = .023$), anxious attachment ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$), and avoidant attachment ($\beta = -.36$, $p < .001$) each significantly predicted relationship-contingent self-esteem. Further, consistent with Hypothesis 4, higher relationship-contingent self-esteem predicted greater endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies ($\beta = .23$, $p = .001$). Inconsistent with expectations, however, higher relationship-contingent self-esteem was not significantly associated with positive relationship maintenance strategies (Hypothesis 5, $\beta = .05$, $p = .514$) or with relationship dissolution (Hypothesis 6, $\beta = -.07$, $p = .327$). Finally, we tested Hypothesis 7, which predicted that relationship-contingent self-esteem would mediate the association between anxious attachment and negative relationship maintenance strategies. The indirect effect corresponding to this prediction was significant ($\beta = .12$ $p = .002$), thus lending support to Hypothesis 7. Collectively, these findings indicate that relationship-contingent self-esteem may help to explain why people higher in anxious attachment tend to endorse negative relationship maintenance strategies more strongly. That is, anxious attachment appears to

correspond with higher relationship-contingent self-esteem, which in turn may encourage a stronger preference for maintaining relationships using negative strategies.[5]

As a final step, we addressed Research Question 1, which asked whether gender moderates any of the paths in the model. We conducted these analyses using the multiple-group framework recommended by Kline (2005). Specifically, we began by specifying a multiple-group model in which the paths were freely estimated for women and men. Then we specified a second model in which the paths for women and men were constrained to equality. Findings did not provide evidence of moderation. That is, the model in which paths were freely estimated by gender did not fit significantly better than the model in which paths were constrained to equality, X^2 (8, N = 190) = 7.72, p = .461). Accordingly, we do not present findings separately for women and men.

Study 2 Discussion

Study 2 built on Study 1 in two main ways. First, we extended the sample to men with the goal of exploring whether the Study 1 patterns were specific to women or more general human tendencies. Findings provided more evidence of gender similarities than gender differences, which is consistent with a large body of meta-analytic evidence demonstrating that women and men tend to be more similar than different in most regards (Hyde, 2005). More specifically, gender did not appear to moderate any paths in the model.

Second, in an effort to explain additional variance in relationship-contingent self-esteem and the relationship maintenance strategies, we included anxious and avoidant attachment styles in the Study 2 model. Findings revealed that anxious attachment indirectly predicted the use of

[5] We also examined the mediation model from study 1 involving benevolent sexism, relationship-contingent self-esteem, and negative relationship maintenance strategies to investigate whether it would replicate. Although it approached statistical significance, the indirect effect was not significant (p = .058).

negative relationship maintenance strategies via relationship-contingent self-esteem. This mediation effect was consistent with our expectations and expands on patterns that have been obtained in previous work. Past research indicates that people who are anxiously attached are likely to engage in negative relationship maintenance strategies as a means to prolong and enhance their relationship (Barbaro, Pham, Shackelford, & Zeigler-Hill, 2016; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011; Mattingly, Whitson, & Mattingly, 2012). The current study adds to this work by suggesting that relationship-contingent self-esteem may serve as a motivating factor in the use of negative maintenance strategies. In other words, people who are anxiously attached may avoid leaving troubled relationships given that their self-esteem is contingent on the success of the relationship; instead, they may remain in the relationship while engaging maladaptive behaviors (e.g., inducing jealous) with the intent of addressing real or perceived relational inequities.

General Discussion

The current research focused on why some individuals might choose to remain in troubled romantic relationships and how they maintain these relationships. Two main conclusions emerged from Study 1. First, findings revealed that when women were exposed to a hypothetical male partner who endorsed benevolent sexism, they were more likely to want to maintain the relationship with positive maintenance strategies than they were to end the relationship. Second, relationship-contingent self-esteem mediated the association between benevolent sexism and the endorsement of negative relationship maintenance strategies. Together, these findings replicate research indicating that benevolent sexism is associated with negative relational outcomes (e.g., Casad et al., 2015; Hammond & Overall, 2014; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall et al., 2011) and extend this work by identifying relationship-contingent self-esteem as a mechanism that might drive the effects.

Study 2 built on Study 1 by demonstrating that attachment style works in tandem with benevolent sexist to predict relationship-contingent self-esteem and relationship maintenance strategies. Consistent with expectations, we found that relationship-contingent self-esteem mediated the association between anxious attachment and negative relationship maintenance strategies for both the women and the men in our sample. Below, we elaborate on the findings from both studies and discuss key implications.

Study 1: Overview of Key Findings

An important goal of Study 1 was to understand how men's endorsement of benevolent sexism influences women's relationship maintenance strategies within the context of a hypothetical troubled romantic relationship. 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). Therefore, we predicted that when a hypothetical male partner endorsed benevolent sexism, women would endorse positive relationship maintenance strategies most strongly. This hypothesis received support in that women in the benevolent partner condition endorsed positive relationship maintenance strategies more strongly than relationship dissolution. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Bohner et al., 2010; Overall et al., 2011), this finding indicates that men's benevolent sexism can hold appeal for heterosexual women and may even persuade them to remain in a fraught relationship. More concerning, our findings suggest that when a man endorses benevolent sexism, women may choose to prolong a troubled relationship with the use of prosocial (i.e., positive) strategies such as complimenting their partner or stressing their commitment to the relationship.

Another goal of Study 1 was to identify sources of individual variation in women's tendency to remain in a troubled relationship. Findings demonstrated that relationship-contingent

self-esteem mediated the association between benevolent sexism and negative relationship maintenance strategies. This pattern complements theory and research indicating that benevolent sexism encourages women to invest their sense of self in romantic relationships (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996; Waddell et al., 2019). For example, Waddell and colleagues (2019) found that women who endorsed benevolent sexism reported higher levels of well-being when in a relationship. More generally, findings add to research that links benevolent sexism to maladaptive behaviors and negative outcomes in heterosexual romantic relationships (Hammond & Overall, 2013; Hammond & Overall, 2014; Overall et al., 2011).

Study 2: Overview of Key Findings

Study 2 built on Study 1 by extending the sample to men with the goal of examining whether the associations in the hypothesized mediation model differed based on gender. Our decision to test for gender moderation was informed by previous research illustrating that men and women may be differentially impacted by benevolent sexism (see Hammond & Overall, 2017) and attachment style (Del Giudice, 2019). In contrast to this work, however, our findings did not reveal significant gender differences in the hypothesized associations. The null findings for gender moderation are consistent with Hyde's (2005) contention that women and men are more similar than different across most psychological dimensions.

Study 2 also built on Study 1 by investigating whether anxious and avoidant attachment styles would account for additional variation beyond relationship-contingent self-esteem and relationship maintenance strategies. We found that avoidant attachment negatively predicted positive relationship maintenance strategies, which replicated prior research (Dainton, 2007; Guerrero & Bachman, 2006).

