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Benevolent and hostile sexism in a shifting global context

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22 **Abstract**

23 Theory and research on ambivalent sexism—which encompasses both attitudes that are
24 overtly negative (hostile sexism) and those that seem subjectively positive but are actually
25 harmful (benevolent sexism)—has made substantial contributions to understanding how
26 sexism operates and the consequences it has for women. It is now clear that sexism takes
27 different forms, some of which can be disguised as protection and flattery. However, all
28 forms of sexism have negative effects on how women are perceived and treated by others as
29 well as on women themselves. Some of these findings have implications for understanding
30 other social inequalities, such as ableism, ageism, racism, and classism. In this Review, we
31 summarize what is known about the predictors of ambivalent sexism and its effects. Although
32 we focus on women we also consider some effects on men, in particular those that indirectly
33 impact women. Throughout the Review we point to societal shifts that are likely to impact
34 how sexism is manifested, experienced, and understood. We conclude by discussing the
35 broader implications of these changes and specifying areas of enquiry that need to be
36 addressed to continue making progress in understanding the mechanisms underlying social
37 inequalities.

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[H1] Introduction

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Addressing the substantial gender inequalities that exist across a range of life domains¹ requires understanding the impacts of sexism. According to ambivalent sexism theory,² which was developed to account for the relationship between (cisgender and heterosexual) men and women, sexism includes a hostile component (overtly negative attitudes about men and women) and a benevolent component (attitudes towards men and women that seem subjectively positive but are actually harmful). These components differ in tone but are positively correlated and work together to perpetuate gender inequalities.²

Research suggests that children,³ young people,^{4,5} and adult men and women around the world⁶ endorse ambivalent sexism (that is, agree with items that measure both benevolent sexism, such as “women should be protected by men”, and hostile sexism, such as “women seek to gain power by getting control over men”). Indeed, according to one study half of the British population holds these attitudes.⁷ Ambivalent sexism is therefore a critical factor shaping girls’ and women’s lives in a variety of social contexts.

Although there has been substantial progress in this area of research⁸, theoretical insights are often assumed to hold across time, cultures, and social groups. Consequently, theoretical advances do not account for societal shifts in gender relationships over time, or consider the socio-political and cultural contexts in which they operate. For example, binary views of gender are more widely challenged than before⁹ (at least in some places), which influences ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman, as well as what relationships between individuals of different gender groups should look like. In addition, legal and policy developments change the background against which relationships between men and women play out. For example, the number of countries offering paid paternity leave has increased, and so has its uptake,¹⁰ which has led to greater labour participation of both mothers and fathers.¹¹ Although the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on workload and

66 household work burdens disproportionately affected women,^{12,13} changes in women's
67 participation in the workforce provided a normative climate against which couples could
68 evaluate, and be evaluated by others as a function of, their decisions in this area. In addition,
69 because divorce and same-sex and single parenting are increasing,^{14,15} men and women now
70 often play both traditionally male and female roles within families.

71 More broadly, the spread of neoliberalism as a prevailing socio-political ideology has
72 influenced ideas of equality and how best to achieve progress (for example, by changing
73 individuals rather than social structures).¹⁶ For women, this shift has been associated with
74 greater agency in terms of workplace involvement and contribution to the global
75 marketplace,¹⁷ but often without adequate policy and structural support (such as adequate
76 parental leave or strong employment non-discrimination laws). Instead, women are
77 simultaneously tasked with traditional gendered chores, such as childcare and housekeeping,
78 while also being told to 'lean into' their careers when they inevitably experience obstacles not
79 faced by heterosexual men. Neoliberalism both empowers women to strive for, and blames
80 women for failing to achieve, outcomes that are often beyond their individual control,
81 masking subtler and more blatant ways in which sexism shapes and constricts lives. Although
82 the full extent of the consequences of this global shift is not straightforward, these changes
83 might impact how sexism is expressed and experienced.

84 Researchers have begun to recognise such societal shifts in ideas about gender and
85 romantic relationships beyond heterosexual couples,⁹ but research in this area is still scarce.
86 In addition, the geographical contexts of research on ambivalent sexism have diversified,¹⁸
87 but the majority of research is still carried out in a restricted number of countries (including
88 New Zealand, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States); thus, comparative
89 work and reflections on cultural specificities are still largely missing.

90 In this Review, we take stock of current understanding of ambivalent sexism to
91 facilitate further enquiry that addresses relevant societal shifts and their global contexts. First,
92 we describe benevolent and hostile sexism and their predictors. We then review what is
93 currently known about how benevolent and hostile sexism influence how women are
94 perceived and treated (by both men and women). Next, we discuss how these types of sexism
95 influence how women feel and behave, as well as romantic relationships between men and
96 women. Although the applicability of findings to present socio-political contexts will be
97 flagged throughout the paper, the final section more thoroughly considers shifts in global
98 context and how these open up avenues for future research. We focus on research published
99 within the past five years, but key older studies are also mentioned where they exemplify core
100 theoretical aspects. We also focus primarily on sexism towards women. Ambivalent attitudes
101 towards men also encompass hostile and benevolent components¹⁹, but these attitudes are less
102 well understood. Importantly, they are strongly related to ambivalent sexism towards women
103 and are proposed to serve the same function of supporting male dominance over women.²⁰
104 Some examples of effects of ambivalent sexism on men are mentioned especially where their
105 impact on women is most direct.

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107 **[H1] Two forms of sexism**

108 Prejudice is traditionally conceptualised as a negative attitude that explains and
109 shapes antagonistic relationships between dominant and subordinate groups.²¹ Sexism is a
110 form of prejudice that specifically subordinates women to men. Although sexism can take
111 very clearly negative (and even violent) forms, attitudes towards women are not necessarily
112 negative in obvious ways; in fact, people often describe women more positively than they
113 describe men—the ‘women are wonderful effect.’²² However, positive descriptions of women
114 tend to be restricted to traits related to warmth (women are sociable and nice), whereas men

115 are more positively described in domains like agency and competence that determine status
116 and power in society (men are bright and capable).^{22,23} In addition, relationships between men
117 and women are not necessarily characterized by antagonism; instead, they often involve the
118 coexistence of male dominance with cooperation, and even intimacy. Ambivalent sexism
119 theory^{2,24} was developed to account for these specific circumstances and proposes that sexism
120 combines antipathy (hostile sexism) with subjective benevolence (benevolent sexism)
121 towards women, which together maintain men's dominance over women.

122 Hostile sexism is similar to the traditional conceptualization of prejudice as antipathy:
123 It is negative in tone and disparages women who challenge traditional gender roles and
124 ideologies (for example, professionally successful women). It communicates a view of
125 gender relationships as competitive, with women wanting to dominate men and threatening
126 men's higher status in society. By contrast, benevolent sexism has a more positive tone: It
127 idealizes and flatters women who embody traditional ideals (such as stay-at-home mothers),
128 and portrays women as morally pure and uniquely caring, but also weak and unable to take
129 care of themselves. Benevolent sexism portrays gender relationships as cooperative and
130 complementary, with men in charge of protection and security and women dedicated to
131 nurturance and reproduction.

132 Both hostile and benevolent sexism encompass three components, which are assessed
133 with the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory:²⁴ Paternalism, gender differentiation, and
134 heterosexual intimacy (Table 1). Paternalism refers to men's superiority over women, either
135 aggressively (in hostile sexism) or protectively (in benevolent sexism). Gender differentiation
136 draws a line between men and women, distributing roles associated with power to men (in
137 hostile sexism) and nurturing roles to women (in benevolent sexism). Heterosexual intimacy
138 accommodates heterosexual men's dependency on women for sexual satisfaction; hostile

139 sexism aims to restrict women's use of sex to manipulate men and benevolent sexism
140 idealizes women as necessary to complete men.

141 Although hostile and benevolent sexism are opposite in tone, they both draw on
142 gender stereotypes and therefore tend to be positively associated²⁴ across nations:⁶ The more
143 hostile sexism there is in a given society, the more individuals in that society also endorse
144 benevolent sexism.⁶ Correspondingly, women who report more daily experiences with hostile
145 sexism also report more daily experiences with benevolent sexism.²⁵ However, because
146 hostile and benevolent sexism express gender stereotypes in distinct ways, there are
147 important differences in how these two forms of sexism are perceived: Hostile sexism is
148 regarded as more objectionable than benevolent sexism,²⁶ in part because it is perceived as
149 more sexist.²⁷ Benevolent sexism is perceived as harmless²⁸ and even romantic,²⁹ and this
150 makes men who endorse benevolent sexism seem likeable.^{18,27,30} Hostile sexism is less
151 commonly endorsed⁶ and expressed, and indeed women report more lifetime experiences
152 with benevolent than hostile sexism.^{25,31} However, in part because of the warmth it transmits,
153 benevolent sexism can make hostile sexism seem more acceptable when expressed by the
154 same person.³²

155 Benevolent sexism is also seen as less objectionable than hostile sexism because it
156 offers women benefits. For example, because benevolent sexism offers protection to
157 women,³³ men who express benevolent sexism are seen as caring.³⁴ In addition, women who
158 endorse benevolent sexism see the social system as fair³⁵ and consequently report greater life
159 satisfaction.³⁶

160 In sum, benevolent and hostile sexism both express the belief that women are and
161 should be submissive to men. However, benevolent sexism is considered more acceptable,
162 and at times even flattering. This positive perception is a key property of ambivalent sexism
163 that contributes to the perpetuation and pervasiveness of gender inequalities.

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[H1] Predictors of ambivalent sexism

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Understanding how sexism operates requires consideration of why people might endorse sexist views. Whereas some factors predict endorsement of both benevolent and hostile sexism, others appear to uniquely predict one type of sexism (Figure 1).

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[H3] Demographic factors

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Existing comparative evidence using the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory relies upon non-representative samples,²⁴ so it is not possible to establish precisely how benevolent and hostile sexism vary across countries. However, the evidence suggests that hostile sexism is strongest in countries characterised by lower gender equality and less wealth, health, and education, as measured by United Nations indicators.³⁷ These findings suggest that sexism is not only detrimental to women's own advancement, but might also be detrimental to society as a whole, reducing overall educational achievement and impairing social prosperity.

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Because benevolent and hostile sexism serve to justify and perpetuate male privilege, it is not surprising that men endorse benevolent and hostile sexism to a greater extent than women²⁴ across nations,⁶ with gender differences typically larger for hostile than benevolent sexism. Research comparing sexism scores between cisgender (those who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth), transgender (those who identify with a gender different from that assigned at birth) and gender diverse individuals (those who identify as for example non-binary, genderfluid or genderqueer) has produced mixed results. One study revealed higher hostile sexism scores among cisgender men, and lower benevolent sexism scores among cisgender women and gender diverse individuals assigned female at birth, than other gender groups.³⁸ However, another study revealed higher scores on both components among

188 transgender than cisgender individuals.³⁹ These discrepancies highlight the need for more
189 research in this area.

190 Regarding age, men’s hostile sexism and women’s hostile and benevolent sexism are
191 higher in adolescence and young adulthood, lower in middle adulthood, and again higher in
192 older age. By contrast men’s benevolent sexism increases with age.^{5,40} This finding is argued
193 to reflect age-normative changes in the importance of goals related to power, identity, and
194 relationships that underlie ambivalent sexism, such as the fact that middle-aged individuals
195 have greater relational and role stability as well as greater independence than young and older
196 adults. It remains to be seen whether these age and gender patterns hold across time and
197 cultures with different views on power, identity, and relationships.

198 Studies are beginning to show the importance of taking race into account when
199 attempting to understand the drivers of sexism (Box 1). One study showed that Black
200 American women endorse benevolent sexism to a greater extent than white American
201 women.⁴¹ Crucially, benevolent and hostile sexism are not significantly correlated among
202 Black American participants,⁴² and there is also no gender difference in the endorsement of
203 these two types of sexism among these participants.^{41,42} However, the benevolent sexism
204 subscale of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory has poor measurement properties for Latinx
205 and African American participants, suggesting that it is not appropriate for assessing this
206 construct in all racial or ethnic groups.⁴² This measurement issue also highlights the need to
207 expand understandings to other cultural contexts and intersections between multiple
208 identities.