In contrast to avoidant attachment, anxious attachment played a more prominent role in the mediation model. As expected, we found that relationship-contingent self-esteem mediated the association between anxious attachment and negative relationship maintenance strategies. To our knowledge, this pattern has not been documented in prior research. It does, however, align with work documenting the negative implications of anxious attachment in romantic relationships (Barbaro et al., 2016; Mattingly et al., 2012). For example, Goodboy and Balkan (2011) found that people high in anxious attachment tend to allow their partners to take control of the relationship, and they are likely to spy on their partner to gain information and lower their anxiety.

Ultimately, the mediation findings paint a worrisome picture of an individual who is in a negative relationship, feels as if they must maintain the relationship to protect their self-esteem, but chooses to engage in troublesome behaviors as a means to prolong this relationship. Taken together, then, findings from Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that both benevolent sexism and anxious attachment may function similarly within the context of a troubled romantic relationship. Although previous research has identified parallels between benevolent sexism and anxious attachment (Hammond, Overall, & Cross, 2020), results from the current study add to the existing literature by demonstrating that people who hold benevolent ideals or who have an anxious attachment style may engage in maladaptive strategies to prolong their relationships in part because their self-esteem hinges on the longevity of the relationship.

Practical Implications

Findings from Study 1 suggested that women may be reluctant to exit troubled romantic relationships if their partner endorses benevolent sexism. These findings add to a large body of research that documents unequal power dynamics in heterosexual romantic relationships (e.g.,

Casad et al., 2015; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Hammond & Overall, 2017). Benevolent sexism creates a cyclical problem where women become less agentic and independent when their partner endorses benevolent sexism (Hammond & Overall, 2015). This cycle can have serious and damaging consequences. For instance, Papp and colleagues (2017) found that women who endorsed ideals that are consistent with benevolent sexism were more likely than other women to romanticize controlling behavior and to experience intimate partner violence. This may be because women are more likely to accept hostile sexism when 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.

Our findings pertaining to relationship-contingent self-esteem shed light on *why* people who endorse benevolent sexism or who are high in anxious attachment may struggle to exit a troubled romantic relationship. Therapists who focus on romantic relationships could perhaps focus on relationship-contingent self-esteem in their clinical practice to better understand their clients. A targeted approach to understanding how relationship-contingent self-esteem functions within a relationship could help counselors develop tools and strategies to help individuals who are seeking support for their relationship. However, it is critical that future research replicates these effects with an experimental or longitudinal design prior to adopting it within a therapy context. Stronger evidence including causal inference is necessary for therapeutic interventions. Additionally, clients' views on benevolent sexism could influence the relationship with their therapist. Although therapists receive general training concerning sexism in the therapy-client relationship (Roberts, 1991), it would be helpful for therapists to receive training specifically on encountering benevolent sexism when working with clients.

Readers should interpret our correlation coefficients with caution. We reported several significant correlations in both studies, but the magnitude of the relationship is subjective based on scientific discipline (see Okoglu, 2018). Practical significance should be considered in light of correlation coefficients. The strongest significant correlation we obtained indicated a moderate positive association between negative relationship maintenance strategies and relationship dissolution (r=.45, p < .001). The weakest significant correlation we obtained indicated a weak negative association between positive relationship maintenance strategies and negative relationship maintenance strategies (r=-.19, p <.01.

Limitations and Future Directions

The conclusions drawn from the current study could be strengthened through several methodological changes. First, this study could be improved by increasing external validity. An improvement in external validity could be achieved through observing real couples interacting, rather than just reading about a hypothetical couple. For example, Overall et al. (2011) conducted a study in which trained researchers observed real couples attempting to produce change in their partner and coded these interactions for hostile communication (i.e., coercion and autocratic tactics) and soft positive strategies (i.e., acknowledging their partner's perspective). These communication strategies were examined in relation to participants' ambivalent sexism scores to understand how sexism might influence persuasion strategies and ability to effect change. 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. For example, Hammond and Overall (2013) instructed women to keep a diary of their relationship problems and how they evaluated the relationship. Compared to the current study, this type of research design would likely provide a more accurate measure of how people reason about and maintain romantic relationships by documenting actual behavior as opposed to responses to a hypothetical scenario.

This study could be strengthened through adding an "egalitarian partner" condition to the experimental design. This would allow future researchers to determine whether participants prefer a partner who endorses benevolent sexism or egalitarian values. The current study utilized a benevolent partner condition and a control condition, so we were only able to make inferences about partner who is not described as sexist.

Last, even though the path models tested in the current research imply a particular causal flow, we cannot ascertain causal direction or temporal ordering with the current research. Future research should utilize an experimental manipulation to allow for causal inferences. A potential future design could consist of conditions that describes a target partner as endorsing benevolent sexism and another target partner endorsing egalitarian attitudes. Examining these separate conditions within a path model framework could allow future researchers to gain insight into causal inferences.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings from this paper provide new insight into how people reason about troubled romantic relationships. The findings suggest that benevolent sexism, attachment, and relationship contingent self-esteem work in concert to explain how women and men anticipate responding when confronted with a troubled romantic relationship. Findings add a robust literature demonstrating the deleterious impact that benevolent sexism can have in romantic

relationships and extend this work by identifying relationship-contingent self-esteem as a potential mechanism that drives these effects. Pending replication with experimental and longitudinal designs, our findings may have important applied implications in therapeutic contexts that seek to improve romantic relationship functioning.

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Chapter 5: Bridge

In Underwood and Robnett (2023), I found that romantic attachment, benevolent sexism endorsement and self-esteem collectively predicted whether participants wanted to maintain a negative romantic relationship with a hypothetical partner who endorsed benevolent sexism. This study illustrated how sexism, attachment, and self-esteem might influence romantic relationship function.

Although this research was able to shed light on important romantic relationship phenomena, and it helped to shed light on the factors that influence relationship maintenance within a problematic relationship, this study, and many studies that focus on benevolent sexism are heteronormative. Benevolent sexism and many studies on romantic relationships focus on ideologies that apply to heterosexual relationships. The field of psychology needs more research that draws from diverse samples to understand how relationship norms are expressed in diverse relationships. Therefore, we need to look at couples in same-sex relationships to understand their attitudes toward relationship norms.

In a previous study, we examined surname attitudes in heterosexual relationships (Robnett, et al., 2016). We found that when women chose to keep their own surname, participants viewed women as being less committed to the relationship. Although this study is insightful regarding surnames in heterosexual relationships, it is important to understand surname attitudes in same-sex relationships. Investigating surname preferences in same-sex relationships provides us with insight into how this historically gendered relationship norm functions within a diverse sample of participants.

In the next study, I utilized a sample of participants in same-sex relationships in order to understand surname preferences and rationales for these preferences. I found that although participants reported a diverse range of surname preferences, overall participants indicated that

they planned on making some type of surname change, which contrasts prior research on same-sex surname preferences (Braun & Clarke, 2008). Additionally, participants reported that the desire to create a family unit or the desire for children was the main factor that drove surname preferences.