209 Even though ambivalent sexism is endorsed across sexual orientations,^{40,41} individuals
210 who are, or desire to be, in heterosexual romantic relationships report stronger benevolent
211 and hostile sexist attitudes than sexual minority respondents^{36,44–46}. However, as above,
212 existing measurement tools are not appropriate for comparing heterosexual and sexual

213 minority samples, creating doubt about how these differences in scores should be
214 interpreted.⁴⁷

215 *[H3] Situational factors*

216 The more an individual's circumstances reflect traditional gender roles, the higher
217 their benevolent sexism scores. For example, having more children predicts stronger
218 endorsement of benevolent sexism two years later—and not the other way around.⁴⁸ That is,
219 people might endorse benevolent sexism to justify the traditional gender roles they have
220 adopted in their life, rather than adopting these roles because they endorse benevolent sexism.
221 If this is the case, then changes in gender roles—for example through increase in same-sex
222 parenting, or men's increased participation in childcare—might lead to reductions in
223 endorsement of benevolent sexism.

224 *[H3] Ideological factors*

225 Religiosity is another form of traditionalism that drives sexism. Both forms of sexism,
226 but benevolent sexism in particular, have been positively associated with religiosity across
227 affiliations such as Christianity and Islam.^{49–53} Simple reminders of religion can be sufficient
228 to increase endorsement of benevolent sexism.⁵⁴ Some have argued (but not yet
229 demonstrated) that reductions in religiosity worldwide coincide with scientific and
230 technological advances that increase fertility and reduce child mortality. These advances
231 thereby reduce the need to control women's reproduction and sphere of activity, which was
232 historically facilitated by religious norms.⁵⁵ Thus, one prediction is that declines in religiosity
233 might translate into a reduction in sexist attitudes.

234 Ideological variables related to political conservatism also predict sexism. In fact,
235 political conservatism has been found to explain more variance in ambivalent sexism than
236 gender.⁷ Moreover, in both men and women hostile sexism is predicted most strongly and
237 consistently by social dominance orientation (a view of the world in which groups of people

238 compete for dominance and superiority), whereas benevolent sexism is most strongly and
239 consistently predicted by right-wing authoritarianism (which stems from perceptions of the
240 world as a dangerous place and reflects a desire for security).^{56,57} These findings support the
241 idea that hostile sexism is primarily driven by the idea that men's dominance over women is
242 both appropriate and desirable, a belief that can be shared by men and women. By contrast,
243 benevolent sexism is driven by a need for security (implied in right-wing authoritarianism).
244 These findings lead to the prediction that political rhetoric associated with the rise in right-
245 wing populism and world events that promote the idea that the world is an unsafe place (such
246 as the COVID-19 pandemic) might increase endorsement of these forms of sexism.

247 Further evidencing that benevolent sexism is driven by a need for security, women's
248 endorsement of benevolent (but not hostile) sexism increases when they believe that men
249 have more hostile attitudes towards women.⁶ Women also endorse benevolent sexism to a
250 greater extent when their fear of crime is enhanced.⁵⁸ This finding leads to the prediction that
251 actions that highlight women's vulnerability to sexual violence (for example the #MeToo
252 movement) might ironically increase women's feelings of insecurity and their endorsement of
253 benevolent sexism in an attempt to secure protection. Similarly, particularly high exposure to
254 discrimination among Black American women (which raises the need for safety) might
255 explain why they endorse benevolent sexism to a greater extent than white American
256 women,⁴¹ but this has not been directly tested. Furthermore, men and women who are more
257 afraid of disease and contagion endorse benevolent sexism to a greater extent, presumably
258 because the restrictions benevolent sexism imposes on women's behaviour can protect
259 against disease.⁵⁹ This finding is particularly interesting in light of the COVID-19
260 pandemic—fear of disease during the pandemic might have led to increases in benevolent
261 sexism. Finally, men's benevolent sexism increases when they feel anxious about their sense
262 of manhood⁶⁰ or their romantic relationship.⁶¹ Interestingly, men who do not have such

263 security needs (men with a tendency to avoid attachment) report low benevolent and high
264 hostile sexism.⁶¹

265 In sum, a range of factors increase benevolent and hostile sexism, some of which are
266 unique to each form of sexism. Importantly, changes within a given society in these various
267 predictors (for example, general decreases in religiosity, or temporary fluctuations in
268 insecurity, particularly for women) might have implications for the manifestation of
269 ambivalent sexism. The direct links between these societal changes and endorsement of
270 ambivalent sexism requires further evidence.

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272 **[H1] Impact of ambivalent sexism**

273 It is important to understand the different ways in which sexism can be expressed
274 because they can have different consequences. In this section we summarize and compare the
275 effects of benevolent and hostile sexism. Although the review is not exhaustive, it includes
276 those effects that are most crucial for understanding the impact of ambivalent sexism across a
277 range of domains (Table 2).

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279 ***[H3] Gender roles***

280 Hostile and benevolent sexism contribute to maintaining the status quo by regulating
281 how women (and men) behave. Hostile sexism is correlated with negative stereotypes or
282 disparaging views about women who challenge the status quo by behaving non-traditionally,
283 such as career women,⁶² women in stereotypical male employment positions (such as
284 managers)⁶³ or feminists.⁶² By contrast, benevolent sexism is associated with positive
285 stereotypes about or support for women who reinforce gender inequalities by behaving in line
286 with traditional gender roles, such as housewives,^{6,24} or women who do not confront
287 sexism.⁶⁴ In addition, hostile sexism punishes women who deviate from traditional gender

288 roles and benevolent sexism encourages women to abide by them in exchange for protection
289 and financial security. For example, women’s endorsement of hostile sexism is associated
290 with the derogation of women who breastfeed in public⁶⁵ and women who are highly sexually
291 active;⁶⁶ men’s endorsement of benevolent sexism is associated with favourable views of
292 women who breastfeed their children in private,⁶⁷ and predicts unfavourable attitudes towards
293 women who engage in pre-marital sex.⁶⁸ Men who endorse benevolent sexism often engage
294 in protective behaviours towards women (the ‘white knight’ effect),³³ and the idea that
295 women need protection is often used as an argument in favour of restricting transgender
296 women’s access to the bathroom of their affirmed gender.⁶⁹

297 Men do not necessarily benefit from these restrictive attitudes. Indeed, both men and
298 women who do not conform to the rigid gender role prescriptions that underlie ambivalent
299 sexism—such as LGB individuals,^{70,71} men who perform stereotypically feminine behaviours
300 (such as styling someone’s hair),⁷² men who express gender egalitarian beliefs,⁷³ and
301 transgender individuals^{74,75}—are the target of negative attitudes, particularly by those high in
302 hostile sexism.⁷¹ This lack of conformity is perceived to threaten the gender hierarchy in
303 which men dominate, so it is not surprising that these negative attitudes tend to be stronger
304 among men than women.^{74,75} These rigid notions of gender contribute to regulating men’s
305 behaviour, and directly or indirectly influence women’s social standing. It is unclear whether
306 these gender role prescriptions (and their effects on how men and women are perceived) are
307 retained as men and women are seen to successfully take on more counter-stereotypical roles,
308 such as women being successful at work, or men successfully parenting.