"I Would Like Us to Share a Name so That We Can be Recognized in Society." Marital Surname Preferences in Same-Sex Relationships

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Abstract

The norm of a woman adopting her partner's surname after marriage is widely endorsed, but little is known about norms regarding surname preferences of individuals in same-sex relationships. Furthermore, current research examining marriage-related practices in same-sex relationships has not kept pace with same-sex couples' legal-recognition. As prior research has been limited by small sample sizes, we extended prior research by exploring marital surname preferences and corresponding rationales in a large, sociodemographically diverse sample of adults in same-sex relationships. Participants (n = 179) in same-sex relationships responded to an open-ended prompt regarding their surname preferences. The most common response was that some type of surname change was possible, which revealed more openness to sharing a surname as compared to prior research. Qualitative analyses revealed the most common rationale for surname preferences centered on "doing/being family." Results indicate that there may be a shift in surname preferences of individuals in same-sex relationships.

Keywords: naming practices, same-sex relationships, thematic analysis, romantic relationships, tradition, gay, lesbian

Chapter 6: Introduction

"If you were to get married, would you and/or your partner change your surnames? Please explain what you envision."

Christina[6]: "YES. If getting married is what we decide it will be because we want to be a unit and build a family of our own. Last names will give us a nice tie."

Maureen: "No. Neither of us wanted to change our last name. I've always worried about people mistaking us for sisters if we had the same last name."

Brandon: "No -- we don't believe it's a 'with the times' ritual."

In 2015, same-sex couples in the U.S. were granted the constitutional right to marriage. Empirical research examining marriage-related practices in same-sex relationships has not kept pace with the rapidly changing social landscape. Accordingly, the current study focuses on attitudes about one such practice: the marital surname change, whereby one or both partners change their last name after marriage.

In one of the few studies examining naming preferences among participants in same-sex relationships, Clarke, Burns, and Burgoyne (2008) found that most of their sample had not seriously considered making a marital surname change. However, Clarke et al. (2008) also emphasized the importance of examining how naming practices might change with increased legal recognition for same-sex couples. The current study responds to this call by sampling sexual minority participants immediately after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. More specifically, we explored marital surname preferences and corresponding rationales for these preferences in a large, sociodemographically diverse sample of adults in same-sex relationships. In addition to examining whether Clarke et al.'s

[6] All names were changed to pseudonyms.

(2008) findings generalize to a somewhat different sociohistorical context, we extend prior research by testing for sociodemographic correlates of surname preferences. That is, we anticipated that preferences would vary across our sample—as illustrated in the above sample responses from Christina, Maureen, and Brandon—and we expected that this variation would be associated with participant background characteristics such as gender and age.

History of the Marital Surname Tradition

For many years, women in heterosexual marriages were required to adopt their husband's surname upon marriage (Boxer & Gritsenko, 2005; Scheuble & Johnson, 1993). The second-wave feminist movement fought against traditional surname laws, and women eventually earned the right to make their own surname choices (Goldin, 2006). Although women are no longer legally required to adopt their husband's surname, most women still adhere to the tradition (Gooding & Kreider, 2009; Robnett & Leaper, 2013). This implies that the marital surname tradition continues to exert a strong conformity pressure within heterosexual romantic relationships.

Prior research has identified several core rationales that underlie heterosexual women's surname preferences. For instance, women often report that adopting their husband's surname is desirable because it unites the whole family under the same surname (Twenge, 1997). Relatedly, women may change their name in an effort to display spousal devotion and commitment to their marriage (Robnett & Leaper, 2013; Robnett, Underwood, Nelson, & Anderson, 2016). In contrast, women who break with tradition by retaining their own surname after marriage often cite professional reasons or the desire to preserve their sense of self (Boxer & Gritsenko, 2005).

Surname Preferences in Same-Sex Relationships

Norms and traditions that are commonplace in heterosexual relationships often reflect and perpetuate heteronormativity and patriarchy (see Herz & Johansson, 2015). For this reason, some individuals in same-sex relationships explicitly reject the notion of a marital surname change (e.g., Clarke et al., 2008; Kim & Thurman, 2016). For instance, same-sex couples in one study described surname-*changing* as "buying into the name-changing cultural norm," and they described surname-*retaining* as "opting out of the traditionally gendered marital name bargain" (Kim & Thurman, 2016, p. 758). In contrast, other people in same-sex relationships may feel caught between resisting practices that are common in heterosexual relationships (i.e., on the basis of heteronormativity) versus adopting these practices as a way to express the "legitimacy" of the relationship (Clarke, Burgoyne, & Burns, 2013; Clarke et al., 2008; Hequembourg, 2004; Suter & Oswald, 2003). This tension can lead to creative resolutions, particularly given that same-sex couples do not have a widely-agreed upon script to guide their relationship ceremonies (Clarke et al., 2013). For example, one couple chose to hyphenate as a political act because it both indicated that the couple was legally married, but also emphasized that their marriage was not a traditional heterosexual marriage (Kim & Thurman, 2016). In another study, a couple decided to change their surnames during an anniversary celebration rather than during a marriage (Suter & Oswald, 2003). These patterns parallel research examining the division of household labor within same-sex relationships; in contrast to heterosexual relationships, the division of labor in same-sex relationships does not follow a script but is instead based on preferences and contextual circumstances (Perlesz et al., 2010).

Given the lack of a script to follow, it is perhaps unsurprising that people in same-sex relationships tend to vary in their attitudes about marital surname changes (Clarke et al., 2008).

Sociodemographic differences may help to account for this variation, but small sample sizes have precluded systematic tests of sociodemographic variation in prior research. For instance, Clarke and colleagues (2008) noted, "There is a need for research using larger and more diverse samples. […] the views reported in this paper are indicative only of the views (of a small group) of more privileged lesbians and gay men" (p. 436). We sought to address this issue by testing sociodemographic correlates of surname preferences.

Past research has uncovered a number of sociodemographic attributes that are associated with attitudes about the surname tradition as practiced in heterosexual relationships (for an overview, see Hamilton, Geist, & Powell, 2011). Specifically, prior research illustrates that women who were married at a younger age (Goldin & Shim, 2004; Hoffnung, 2006; Johnson & Scheuble, 1995) and have a lower occupational status (Hoffnung, 2006) are more likely to adopt their partner's surname after marriage. In addition, White women are more likely to favor a traditional surname, as compared to Women of Color (Hoffnung, 2006; Twenge, 1997). Lastly, women often cite wanting children as a rationale for sharing a name with their partner (Twenge, 1997). In the current study, we explored whether parallel trends would be observed in naming preferences among individuals in same-sex relationships. To our knowledge, this question has not been explored in any prior research.

The Present Study

In the present study, we take a mixed-methods approach to understanding surname preferences among people in same-sex relationships. Specifically, we blend qualitative data about participants' surname preferences with quantitative analyses testing for sociodemographic variation in these preferences. Analyses were guided by three research questions. Our first research question is as follows: *What surname preferences do participants hold?* We were

interested in understanding whether Clarke et al.'s (2008) results would extend to a different sociohistorical time now that same-sex marriage is legal. From there, our study will build on Clarke et al.'s (2008) findings via our second research question: *Do surname preferences significantly vary according to participants' sociodemographic background characteristics?* Specifically, we will examine whether surname preferences vary as a function of gender, relationship status, age, ethnic background, income, and whether participants planned to have (additional) children. Finally, we sought to build on prior research by delving into the rationales underlying participants' surname preferences. Specifically, our third research question is as follows: *What rationales do participants provide for their surname preferences?*

Method

Participants

Participants were 179 individuals who reported that they had been in a same-sex relationship for at least three months. Table 6.1 summarizes the sample's sociodemographic attributes. Six-one percent (n = 109) of the sample identified as women, 37% (n = 67) identified as men, and 2% (n = 3) did not identify as women or men.[7] Participants indicated their sexual orientation by self-labeling as lesbian (39%, n = 69), gay (29%, n = 52), bisexual (22%, n = 40), or queer (7%, n = 13). In addition, several participants (3%, n = 5) indicated in an open-ended space that they did not identify with any of the categories listed. For example, two participants labeled themselves as pansexual, and two other participants indicated that they believed labeling was unnecessary. Most participants reported that they were in a committed relationship, but were

[7] Several demographic questions had missing data from participants who declined to respond. First, 1% (n = 1) did not report their relationship status. Second, 10% (n = 18) did not report their age. Third, 11% (n = 19) did not report their race/ethnicity. Fourth, 11% (n = 20) did not report their income.

not engaged or married (72%, *n* = 128); of the remaining participants, several reported they were married (21%, *n* = 37), and a few reported that they were engaged (7%, *n* = 13).

Participants' ages ranged from 18-64. The majority of participants (80%, *n* = 128) were between the ages of 18-34. Participants identified as European American (61%, *n* = 98), Hispanic/Latino (14%, *n* = 22), Asian/Pacific Islander (9%, *n* = 14), African American (6%, *n* = 10), Native American/American Indian (1%, *n* = 1), and Other (9%, *n* = 15). Lastly, participants reported their yearly household income. The majority of participants indicated their income was less than $30,000 (50%, *n* = 80), and of those, about half were students (46%, *n* = 37). An additional 36% of the sample reported their income was $30,000 to $69,999 *(n* = 57), and 14% reported that their income was over $70,000 (*n* = 22).

Recruiting and Procedure

Participation took place via an anonymous online survey. The recruiting materials and consent form described the study as "a project to better understand romantic relationship practices among couples in same-sex relationships," and stipulated that participants needed to be in a same-sex relationship that had lasted for at least three months. We used several strategies to recruit participants. For instance, a local LGBTQ center included a brief description of the study in their online newsletter. We also posted recruiting flyers on a college campus and shared the survey link with relevant online communities. After completing the survey, participants had the option of providing their contact information if they wanted to be entered into a raffle for a $150 gift card.

Measures and Analytic Strategy

Qualitative. To provide insight into surname preferences, we asked participants the following open-ended question: "If you were to get married, would you and/or your partner

change your surnames? Please explain what you envision." Responses were coded inductively through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). One of the authors began by grouping the participant responses based on surname preferences. These preferences were then grouped into four mutually exclusive coding categories (i.e., macro-categories): (1) *one of us will change our surname*, (2) *we will both change/blend/hyphenate*, (3) *neither of us will change our surname*, and (4) *I have not decided*. To test for inter-rater reliability, two of the authors double-coded 50% of the responses. Agreement was excellent (kappa = .94). The few discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus between the two coders.

To assess the rationales participants provided for surname preferences, the four macro-categories were then further refined into subtypes (i.e., micro-categories). The micro-categories consisted of emergent themes that participants used to justify their surname preferences. These preferences were then grouped into five micro-categories: (1) *Doing/being family*, (2) *Figuring it out*, (3) *Aesthetics*, (4) *Identity*, and (5) *Reject tradition*. To test for inter-rater reliability, two of the authors double-coded 50% of the responses. Agreement was very good (kappa = .86). The few discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus between the two coders. Micro-categories were not mutually exclusive; participants' responses were coded for all micro-categories that were applicable. For example, Julia stated that, "We decided not to change them. We kept the idea open for discussion later. I would like any children that we have to have the same name as us. We talked about my wife taking my name and keeping her maiden name for work. At this point in our lives it is not really a priority." This response was coded for *doing/being family* as well as *identity*.

Quantitative. To assess whether surname preferences vary according to participants' sociodemographic background characteristics, we asked participants about their membership in

the following sociodemographic categories: gender, sexual orientation, relationship status, age, ethnicity, income, and whether they planned on having (additional) children (see Table 6.1). To avoid violating cell size requirements for chi-squares, several sociodemographic categories that included relatively small numbers of participants were not included in the quantitative comparisons. First, the tests of gender differences focused on participants who identified as either women or men; three participants who did not identify as either women or men were not included. Second, the tests of sexual orientation differences focused on participants who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual; 18 participants who did not identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual were not included.

Table 6.1
Summary of Sample Characteristics

Gender	Woman (*n* = 109) Man (*n* = 67) Did not identify as woman or man (*n* = 3)
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian (*n* = 69) Gay (*n* = 52) Bisexual (*n* = 40) Queer (*n* = 13) Did not identify with listed categories (*n* = 5)
Relationship Status	Committed relationship, not engaged or married (*n* = 128) Married (*n* = 37) Engaged (*n* = 13)
Age (range)	18-34 (*n* = 128) 35-64 (*n* = 33)
Race/ethnicity	European American (*n* = 98) Hispanic/Latino (*n* = 22) Native American (*n* = 14) Asian/Pacific Islander (*n* = 14) African American (*n* = 10) Did not identify with listed categories (*n* = 15)
Income (range)	Less than $30,000 (*n* = 80) $30,000-$69,999 (*n* = 57) More than $70,000 (*n* = 22)
Planning to have (additional) children	Yes (*n* = 86) No (*n* = 46) Unsure (*n* = 46)

Note. (*N* = 179)

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary chi-square tests of independence revealed several potential confounds. Specifically, there was a significant association between age and relationship status, χ^2 (2) = 24.72, $p < .001$, Cramer's V = .39, such that individuals who were younger were less likely to be married. There was also a significant association between age and income, χ^2 (2) = 30.96, $p <$

.001, Cramer's V = .44 such that individuals who were younger were less likely to earn a higher income. Finally, there was a significant association between income and relationship status, χ^2 (4) = 11.02, p = .026, Cramer's V = .19, such that individuals who earned a lower income were less likely to be married. We explore the implications of these effects in the general discussion below.

RQ1: What Surname Preferences Do Participants Hold?

A plurality of participants reported that neither partner would change their surname (39%); however, it was also fairly common for participants to report that one person in the relationship would change their surname (30%). It was less common for participants to report that both partners would change their surnames (19%), or that they were undecided (12%). Sample responses and group comparisons for each of these four macro-categories are reported below. Most participants provided brief responses.

"Neither of us will change our surname." This macro-category was composed of participants who indicated that neither they nor their partner would change their surnames. For example, Angeline stated, "We are not so interested in changing our surnames." Similarly, Jack stated, "We didn't change our names, and it wasn't really something either of us were interested in. We do jokingly merge our two last names occasionally."