309

310 *[H3] Self-views*

311 Sexism impacts how women feel and think about themselves and their bodies.

312 Benevolent sexism is particularly problematic in this regard because its flattering and less

313 obviously sexist tone discourages women from rejecting the stereotypes it makes salient.
314 Consequently, women exposed to benevolent (but not hostile) sexism describe themselves
315 more in line with gender stereotypes and remember more gender stereotypical information
316 about themselves.^{76,77}

317 Beauty ideals are important for the subjugation of women because they often reduce
318 women to sex objects, draw attention away from their competence, and undermine their self-
319 confidence, thereby facilitating men's dominance. Both benevolent and hostile sexism are
320 associated with the endorsement of beauty ideals (such as thin bodies),⁷⁸ self-
321 objectification,⁷⁹ and body dissatisfaction.⁸⁰ These, in turn, make women vulnerable to
322 psychological ill health, for example by decreasing adherence to physical medical exams and
323 exacerbating eating disorders.⁸¹ Interestingly, benevolent sexism has been associated with
324 both thin^{78,82} and large⁸⁰ body ideals, the former presumably because they render women
325 fragile and dependent, and the latter presumably because large bodies signal fertility. In
326 addition, benevolent sexism has also been associated with women's increased use of
327 cosmetics, which can improve satisfaction with appearance⁸² and reverse the relationship
328 between benevolent sexism and body image.^{80,83} In sum, both forms of sexism lead to
329 attitudes that seek to control, and draw attention to, women's appearance, but the effects of
330 benevolent sexism are slightly more complex.

331 Sexism also influences men's views of themselves and their bodies. Although sexism
332 can enhance the value of being a man, such narrow notions of masculinity can lead those who
333 do not (always) fit this notion to experience low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction.⁸⁴ The
334 role of ambivalent sexism in beauty ideals for transgender and gender diverse people has not
335 been directly researched and is an important focus for future research.

336

337 *[H3] Affect and physiology*

338 Automatic responses to both types of sexism are evident in changes in physiology and
339 affect, which might place women at increased risk of physiological ‘wear-and-tear,’ including
340 cardiovascular disease, over the life course.⁸⁵ Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of
341 mortality among women around the world, yet remains under-recognized, underdiagnosed
342 and undertreated.⁸⁶ Thus, research into the specific contributions of ambivalent sexism to this
343 condition is critical to health equity. For example, being a target of benevolent^{87,88} or hostile⁸⁸
344 sexism leads to cardiovascular signatures indicative of threat. However, being a target of
345 hostile sexism leads to a greater initial spike in cardiovascular reactivity whereas benevolent
346 sexism leads to a lower initial spike but slower recovery to baseline⁸⁸ (Figure 2). These
347 findings might be consistent with evidence that exposure to benevolent sexism increases
348 activation of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, a brain region involved in cognitive control
349 and thought suppression, suggesting that women ruminate about benevolent sexism for some
350 time after experiencing it.⁸⁹ Sexism can also be a substantial physical stressor for men when
351 they feel their adherence to strict notions of masculinity is questioned.⁹⁰

352 Consistent with the portrayal of sexism as a stressor, it can elicit anxiety in men.²⁸
353 For women, experiences with benevolent and hostile sexism are both associated with
354 increased self-reported anxiety^{91,92} and anger.^{27,93} However, these associations are relatively
355 stronger for hostile than benevolent sexism,^{27,92} perhaps because women do not always
356 identify benevolent sexism as overtly (or uniquely) negative. Men and women tend to
357 overestimate and underestimate how women’s affect will be influenced by exposure to hostile
358 and benevolent sexism, respectively, potentially because they only have a naive
359 understanding of the difference between them.²⁸ Furthermore, some evidence suggests that
360 the affective impact of benevolent sexism varies depending on the specific component of
361 benevolent sexism experienced; specifically, one study showed that experiences with
362 protective paternalism are associated with more self-doubt, lower self-esteem, and poorer

363 psychological wellbeing, whereas experiencing complementary gender differentiation was
364 associated with less self-doubt, more self-esteem, and better wellbeing.³¹ Future work must
365 continue to disentangle the overlapping and unique affective and physiological sequelae of
366 exposure to various forms of ambivalent sexism among women.

367

368 *[H3] Violence towards women*

369 Restrictive gender role prescriptions can encourage men who feel their masculinity is
370 threatened to behave in ways that they believe demonstrate their manhood, such as displaying
371 aggression.⁹⁴ Only hostile sexism has been shown to predict men's self-reported likelihood to
372 sexually harass women,⁹⁵ and tolerance of sexual harassment.⁹⁶ However, both hostile and
373 benevolent sexism predict men's inclination to commit acquaintance rape and blame victims
374 of sexual assault.^{97,98} For hostile sexism this is because it is associated with the idea that
375 women actually want and control sex even when they claim not to. For benevolent sexism,
376 this is restricted to cases of acquaintance rape and attributed to the idea that women who enter
377 a relationship with a man invite sexual attention.⁹⁷ Because of these perceptions of victims'
378 culpability, those high (vs. low) in benevolent sexism recommend more lenient sentences for
379 perpetrators of acquaintance rape.⁹⁹ In addition, because those high in hostile sexism believe
380 victims actually want sex, hostile sexism predicts less support for measures that reduce male
381 violence towards women and more support for measures that encourage women to avoid
382 male violence;¹⁰⁰ benevolent sexism is positively associated with support for both types of
383 measures owing to its focus on women's protection.¹⁰⁰

384 However, the protection against violence offered by benevolent sexism does not
385 necessarily extend to Black women. In situations where police shoot suspects of armed
386 robberies, benevolent sexism leads to perceptions of white (vs. Black) female suspects as
387 more feminine, which in turn leads to more blame on the officer than the suspect when the

388 suspect is white, but not when she is Black.¹⁰¹ This underlines the need for more research into
389 the intersection of race and gender to examine the limits of ambivalent sexism theory, or
390 expand it to diverse racial groups.