Research Question 2: Group comparisons. We used chi-square tests of independence to examine whether participants' likelihood of being in the *neither of us will change our surname* macro-category varied according to their sociodemographic background characteristics. Findings are detailed in Table 6.2a. Relative to the rest of the sample, participants were significantly more likely to report that neither partner will change their name if they were (1) older (77% of participants ages 35-64), (2) higher-income (81% of participants making over $70,000), (3)

married (58% of married participants), and (4) not planning to have children (67% of participants who do not plan to have children). Membership in this macro-category did not vary on the basis of gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

Table 6.2a

Significant Sources of Variation Within the "Neither of us Will Change our Surname" Macro-Category

Variable	**% in Macro-Category**	**Chi-square**	***df***	***p***	***Cramer's V***
Age		23.42	3	.001	.40
18 - 34	$29\%_{a}$				
35 - 64	$77\%_{b}$				
Income		21.64	6	.001	.27
$0 - $29,999	$27\%_{a}$				
$30,000 - $69,999	$41\%_{a}$				
$70,000 - $100,000+	$81\%_{b}$				
Relationship Status		14.94	6	.021	.22
Committed	$33\%_{a}$				
Engaged	$27\%_{a.b}$				
Married	$58\%_{b}$				
Planning to Have Children		28.66	6	.001	.42
Yes	$21\%_{a}$				
No	$67\%_{b}$				
Unsure	$45\%_{b}$				

Note. Different subscript letters denote significant differences between levels within a variable at $p < .05$.

"One of us will change our surname." This macro-category included participants who reported that someone in the relationship would change their surname. Some of these participants reported that they would adopt their partner's surname. For example, Jessica stated, "Yes, I would probably take her last name. We don't want different last names." Other participants noted that their partner would adopt their surname. For example, Vanessa explained, "My wife has chosen to take my last name." Participants who did not specify whose surname they would adopt were also placed in this category. For example, Meg stated, "Yes. I would like our family to be one. I would like us to share a name so that we can be recognized in society."

Research Question 2: Group comparisons. We used chi-square tests of independence to examine whether participants' likelihood of being in the *one of us will change our surname* macro-category varied according to their sociodemographic background characteristics. Findings are detailed in Table 6.2b. Relative to the rest of the sample, participants were significantly more likely to report that one partner will change their name if they identified as lesbian (45% of participants identifying as lesbian), were younger (36% of participants ages 18-34), lower-income (39% of participants making less than $30,000), and planning to have children (44% of participants who plan to have children). Membership in this macro-category did not vary on the basis of gender, ethnicity, or relationship status.

Table 6.2b

Significant Sources of Variation Within the "One of us Will Change our Surname" Macro-Category

Variable	**% in Macro-Category**	**Chi-square**	***df***	***p***	***Cramer's V***
Sexual Orientation		16.52	6	.011	.239
Gay	$20\%_{a}$				
Lesbian	$45\%_{b}$				
Bisexual	$19\%_{a}$				
Age		23.42	3	.001	.40
18 - 34	$36\%_{a}$				
35 - 64	$13\%_{b}$				
Income		21.64	6	.001	.27
\$0 - \$29,999	$39\%_{a}$				
\$30,000 - \$69,999	$29\%_{a,b}$				
\$70,000 - \$100,000+	$10\%_{b}$				
Planning to Have Children		28.66	6	.001	.42
Yes	$44\%_{a}$				
No	$15\%_{b}$				
Unsure	$19\%_{b}$				

Note. Different subscript letters denote significant differences between levels within a variable at $p < .05$.

"We will both change/blend/hyphenate." This macro-category included participants who wished to share a surname with their partner, but who also wanted both people in the relationship to make the necessary change. Some of the participants in this macro-category wanted to create an entirely new surname to share with their partner. For example, Liam reported, "We would want to come up with a new surname together, we both have issues with our paternal parentage and don't like our current last names." This macro-category was also

composed of participants who wanted to create a new name to share with their partner by blending both of their surnames together (e.g., “Yes, I'm thinking of a hybrid of our surnames.”) or hyphenating (e.g., “I wouldn't want to change my name but I would consider hyphenating them together.”). A final subset of participants stated that they and their partner would both change their surnames, but they did not indicate exactly what the outcome of that change would be. For example, Isabella explained, “We haven't discussed it in detail, but I think she's not particularly attached to her own name, nor am I very happy with my own, so we would either mash them (as in the blending of two names into one, and NOT hyphenating) or find a new name for ourselves.”

Research Question 2: Group comparisons. We used chi-square tests of independence to examine whether participants’ likelihood of being in the *we will both change/blend/hyphenate* macro-category varied according to their sociodemographic background characteristics. However, membership in this macro-category did not significantly vary on the basis of any background characteristics.

“I have not decided.” This macro-category included participants who were uncertain or ambivalent about their surname preference. For example, Ethan stated, “I’m actually not sure. It’s something my boyfriend and I are still discussing.” This macro-category was also composed of participants who listed several potential options from disparate macro-categories, for example, “If I were to get married I would either keep my name or hyphenate.”

Group comparisons. We used chi-square tests of independence to examine whether participants’ likelihood of being in the *I have not decided* macro-category varied according to their sociodemographic background characteristics. Findings are detailed in Table 6.2c. Relative to the rest of the sample, participants were significantly more likely to report that they were

undecided if they were younger (16% of participants ages 18-34), lower-income (16% of participants making less than $30,000), or in a committed relationship but not yet engaged or married (17% of participants in a committed relationship). Membership in this macro-category did not vary on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or planning to have children.

Table 6.2c

Significant Sources of Variation Within the "I Have not Decided" Macro-Category

Variable	**% in Macro-Category**	**Chi-square**	***df***	***p***	***Cramer's V***
Age		23.42	3	.001	.40
18 – 34	$16\%_{a}$				
35 - 64	$0\%_{b}$				
Income		21.64	6	.001	.27
$0 - $29,999	$16\%_{a}$				
$30,000 - $69,999	$10\%_{a,b}$				
$70,000 - $100,000+	$0\%_{b}$				
Relationship Status		14.94	6	.021	.22
Committed	$17\%_{a}$				
Engaged	$9\%_{a,b}$				
Married	$0\%_{b}$				

Note. Different subscript letters denote significant differences between levels within a variable at $p < .05$.

RQ3: What Are the Rationales Underlying Surname Preferences?

Participants' reasons for their surname preferences were grouped into five micro-categories. Overall, 47% of participants provided rationales for surname preferences. They are listed as follows in descending order according to their prevalence: (a) *doing/being family* (58%),

(b) *figuring it out* (33%), (c) *identity* (13%), (d) *reject tradition* (12%), and (e) *aesthetics* (12%). Table 6.3 presents sample responses and prevalence rates for each coding category. Percentages add to more than 100 because responses could be coded for multiple rationales.

Table 6.3

Summary of rationales underlying participants' surname preferences

Rationale	**Prevalence**	**Sample Response**
Doing/being family	58%	Yes, we plan on having the same last name so our kids can also have our last name.
Figuring it out	33%	I do not think I would do it, and I would not force my partner to change her surname as well. I believe that is a personal decision. That is, I would not impose in any kind of way.
Identity	13%	No. We are established professionals with our current names.
Reject tradition	12%	No, neither of us would. You put your name on your property; I'm not his property and his is not mine.
Aesthetics	12%	I changed my surname to my wife's name. We made that decision solely because her last name is way cooler than mine.

Doing/being family. Many participants stated that their surname preferences were guided by their relationship with their family or their desire to create a family for their children. Responses in this category described how sharing a last name can "symbolize chosen relational

and familial connections," (Clarke et al., 2008, p. 435). Responses in this category demonstrated how surnames can create a sense of unity for a family, and they also focused on participants whose surname rationale was guided by their relationship with their parents and extended family.

The largest percentage of the responses in this category originated from participants in the *one of us will change our surname* macro-category. For example, Haylie responded, "Yes. I would like our family to be one. I would like to us to share a name so that we can be recognized in society." Participants who cited this rationale as a guide for surname preferences also discussed how having children influenced whether they wished to share a surname with their partner. Some of the responses in this category originated from participants in the *neither of us will change our surname* macro-category. For example, Lexi stated, "I don't think that either of us would change our surnames, but we would have to find a creative solution if we had children." A few of the responses in this category originated from participants in the *we will both change/blend/hyphenate our surname* macro-category, such as participants whose rationale was influenced by a lack of attachment to their surname. For example, Alex explained, "We would want to come up with a new surname together, we both have issues with our paternal parentage and don't like our current last names." Finally, a few of the responses in this category originated from participants in the *I have not decided* macro-category. For example, Wren explained "If I were to get married I would either keep my name or hyphenate but I would not want to lose my name."

Figuring it out. Participants providing these rationales stated that they either had not given much thought to surname preferences, or that surname preferences were an irrelevant topic. Responses also indicated the need to discuss the decision with their partner. Responses in this category originated exclusively from participants who were in the *I have not decided* macro-

category. For example, Dylan stated, “I don't really care to change my name one way or the other. It'll depend on what my partner wants.” This quote not only illustrates that the participant wanted to abide by his partner’s wishes, but it also conveys a sense of irrelevance toward surname preferences. Some participants in this category indicated that there were several options they were actively considering with their partner. For example, Josiah explained “Yes, but we are arguing about taking one of our names, or combining our last names (Frank+Ellis=Frellis/Ellank/Lank).”

Identity. Some participants linked their surname preference to their personal or professional identity. All but one of the responses in this category originated from participants in the *neither of us will change our surname* macro-category. For example, Gavin explained, “…I love my partner, but I am not willing lose my identity in order to commit to him.” The other response in this category originated from a participant in the *one of us will change our surname* macro-category. Specifically, Taliah stated, “My spouse changed her surname because changing mine is difficult in my career field (military).”

Reject tradition. Some participants expressed a desire to reject patriarchy or heteronormativity when explaining their surname preferences. Responses in this category originated exclusively from participants in the *neither of us will change our surname* macro-category. For example, Xavier explained, “We opted not to for simplicity. We may, however, take each other’s last names and hyphenate. But the whole name changing thing seems a like misogynistic throw-back when you think about it. Old fashioned. Impractical.” Other participants explained that they viewed surname-changing as a heteronormative practice that they wanted to avoid. For example, Camden stated, “No. We both kept our names as they are... Again... we both believe that is a trap into heteronormative living.” Relatedly, other participants in this category

indicated that they viewed surname-changing as patriarchal. For example, Damien explained, "No. I don't think it's necessary. I find it so patriarchal that either of us would have to change our names, and our family histories because of some unquestioned rule about taking the masculine partners name."

Aesthetics. A few participants stated that their surname preference was based on which name was more aesthetically pleasing, or other aesthetic concerns such as the length of the name. A few of the responses in this category originated from participants in the *one of us will change our surname* macro-category. For example, Liza stated, "We think that our names sound weird when we try to switch them around so we thought about a hyphen, but that also sounds weird. We most likely will take my partners last name." The majority of the responses in this category originated from participants in the *neither of us will change our surname* macro-category, such as participants whose rationale was influenced by the complexity of combining surnames. For example, Arielle explained, "We both are published professionally under our own surnames. I would change my name by adding hers with a hyphen, but she is against it. It's quite the mouthful as each of our names have 3 syllables." One of the responses in this category originated from a participant in the *I have not decided* macro-category, whose uncertainty was influenced by the aesthetic characteristics of her name. She stated "I'm an only child and the last person with my last name in my family, and I am female. Along with wanting to keep the name alive, my first and middle name are quite unique and flow well with my last name. I think we'll either keep our last names or perhaps hyphenate."

Discussion

Findings from the current study build on the small body of existing research focusing on marital surname preferences in same-sex relationships (e.g., Clarke et al., 2008; Kim &

Thurman, 2016). Thematic analysis revealed that participants held a range of marital surname preferences and provided varied rationales for their preferences. Some of these preferences and rationales replicated prior research, but others were unique to the current study. Most notably, relative to prior research, participants were more open to making surname changes. As discussed below, this may be due in part to the sociohistorical context in which we conducted the research. We also built on prior research by carrying out quantitative analyses to examine whether participants with different sociodemographic background characteristics showed different response patterns. Analyses indicated that this was indeed the case for some, but not all, of the background characteristics we examined. Below, we describe our findings in greater detail. We conclude by highlighting limitations and corresponding future directions.

Overview of Key Themes

"We're keeping our surnames." Consistent with Clarke and colleagues (2008), a subset (39%) of participants in the current study reported that neither person in the relationship would change their surname if they were to get married. Subsequent group comparisons reveal correlates of this pattern. Specifically, participants were more likely to report this preference when they were older than 35, higher-income, already married, and not planning to have children. These findings parallel patterns that have been observed in research examining attitudes about the name-changing as practiced within heterosexual relationships. For instance, Noack and Wiik (2008) found that women who chose to retain their surname got married at an older age and had a higher income than women who chose to adopt their husband's surname. This may be in part because age and income are correlated with experience in higher education settings, which can contribute to greater resistance to traditional practices (Hamilton et al., 2011).

Many of the participants who reported that neither partner would change their surname explicitly critiqued the tradition when asked to explain their preference. Indeed, some participants appeared to be bemused or exasperated about being asked in the first place (for a similar pattern, see Clarke et al., 2008). Participants' concerns mainly centered on the heteronormative and patriarchal roots of the marital surname tradition. Heteronormativity contributes to oppression and marginalization for people who identify as sexual minorities (Herek, 2000; Herz & Johansson, 2015); thus, rejecting heteronormative naming traditions may be an important form of resistance for some people in same-sex relationships (Clarke et al., 2013; Clarke et al., 2008; Pilcher, 2017). Consistent with this point, Schecter and colleagues (2008) assessed same-sex couples' preferences for public displays of commitment such as wedding ceremonies. Among the participants who did not anticipate having a public ceremony, some attributed their reluctance to the patriarchal roots of these ceremonies. A related concern was that adopting heteronormative relationship traditions may result in the gay and lesbian community "losing its uniqueness as well as the creativity that has characterized gay and lesbian commitment ceremonies," (Schecter et al., 2008, p. 415).