391 Hostile sexism is also linked to sexual aggression towards women by increasing
392 objectification^{102,103} and denying women uniquely human emotions.¹⁰⁴ Benevolent sexism has
393 no such effect. In fact, one study showed that, for both men and women, benevolent sexism
394 increases the association of women with positive and uniquely human emotions.¹⁰⁴ The fact
395 that benevolent sexism can promote this positive image of women might be another reason
396 why women feel flattered by it, despite the fact that it can nevertheless be associated with
397 negative outcomes, including gender violence.

398

399 *[H3] Careers*

400 Sexism influences how women are perceived and treated in the work domain. For
401 example, hostile sexism is associated with the idea that gender income inequality is legitimate
402 because it arises from women's choice of work arrangements that are associated with lower
403 salaries.¹⁰⁵ In addition, hostile sexism leads to fewer recommendations to hire women as
404 managers⁶³ and predicts negative attitudes towards women managers.¹⁰⁶ Once at work,
405 female employees are often treated in benevolently sexist ways by receiving ample praise but
406 little concrete recognition for their work, such as career enhancing opportunities,¹⁰⁷
407 promotions, or salary raises.^{108,109} Benevolent sexism is associated with lower competency
408 standards for female (vs. male) employees, resulting in positive evaluations of women when
409 they are compared to other women, but not when they are compared to men (to whom they
410 are deemed inferior).¹¹⁰ Benevolent sexism also results in more dependency-oriented (vs.
411 autonomy-oriented) help offered to female employees,¹¹¹ which leads others to perceive
412 women as less competent,¹¹² irrespective of whether or not they have requested the help

413 offered.¹¹³ Merely observing a female job candidate being treated in a benevolently sexist
414 manner leads observers to infer that she is less competent or hireable.¹¹³ Finally, benevolent
415 sexism has been related to more support for employment equity policies, but only for
416 stereotypically feminine, not masculine, positions.¹¹⁴ Taken together, this evidence suggests
417 that benevolent sexism encourages behaviours towards female employees that seem positive,
418 but in fact undermine women's careers. Thus benevolent sexism might partially explain why
419 women remain under-represented in higher status and more powerful roles. It remains to be
420 examined whether these relationships become weaker when and where sexist individuals are
421 a minority in the workplace and their attitudes towards female employees have less power.

422 In terms of career choices, benevolent sexism directs boys to stereotypically male
423 domains, like business and maths-related fields, and girls to stereotypically female domains,
424 like the arts.^{115,116} These choices are often influenced by mothers' benevolent sexist
425 attitudes.¹¹⁷ In addition to shaping career choices, benevolent sexism can impair how women
426 actually perform at work, especially if the task is stereotypically masculine,¹¹⁸ by decreasing
427 self-efficacy¹¹⁹ and increasing thought intrusions.^{89,120} At the same time, benevolent sexism
428 restricts women's access to career enhancing support.¹²¹ Women high (vs. low) in benevolent
429 sexism are more likely to accept patronizing behaviour from men, which they might perceive
430 as supportive, but which can perpetuate their dependence on men and undermine their career
431 prospects.^{34,111} Irrespective of their benevolent sexist attitudes, women might refuse support
432 when they believe that accepting such support would confirm the sexist belief that they are
433 dependent upon men.¹²²

434 Taken together these findings show that although hostile sexism has more immediate
435 and negative emotional effects than benevolent sexism, both negatively influence self-views
436 and benevolent sexism in particular shapes women's career choices and performance. The
437 fact that benevolent sexism is often not identified as problematic means that an important

438 deterrent of women's careers frequently remains unaddressed. However, research on this
439 topic might need updating, particularly because some effects of benevolent sexism rely on its
440 subtlety and perceived flattery, which might wane when and where its sexist nature is more
441 visible.

442

443 ***[H3] Healthcare***

444 Both men's and women's health care is compromised by sexist views of women as
445 emotional and men as brave.¹²³ However, only support for addressing women's (but not
446 men's) pain is negatively related to benevolent and hostile sexism.¹²⁴ Moreover, patronizing
447 attitudes characteristic of benevolent sexism are associated with discouraging women to
448 undergo mammography to avoid the anxiety it might provoke, despite evidence suggesting
449 that mammography reduces women's anxiety about having breast cancer.¹²⁵

450 In addition, the idealization of women as mothers (which is fundamental to
451 benevolent sexism) leads to controlling attitudes about pregnant women's choices,¹²⁶ and
452 opposition to both elective and traumatic abortion.¹²⁷ Men's and women's benevolent sexism
453 is associated with negative attitudes towards women who have an abortion, even if it is
454 medically motivated.¹²⁸ In fact, although sexist attitudes can coerce women towards abortion
455 when families seek to restrict the birth of female children,¹²⁹ sexism can also limit access to
456 abortion. For example, benevolently sexist language has been identified in policy-making
457 discussions to justify restricting women's access to abortion services.¹³⁰ Ironically, rather
458 than protecting women's health, research in the United States has shown that state-level
459 abortion bans are tied to increased total maternal mortality.¹³¹ Consistent with benevolent
460 sexism, those who object to abortion often claim that they wish to protect women from the
461 negative emotions it might elicit (such as shame, grief and regret) and portray women as
462 incapable of making good decisions.¹³² Such arguments might take on greater importance as

463 abortion becomes legal in more places because they provide an additional (but informal)
464 hurdle women might need to overcome to access this care.¹²⁹ Of course, benevolently sexist
465 arguments can also be used to ensure that abortion does not become legal, as in the United
466 States where the Supreme Court overturned previously established abortion rights in 2022.
467

468 ***[H3] Legal decisions***

469 Finally, court decisions and criminal sentencing often reflect benevolent sexism, in
470 this case often benefitting women.¹³³ For example, judges tend to sentence female defendants
471 to less time in prison than male defendants for the same crime, which can be attributed to
472 benevolent sexist ideas that women are weaker than men. Similarly, judges are more likely to
473 allow a divorced mother to relocate with her children away from the father than when the
474 exact same case is presented by a father, which in turn can be attributed to the benevolently
475 sexist belief that women are inherently more essential to children than men. The legalization
476 of gay marriage in some countries, and associated shifts in the prevalence and visibility of
477 same-sex parenting, might make men's ability to provide appropriate parenting more evident
478 and bring about change in this type of decision-making. Clearly, although these effects of
479 benevolent sexism might bring some benefits to women, they contribute to portraying women
480 as weak and restricting them to the domestic sphere.