"A surname change is a possibility." Most of our participants were considering some type of surname change. Nearly half of the sample (49%) expressed a preference for one or both partners to make a surname change; an additional subset of participants (12%) were open to the possibility of a surname change, but reported that they were still deciding. Thus, many participants appeared to be actively weighing the possibility of a surname change, which suggests that they perceived the topic as relevant to their lives. This differs from prior research (e.g., Clarke et al., 2008), which tends to find that surname changes are not an especially common preference among people in same-sex relationships.

The distinction between the current study and prior research may be due in part to the timing of our data collection, which occurred several months after same-sex couples were granted the right to marry across the U.S. That is, perceiving marriage as a viable option may have contributed to our participants' reasoning in ways that differ from what has been observed in other samples. Schecter and colleagues (2008) made a similar observation in their study examining same-sex couples' attitudes about commitment ceremonies after same-sex marriage was legalized in Massachusetts. It is also possible that age contributed to differences between the current study and prior research. The participants in our sample were primarily under the age of 35, whereas samples in similar studies tend to have an average age in the late 30s or early 40s (Clarke et al., 2013; Clarke et al., 2008; Haas & Whitton, 2015). Our quantitative comparisons provide further evidence of age differences; most participants over the age of 35 reported that they were not interested in a marital surname change.

"One of us will change." Among the participants who expressed a desire for a surname change, the most common preference was for one partner to adopt the other's surname (30% of the sample). Participants were more likely to hold this preference when they were younger than 35, lesbians, lower-income, and planning to have children. It is interesting that the women in our study were more likely than the men to report that one person in the relationship would change their surname. Emens (2007) found a similar pattern when analyzing data of same-sex couples who formed civil unions in Vermont, in that a disproportionate number of lesbian couples shared names.

Suter and Oswald (2003) examined rationales underlying lesbian couples' surname preferences. Although their sample was too small to indicate quantitative trends, their qualitative data suggested that participants often expressed a desire to create a sense of family unity. The

link between sharing a surname and planning to have children was also apparent in the qualitative data collected in the current study. That is, some participants who wanted to share a surname with their partner explained that it was important to them that the whole family be united under the same surname. This reasoning bears similarities to trends that have been observed in heterosexual participants, who commonly report that family unity underlies their desire for the woman in the relationship to adopt the man's surname (Robnett & Leaper, 2013; Twenge, 1997). In heterosexual relationships, however, couples are typically guided by gender-role norms when deciding who will change their surname. Our qualitative data yield insight into how people in same-sex relationships may navigate this decision. Namely, participants referenced factors such as aesthetics, identity, and family lineage as reasons why one person in the relationship may (or may not) decide to adopt their partner's surname. For instance, some participants reported that they would be glad to adopt their partner's surname because they do not have a strong connection to their own.

"We'll both change." A smaller percentage of participants (19%) who wanted to share a name with their partner expressed a preference for both partners in the relationship to change their surnames. Common ways of accomplishing this goal included hyphenation, blending the two surnames, and coming up with a completely new surname. Although small in number, participants who expressed a desire for both partners to change their surnames are noteworthy in that they are "putting their own spin" on a traditional practice. It is possible that participants in this response category are being guided by a tension that has been observed in similar studies (e.g., Clarke et al., 2013; Schecter et al., 2008). Specifically, some individuals in same-sex relationships note that adopting traditions that are common in heterosexual relationships (e.g., marriage ceremonies) affords their relationship greater "legitimacy" in the eyes of friends, family

members, and the broader society. In some cases, this perception of legitimacy may contribute to heightened acceptance and improved relationships with family members or colleagues (Schecter et al., 2008). However, as discussed earlier, adopting these traditions comes at the expense of aligning with heteronormative scripts, which can be a source of concern for individuals in same-sex relationships (Clarke et al., 2013; Clarke et al., 2008; Schecter et al., 2008). Perhaps some participants in the current study sought to resolve this tension by aligning with the surname tradition in some regards (i.e., sharing the same surname after marriage), while subverting its heteronormative and patriarchal roots by implementing the tradition in a manner that does not align with common practices in heterosexual relationships (e.g., blending both surnames to create a new one).

Limitations and Future Directions

Findings from the current study should be viewed in light of several limitations. First, age, relationship status, and income were confounded with one another. The confounding effects raise questions about the extent to which age, relationship status, and income independently contribute to surname preferences. Future research could address this concern by collecting data from participants with a wider array of backgrounds. A more diverse sample would also enable more refined tests of ethnic variation; the current study relied on coarse ethnic groupings. We recognize the difficulties inherent in recruiting a large, diverse sample; collecting data from historically marginalized populations presents unique challenges (e.g., Clarke et al., 2008). However, it may be possible to leverage online communities and crowdsourcing websites (e.g., Amazon's Mechanical Turk) to obtain data from participants who have been difficult to reach with more traditional recruiting methods.

A related limitation pertains to generalizability. Data from the current study were collected from a convenience sample. Although the sample showed a moderate degree of ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, nearly three-quarters of the participants were under the age of 35. This is likely because recruiting materials were posted online and around a college campus. It is not clear whether the findings would generalize to older samples. Indeed, our quantitative comparisons suggest that there may be meaningful age-related differences in how people reason about romantic relationship practices. Future research should delve more deeply into this possibility. For instance, it would be interesting to know whether age differences in attitudes about naming practices are indicative of a cultural shift versus a more general tendency for attitudes about tradition to differ on the basis of age (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2011).

A final limitation pertains to the current study's exclusive focus on sociodemographic variation. It would be interesting to examine whether additional factors such as personality traits or relationship power dynamics help to explain how people in same-sex relationships navigate the surnaming tradition. For instance, in situations where one partner adopts the other's surname, perhaps the "adopter" tends to be more agreeable or holds less power in the relationship. Researchers have speculated that this may be the case when women in heterosexual relationships adopt the husband's surname (see Pilcher, 2017); however, this work inevitably confounds individual-level variation with average gender differences in status and power at the societal level.

Conclusion

The current study replicates and extends prior research focusing on how people in same-sex relationships reason about marital surname changes. Consistent with prior research, a subset of the sample expressed a lack of interest in undergoing a surname change; often, they rejected

this tradition on the basis of its heteronormative roots. Inconsistent with prior research, however, the majority of the sample expressed at least some openness to a marital surname change. Relative to the rest of the sample, these participants were more likely to be lesbians and to anticipate having children; they also tended to be younger. Additional qualitative analyses provided deeper insight into the rationales underlying this preference (e.g., a desire for family unity). Future research should build on the current study by examining whether these findings generalize to more diverse samples. At a more general level, additional work that focuses on norms and traditions in same-sex relationships is much-needed; the research literature currently lags behind societal progress.

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Conclusion

In my dissertation, I examined three main questions. First, how do heterosexual men reason about benevolent sexism? Second, how heterosexual individuals reason about troubled romantic relationships? Third, how do same-sex couples reason about their surnames?

In chapter 2, I used a mixed-methods approach to understand how heterosexual men reason about benevolent sexism. Past research has focused primarily on women's experiences with benevolent sexism, and benevolent sexism research in general has yielded poor psychometric properties when utilized within a racial and ethnically diverse sample (Hayes & Swim, 2013). Therefore, I examined a racially and ethnically diverse sample of heterosexual men. I used thematic analysis and developed a coding manual to understand how participants reasoned about protective paternalism. Emergent themes centered on men and women as equals within the workforce and men's role as a caretaker for women. This study can be used as a steppingstone to developing culturally appropriate measures of sexism.