481

482 **[H1] Impact on heterosexual relationships**

483 The desire to sustain the historical norm of heterosexual relationships between
484 cisgender men and women to raise children was originally proposed as one of the driving
485 forces behind ambivalent sexism.^{24,134} Accordingly, an impressive body of research now
486 addresses how ambivalent sexism plays out within heterosexual relationships between
487 cisgender men and women.¹³⁵

488 Some women (and men) might be romantically persuaded by the chivalry inherent in
489 benevolent sexism.¹³⁶ Benevolent sexism might play a seductive role in heterosexual
490 women's initial attraction to men because it promises adoration and willingness to invest by
491 potential male partners.¹³⁷ Indeed, women rate benevolently sexist male strangers as more
492 likeable and sexually attractive than hostilely sexist, or even non-sexist, male strangers.³⁰
493 This is especially true for women higher in need for security in romantic relationships (for
494 instance, women higher in attachment anxiety).¹³⁸ Women's benevolent sexism is also
495 associated with preferences for male romantic partners who possess traits more consistent
496 with traditional gender roles, such as the ability to provide status and/or resources.^{139,140} By
497 contrast, men's hostile sexism is associated with preferences for female romantic partners
498 who possess traits more consistent with traditional gender roles, such as attractiveness or
499 vitality.¹³⁹ Among men and women, both benevolent and hostile sexism are associated with
500 greater endorsement of double standards in heterosexual dating (such as the idea that men,
501 not women, should ask for the first date and pay for the date).¹⁴¹ Taken together, both hostile
502 and, particularly, benevolent sexism influence heterosexual cisgender women to pursue more
503 traditional heteronormative partners and potential relationships.

504 Once in established heterosexual intimate relationships, both men's and women's
505 benevolent and hostile sexism can shape the ways in which romantic partners interact and
506 how their relationships function over time. For example, benevolent sexism promotes
507 traditional task divisions for women¹⁴² and men in heterosexual couples.¹⁴³ By ostensibly
508 providing women with a sphere of influence (within rather than outside the home),
509 ambivalent sexism tempts women to become complicit in their own subjugation. For
510 example, hostile sexism among mothers is associated with maternal gatekeeping (behaviours
511 that limit or exclude fathers from childcare), which leads to women performing a greater
512 share of childcare tasks and spending more hours on these tasks than men.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore,

513 benevolent sexism among women (but not men) is related to intentions to provide
514 dependency-oriented help to male romantic partners when completing stereotypically
515 feminine domestic tasks (such as doing laundry), allowing men to avoid this type of labour in
516 the long run.¹⁴⁵ Thus, ambivalent sexism perpetuates broader social inequalities around
517 gender by steering women away from education and careers in favour of a primary caregiving
518 role in relationships and family life.¹⁴⁶

519 Benevolent sexism can also influence sexual functioning within relationships by
520 focusing the couple on men's sexual needs and women's sexual duties.^{147,148} In heterosexual
521 relationships, women's hostile and benevolent sexism is associated with greater and lesser
522 frequency of faking orgasms, respectively (potentially indicating that women higher in
523 benevolent sexism place less value upon their own sexual pleasure).¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, exposure
524 to benevolent sexism reduces condom use during sex, partially owing to women's motivation
525 to have sex to please a male partner rather than for their own pleasure.¹⁴⁷ Such behaviours
526 can increase risk of sexually transmitted infections as well as pregnancy, which can have
527 detrimental health effects and further limit women's educational and career attainment.

528 Perhaps due to differences in social acceptability, benevolent versus hostile sexism
529 from male romantic partners is more prevalent in public versus private contexts,
530 respectively.¹⁵⁰ However, women higher in benevolent sexism are more likely to accept
531 paternalistic restrictions on their behaviours outside of the home (for example, declining a
532 'risky' educational or career opportunity) at their romantic partner's behest (particularly
533 when the partner offers a justification that is ostensibly about protecting the woman).³⁴
534 Importantly, women's endorsement of benevolent sexism is strongly influenced by
535 perceptions of their male partners' benevolent sexism.^{31,151} Thus, being involved in a
536 relationship with a man who holds benevolently sexist attitudes and ideals might tempt

537 women to view benevolent sexism as a manifestation of love and protection rather than
538 sexism and subjugation.

539 Ambivalent sexism likely leads to deterioration of relationship quality in heterosexual
540 couples. However, processes by which this might happen can differ for hostile and
541 benevolent sexism and longitudinal research is currently lacking. In general, current evidence
542 suggests that men's hostile sexism decreases relationship satisfaction for men and women.
543 Indeed, men's hostile sexism leads to insecurities about women's independence¹⁵² and
544 increases conflict¹⁵³ and aggression^{154,155} in heterosexual relationships, which can lead some
545 women to perceive these behaviours as normative and acceptable in intimate relationships.¹⁵⁶
546 Women's benevolent sexism can increase their partner's relationship satisfaction,¹⁵⁷ but is
547 associated with shorter relationship length.¹⁵³ The more women endorse the romanticized
548 relationship ideals linked to benevolent sexism, the more dissatisfied they are with their
549 relationship when the couple faces conflict.^{158,159} However, women with attachment
550 insecurities can benefit from perceiving that their partner endorses benevolent sexism when
551 there are low levels of conflict because this reassures them of their commitment to the
552 relationship.¹⁶⁰

553 Hostile sexism is also associated with negative attitudes towards non-traditional
554 family planning, such as surrogacy.¹⁶¹ However, there is little research on how ambivalent
555 sexism influences sexual minority relationships.^{162,163} Furthermore, the Ambivalent Sexism
556 Inventory produces different means and item loadings across heterosexual and sexual
557 minority individuals.⁴⁷ Thus, it might not reflect how sexism is experienced by sexual
558 minority individuals and should not be used to compare groups based on sexual orientation.
559 Future research on the effects of ambivalent sexism on romantic relationships should
560 investigate how these processes might function among individuals of diverse sexual and
561 gender identities.

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[H1] Summary and future directions

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Theoretical and empirical knowledge about ambivalent sexism has advanced understanding of gender inequalities by shedding light on how women are subordinated through the tandem operation of hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism has more obvious effects, but benevolent sexism is equally damaging and more insidious, largely because it wears a cloak of flattery and protection.