In chapter 4, I used a two-study design to understand how heterosexual individuals reason about troubled romantic relationships. In study 1, I used an experimental design to manipulate whether a hypothetical male partner was described as endorsing benevolent sexism or no sexism (control). In both conditions, the relationship was characterized as troubled. When heterosexual women were assigned to the benevolent partner condition, they indicated that they would prolong the relationship with positive maintenance strategies, as opposed to exiting the relationship. In study 2, I expanded the study to include heterosexual men and to examine with adult romantic attachment influenced participants' reasoning about a troubled romantic relationship. Path analysis revealed that attachment style, benevolent sexism endorsement, and relationship-contingent self-esteem worked in conjunction to predict relationship maintenance

strategies. Pending additional research with an experimental design and replication, this study could serve as a steppingstone for therapeutic techniques in couples therapy.

In chapter 6, I used a mixed-methods approach to understand how individuals in a same-sex relationship reason about their surnames. Previous research focused on participants from homogeneous samples (Clarke et al., 2008), so one of the goals of this study was to examine surname preferences from a large group of participants from diverse backgrounds. I used thematic analysis and developed a coding manual to understand the motivations participants offered for their surname preferences. Results revealed that participants were somewhat more willing to change their surnames, as compared to previous research (Clarke et al., 2008). Moreover, participants who were younger indicated more willingness to change their surnames. Emergent themes centered on how sharing a surname can create a sense of family.

In my research, I have used both quantitative research methods to understand trends regarding romantic relationships, as well as qualitative research methods to understand the nuances within these trends. For example, in Underwood & Robnett (2019), we used mixed-methods research, which relied on quantitative methods to capture normative behavior regarding same-sex couples' surname preferences and qualitative methods to reveal the rich nuances in participants' descriptions of their surname preferences and decisions. As a researcher, it is my goal to utilize mixed-methods approaches to understand trends and minute details.

A second goal is to produce research that adds to the rich scholarship on gender norms and romantic relationships, as well as to produce research that can be utilized in an applied setting. The manuscripts I have submitted for my dissertation provide both basic research insight as well as the potential for applied research. For example, in Underwood & Robnett (2023), we developed a two-study manuscript that demonstrates a novel approach to how people reason

about negative romantic relationships. This manuscript not only adds to the growing body of literature about the negative outcomes associated with benevolent sexism, but future research can build on this study, implement experimental designs, and replicate the results in order to inform therapy for romantic relationship functioning.

A third goal of my research is to utilize an interdisciplinary approach and examine both individual differences and psychological variables as well as sociological perspectives. In Underwood and Robnett (2019) I drew on psychological variables to understand how individuals in a same-sex relationship reason about their surnames. I collected this data immediately after same-sex couples earned the right to marry, which provides historical significance to this research. Additionally, this study critiques the heteronormative practice of surname changing, and pulls from sociological perspectives of patriarchal systems. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach for my research, my research speaks to complex issues that women and men from marginalized communities face.

Curriculum Vitae
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EDUCATION

2023 Ph.D. in Psychological and Brain Sciences, Quantitative-Experimental Emphasis: University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2017 M.A. in Experimental Psychology, Quantitative-Experimental Emphasis: University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2012 B.A. in Psychology and Interdisciplinary Programs - Women's Studies: University of Tennessee, Knoxville

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Underwood, C. R., & Robnett, R. D. (2019). "I Would Like Us to Share a Name so That We Can Be Recognized in Society." Marital Surname Preferences in Same-Sex Relationships. *Journal of Homosexuality.*

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

Chapters in Edited Books

Robnett, R. D., & **Underwood, C. R**. (in press). Marriage and surnames. To appear in J. J. Ponzetti Jr. (Ed.), *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Families, Marriages, and Intimate Relationships*.

Robnett, R. D., John, J. E., **Underwood, C. R.,** & Thoman, S. E. (2020). Sexism and gender stereotyping. To appear in S. Hupp & J. Jewell (Eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Child and Adolescent Development*. West Sussex: Wiley.

EMPLOYMENT

2023-present McNair Scholars Program Director, Iona University

2022-2023 Assistant Director for Undergraduate Research, Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2021-2022	Academic Coaching Coordinator, Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2020-2021	Graduate Assistant, Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2019-2020	Graduate Assistant, Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2018-2019	Graduate Assistant, Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2017-2018	Graduate Assistant, Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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

AWARDS & HONORS

2020-2021	UNLV Graduate College Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship
2019-2020	UNLV Graduate College Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship
2019	UNLV Graduate College Sterling Scholarship
2019	UNLV Graduate College Summer Doctoral Research Fellowship
2019	Graduate and Professional Student Association Research Forum Presentation Award- Honorable Mention
2019	Graduate and Professional Student Association Travel Award
2018	Graduate and Professional Student Association Travel Award
2018	UNLV Psychology Department Lovinger Award
2018-2019	UNLV Graduate College Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship
2018-2019	UNLV Graduate College Access Grant
2017	Graduate and Professional Student Association Travel Award

2017-2018 UNLV Graduate College Patricia Sastaunik Scholarship

2017-2018 UNLV Graduate College Access Grant

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

2016-2017 UNLV Graduate College Access Grant

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

2016 Graduate and Professional Student Association Research Forum Presentation Award- First Place

2015-2016 UNLV Graduate College Access Grant

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

Association for Psychological Science

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Klenczar, B., **Underwood, C. R.,** & Robnett, R. D. (2020, October). *Variation in men's reasoning for endorsement of benevolent sexism.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Western Psychological Association, Virtual.

Underwood, C. R., & Robnett, R. D. (2019, February). *Mr. and Mr. or Mrs. and Mrs.: Surname preferences in same-sex relationships.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Portland, OR.

Underwood, C. R., & Robnett, R. D. (2018, October). *Should I stay, or should I go? Examining how benevolent sexism, relationship maintenance strategies, and relationship-contingent self-esteem influence emerging adult women's romantic decisions*. Poster presented at the meeting of the Gender Development Research Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Stephens, A. K., **Underwood, C. R.,** Chiang-Lopez, C., & Robnett, R. D. (2018, October). *I am Polyam: Emerging adults' expressions of polyamorous identities.* Poster presented at the meeting of the Gender Development Research Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Underwood, C. R., & Robnett, R. D. (2018, March). *"But he treats me like a princess.": Benevolent sexism and women's relationship maintenance strategies.* Poster 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

2019-2020 Diversity & Inclusion Student Committee – Treasurer & Secretary

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

2018-2019 Psychology of Women Quarterly Student Editorial Board

Fall 2018 SPSP Graduate Student Poster Award Reviewer

Fall 2017 Invited Judge - Office of Undergraduate Research Slam

Fall 2017 SPSP Undergraduate Student Poster Award Reviewer

Fall 2017 APIASF AANAPISI Scholarship Program Reviewer

Fall 2017 Invited Workshop for the Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, "Applying to Graduate School"

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