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Over the almost three decades of research in this area there has been little effort to consider the changing and global context in which sexism operates. Future research will need to examine whether these societal shifts have been accompanied by changes in how these forms of sexism are expressed, perceived, and experienced (Table 3). For example, it is likely that increased understanding of how sexism operates have produced reductions in both types of sexism, at least in some places, with benevolent sexism potentially showing a slower decline due to its positive tone.⁴⁰ Ambivalent sexism theory was developed to account for the specific characteristics of gender relationships as they were understood at the time. However, men's and women's roles have changed, even if not everywhere.¹⁶⁴ For example, more women in the United States occupy high status positions in employment, or are family breadwinners, in the 2020s than the 1990s.¹⁶⁵ These changes in gender roles can have contradictory effects. For example, they might serve to showcase women's perceived competence in the work domain and men's perceived suitability as carers, and increase cooperation between men and women, which could reduce sexism.^{166,167} However, more egalitarian gender roles might ironically increase gender competition and dominative paternalism to keep women in place and protect the gender hierarchy. The direction of these changes might be influenced by factors such as individuals' baseline levels of sexism,

586 ultimately leading to a more polarised society (though perhaps with a smaller minority of
587 sexist individuals).

588 The increased awareness and acceptability of non-traditional notions of gender, such
589 as transgender and non-binary gender identities or expressions,¹⁶⁸ or of non-traditional
590 families, such as those with same-sex parents, might also influence gender-related processes.
591 Those who endorse hostile sexism might attempt to protect the gender hierarchy by targeting
592 gender non-conforming individuals and non-traditional families (like lesbian mothers) and
593 rewarding women who abide by gender norms. However, it is also possible that these non-
594 traditional gender identities and families could contribute to further changes in societal
595 understanding of gender and gender norms. Future research should examine how perceptions
596 and experiences of sexual minority, transgender and non-binary individuals might be
597 influenced by the restrictive views of gender communicated and supported by hostile and
598 benevolent sexism, and how these, in turn, might change with increased exposure to gender
599 non-conforming individuals.

600 Although research on ambivalent sexism has shed light on how attitudes towards
601 other groups operate (Box 2), more research is needed to understand the intersection between
602 gender and other characteristics, such as age, disability, or sexual orientation. For example,
603 little is known about how ambivalent sexism impacts well-being and relationship functioning
604 in same-sex couples. Prior work suggests that sexism contributes to intimate partner
605 violence,¹⁶² attitudes towards same-sex parenting¹⁶³ and objectification¹⁶⁹ by sexual minority
606 individuals and within sexual minority relationships. However, these studies used a measure
607 now known not to adequately capture sexism in these populations.⁴⁷ Indeed, the
608 appropriateness of existing measures of sexism beyond populations that are cisgender,
609 heterosexual, (largely) white, and living in specific cultures, has as yet to be confirmed. For
610 example, efforts to validate the ambivalent sexism inventory across cultures have revealed

611 that it might need adjustment to capture sexism in those cultures.¹⁷² Future research needs to
612 examine the appropriateness of measures for a range of populations and, if necessary,
613 develop new tools to enable comparative research and better serve these groups.

614 Despite growing evidence that the intersectionality between gender and race shapes
615 women's experiences of ambivalent sexism^{41,42,101,172} the majority of research in this area has
616 either not specified the racial composition of the samples, or described them as
617 predominantly white. The findings of this research raise questions about the generalizability
618 of ambivalent sexism theory. More research is needed to clarify whether the theory is less
619 applicable to women of diverse racial groups, whether it can be adjusted and expanded to
620 increase its generalizability, and what measures might be needed to capture sexism across
621 racial or ethnic groups.

622 More generally, research examining predictors and consequences of ambivalent
623 sexism tend to be restricted to a few cultural contexts, which cannot be regarded as a proxy
624 for the rest of the world. The vast majority of this research fails to acknowledge the cultural
625 context where it is carried out and so does not always reflect on how these contexts impact
626 the processes uncovered. Although men tend to be granted more power than women across
627 most societies, the precise cultural and historical context in which gender relationships are
628 lived cannot be ignored. Indeed, there is some evidence that predictors and consequences of
629 sexism can vary across societies as culturally similar as the United Kingdom and the United
630 States.¹⁷³ At the same time, some of the research reviewed here reported similar phenomena
631 across different cultural settings. Ultimately, what is needed is more comparative research to
632 shed further light on the cultural contexts of sexism.

633 Rapid developments in societal norms and attitudes toward sex, gender and sexuality
634 across many countries in the past few decades^{174,175} reflect a global context that is shifting in
635 response to a more intensely interconnected era. These changes are rarely welcomed by

636 everyone and in some cases they are also not permanent. Research needs to more directly
637 examine the impact of these changes, their trajectories across time, and how they influence
638 and are influenced by changes in gender roles and gender-based equality. Socio-political
639 features of this context, such as dominant neoliberal ideology, are likely to influence the ways
640 in which sexism is manifest and entrenched.^{176,177} It is therefore important to understand the
641 impact of ambivalent sexism and its components¹⁷⁸⁻¹⁸¹ as manifestations and consequences of
642 sexism morph in response to this shifting global context.

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1174 **Table 1. Components of hostile and benevolent sexism and example items from the**
 1175 **ambivalent sexism inventory²⁴**

Overarching Component	Hostile sexism		Benevolent sexism	
	Component	Example item	Component	Example item
Paternalism	Dominative: Defending men's power over women.	'Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.'	Protective: Restricting women's access to resources and freedoms to protect them.	'Women should be cherished and protected by men.'
Gender differentiation	Competitive: Portraying qualities necessary for high status positions as unique to men.	'Women exaggerate problems they have at work.'	Complementary: Ascribing positive traits to women in domains that are inconsequential for status and power.	'Women, compared to men, have a superior moral sensibility.'
Heterosexuality	Hostile: Controlling women's sexuality and fearing its use	'Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries	Intimate: Idealizing women as romantic partners.	'Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.'

	to manipulate men.	to put him on a tight leash.'		
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1178 **Table 2. Summary of key effects of benevolent and hostile sexism**

Domain	Associations with hostile sexism	Associations with benevolent sexism
Gender roles	Negative attitudes towards men and women who behave non-traditionally ⁶²	Positive attitudes towards men and women who behave traditionally ²⁴
Self-views	Body dissatisfaction ⁸⁰	Stereotypical self-descriptions ⁷⁶ and body dissatisfaction ⁸⁰
Affect and physiology	Increased stress response ⁸⁸ and anger ¹⁸²	Delayed stress recovery ⁸⁸ and anxiety ⁹¹
Violence toward women	Belief victims of sexual assault actually want sex ⁹⁷	Belief victims of sexual assault have behaved inappropriately ⁹⁹
Careers	Fewer hiring recommendations for women ⁶³ and less support for female managers ¹⁰⁶	Stereotypical career choices, ¹¹⁵ reduced self-efficacy, ¹¹⁹ and more dependency-oriented support for women at work, ¹¹¹ leading women to be perceived as incompetent ¹¹²

Healthcare	Less support for women's (but not men's) pain management ¹²⁴	Discouraging women from accessing medical treatment. ¹²⁵ Restrictive attitudes towards pregnant women ¹²⁶
Legal decisions	--	More lenient criminal sentencing for women than men ¹³³

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1181 **Figure Captions**

1182 **Figure 1. Predictors of benevolent and hostile sexism.** Unique and shared predictors of
1183 benevolent and hostile sexism. Results can differ across studies; the predictors represented
1184 here reflect the most consistent associations reported in the literature.

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1186 **Figure 2. Cardiovascular responses to ambivalent sexism.** Women's cardiovascular
1187 systems are relatively more reactive to experiences of hostile sexism, but relatively slower to
1188 recover and return to baseline after experiences of benevolent sexism. This illustration is
1189 based on data from ref 88, where cardiovascular responses were measured by systolic and
1190 diastolic blood pressure, heart rate, cardiac output, pre-ejection period and total peripheral
1191 resistance.

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Table 3. Potential ramifications of shifting global context for ambivalent sexism

Contextual shift	Ramifications for hostile sexism	Ramifications for benevolent sexism
Greater awareness of how sexism operates might...	Render hostile sexism increasingly less acceptable	Render benevolent sexism increasingly less acceptable, but with a slower decline than hostile sexism
More egalitarian gender roles might...	Increase gender competition Increase dominative paternalism to keep women in place Increase need for cooperation between men and women, reducing hostile sexism overall	Reduce paternalism and gender complementarity
Increased visibility of same-sex couples might...	Increase targeting of non-traditional families (such as lesbian mothers) to protect the status quo	Increase efforts to reward traditional families to protect the status quo Encourage progressively more inclusive views of what traditional families consist of, reducing benevolent sexism
Increased visibility of gender diversity might...	Increase targeting of gender non-conforming individuals to protect the gender hierarchy	Increase efforts to reward gender conformity to protect the gender hierarchy Encourage progressively more inclusive views of what gender (and therefore also gender conformity) consists of

1197 **Box 1: How benevolent sexism justifies racist attitudes**

1198 Research on ambivalent sexism can contribute to understanding how sexism can
1199 exacerbate race inequalities. For example, stereotypes of white American women tend to
1200 infantilize them as dependent and helpless (in line with benevolent sexism), whereas
1201 stereotypes of Black American women portray them as hypersexualised (in line with hostile
1202 sexism),¹⁷² and Asian American women are seen as both hypersexual and submissive.¹⁸³
1203 Indeed, racial and ethnic minority women often experience a combination of racism and
1204 sexism.¹⁸⁴ This racialized sexual harassment can, in turn, justify their sexual exploitation,
1205 increase the extent to which they are blamed for sexual violence,¹⁸⁵ and reduce the extent to
1206 which they are willing to complain about sexual harassment for fear of not being believed, or
1207 of attracting attention to themselves as targets of sexual attention.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, American
1208 students associate whiteness with femininity and blackness with masculinity, which can
1209 justify harsher treatment of Black men and women more generally. In addition, stereotypes of
1210 strength and aggressiveness contribute to why police officers intervene less frequently on
1211 domestic abuse incidents involving Black American women.¹⁸⁵

1212 Muslim women are essentialised by particular understandings of Islam that render
1213 them responsible for the family's honour by being modest and chaste. Yet, at the same time,
1214 these views of Muslim women are at the core of Western Islamophobic perceptions of
1215 Muslim people as oppressive and inferior, with the use of the hijab seen to symbolize
1216 women's forceful subjugation.¹⁸⁶ This simultaneously racist and (benevolently) sexist
1217 discourse is well encapsulated by the term 'hijabophobia,'¹⁸⁷ which reflects the view of a
1218 "submissive and voiceless Muslim woman who needs to be saved from her barbaric and
1219 misogynistic religion."¹⁸⁶

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1221 **Box 2: Implications for other contexts**

1222 Sexist beliefs can be recruited to justify prejudice and discrimination towards sexual
1223 and gender minority individuals. By restricting men and women to particular roles and
1224 behaviours, sexism discourages other options.¹⁸⁸ It is therefore not surprising that both hostile
1225 and benevolent sexism have been associated with negative attitudes towards
1226 homosexuality^{189–191} and with parenting by same sex couples⁴⁶ in countries such as England,
1227 Turkey, and the United States. In addition, the view that (specific types of) cisgender women
1228 are vulnerable and in need of protection from and by men has been core to arguments against
1229 gender-neutral public bathrooms.⁶⁹ These sexist views simultaneously restrict and subjugate
1230 women, sexual minority individuals, and transgender people, protecting the status quo and
1231 heteronormative male dominance.

1232 Insights regarding ambivalent sexism have inspired research on other types of
1233 prejudice, which also have ambivalent characteristics that often combine hostility and
1234 benevolence, typically involving paternalism. For example, classism,^{134,192} ageism,¹⁹³ and
1235 ableism¹⁹⁴ are all rooted in stereotypes of warmth and incompetence in groups characterised
1236 by low status and cooperative relationships with more powerful groups.¹⁹⁵ Just like with
1237 sexism, ambivalence leads to polarizing attitudes towards members of these groups, with
1238 some offered benevolence (for example, those with visible disabilities, who are perceived as
1239 dependent) and others being targets of hostility (such as those with less apparent disabilities,
1240 who are perceived as wanting unwarranted special privileges)¹⁹⁴ This conceptualization has
1241 further implications, for example underlining the importance of clarifying where the line
1242 might lie between paternalism and legitimate help. Indeed, although some individuals might
1243 legitimately require a level of care or assistance (for example, individuals with memory
1244 impairments), where help goes beyond this required level it can easily become paternalistic,
1245 which, by discouraging agency, can accelerate the individual's deterioration.