



The effect of benevolent sexism on women

The influence on affect and system justification

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Benevolent sexism has a positive feeling, it is a more subtle kind of sexism. Benevolent sexism is known to have negative effects on women. Within this research we focused on the effect of benevolent sexism on affect and system justification. The effect of benevolent sexism is not the same on every woman. In this research we used gender identification, attitude toward gender roles and feminist identification to identify different types of women (N=104). Results: after being exposed to benevolent sexism (vs. neutral control) women reported less positive affect. Women who were highly feminist identified report less positive affect. Gender identification, attitude toward gender roles and feminist identification had a main effect on system justification. Women who were highly gender identified and women with a more traditional attitude towards gender roles report more system justification. Women who were highly feminist identified report less system justification. Feminist identification with condition had a significant interaction effect. Women who were highly feminist identified report less system justification after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women who are low feminist identified. Meanwhile the amount of system justification in the control condition did not significantly vary between high and low feminist identifiers.

Keywords: benevolent sexism, affect, system justification, gender identification, feminist identification

Introduction

Looking back in history, differences between men and women were always there. A long time ago it was very normal to see women as the weaker sex. Women were not allowed to go to college, work or vote. A woman's role was at home. Due to the emancipation of women, these gender differences became smaller (Beneria & Sen, 1982). Nowadays, women also go to college, have jobs and vote. Men and women legally have equal rights. Even though emancipation has come a long way, differences between men and women are still present. Many researchers think the difference between men and women is caused and maintained by sexism (Dardenne, Dumont & Bollier, 2007; Sibley, Overall & Duckitt, 2007; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Nowadays we can distinguish between two types of sexism: hostile and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism is more aggressive and outspoken. An example of a benevolent sexism is the idea that women are way too easily offended. Hostile sexism is an "old" form of sexism, one women can easily recognize (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005a). Benevolent sexism seems more positive and subtle, for example the benevolent sexist idea that men are not complete without a woman. Although benevolent sexism has a positive tone it also has negative effects (Dardenne, Dumont & Bollier, 2007; Dumont, Sarlet & Dardenne, 2010; Moya et al., 2007; Jost & Kay, 2005). In this research we examined how benevolent sexism affects different types of women. We examined the influence of benevolent sexism on affect and system justification (vs. a neutral control condition).

Benevolent sexism.

Glick and Fiske (1996) define benevolent sexism as a set of interrelated attitudes towards women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles, although

subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver). Glick and Fiske (1996) also distinguish three aspects of benevolent sexism; protective paternalism, complementary gender differentiation and heterosexual intimacy. Protective paternalism justifies patriarchy by viewing women as not being fully competent adults, which legitimizes the need for a superordinate male figure. An example of protective paternalism is the idea that women should be put on a pedestal and need to be protected by men. Complementary gender differentiation also presents a social justification for male structural power. This is the ascription of the favorable traits to women compensating for what men stereotypically lack, for example the idea that many women have a quality of purity that few men possess. Heterosexual intimacy is men's dyadic dependency on women, which creates an unusual situation in which members of a more powerful group are dependent on members of a subordinate group. For example the benevolent sexist statement I previously made: "the idea that men are not complete without a woman". This statement may look positive towards women, but it states a dependency on women which is only to support the higher status of men.

Negative effects of benevolent sexism.

Although benevolent sexism does not seem negative at first due to the positive tone, many researchers have found negative effects of benevolent sexism on women (Dardenne, Dumont & Bollier, 2007; Dumont, Sarlet & Dardenne, 2010; Moya et al., 2007; Jost & Kay, 2005). Women perform less well when they are exposed to benevolent sexism (Dardenne, Dumont & Bollier, 2007). Benevolent sexism causes women to have slower performance response latencies and have a greater idea of being incompetent (Dumont, Sarlet & Dardenne, 2010). When women endorse benevolent sexism, their resistance to hostile sexism will reduce (Sibley, Overall & Duckitt, 2007). In addition, they will react in a more hostile form of sexism

towards their own gender. Moya et al. (2007) did three different studies to examine the role of benevolent sexism in women's acceptance of restrictions. All three different studies used different hypothetical scenarios. In the first study they used a scenario in which their romantic partner is taking over driving. In the second study psychology students were asked whether they wanted to participate in a hypothetical counseling practicum working with men who had been convicted of rape or wife abuse. In the third study law school students were asked to imagine a scenario where they were offered a legal studies internship. The participants were asked how they would react to the restrictions of their romantic partner. These restrictions included not driving, not doing the counseling practicum and not doing the internship because their romantic partner did not want them to do this. The researchers tested three different types of justification: hostile justification, protective justification or no justification. They found that when benevolence is fused with dominance, protective paternalism can lead women (especially those who are high on benevolent sexism) to accept restrictions.

Becker and Wright (2011) found that the different types of sexism cause differences in collective action. Collective action involves behaviors on behalf of the in-group that are directed at improving the conditions of the entire group (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Exposure to hostile sexism resulted in significantly less justification of the traditional gender inequality (gender-specific system justification), less perceived advantages of being a woman, less positive affect, and increased negative affect. When women are exposed to hostile sexism, their engagement in collective action increases. They see gender inequality as less justified and therefore will not accept it. By contrast, exposure to benevolent sexism resulted in significantly higher justification of the traditional gender inequality (gender-specific system justification), greater perceived advantages of being a woman, and higher reported positive affect. Because of

the positive feeling of benevolent sexism, women are less likely to want to change this gender stereotypes. In conclusion, hostile sexism promotes social change while benevolent sexism undermines social change (Becker & Wright, 2011).

Although many researches state that there is a negative effect of benevolent sexism on women not all the research on the effects of benevolent sexism is unambiguous. For example, the research of Ramos et al (2015) found no effect of sexism on the implicit stereotypes of men and women. Women in the benevolent sexism as well as in the hostile sexism condition showed less implicit gender bias. Due to this positive tone one should expect women to having a more positive implicit attitude of the traditional gender role after being exposed to benevolent sexism, which cases them to have a stronger implicit stereotype and more gender bias. However, Ramos et al.(2015) found no effect of benevolent sexism due to the high motivation of women to not react stereotypically. On the other hand, Ramos et al. (2015) use students to examine the effect of sexism on women. Students are educated women. Previous research found that a high education is correlated with less sexist attitudes and more progressive attitudes (Banaszak & Plutzer, 1993; Glick, Lameiras & Castro, 2002). Therefore we can expect students to be more motivated than less educated women to not answer stereotypically. In this study we want to examine a more general population, to examine the effect of benevolent sexism on different types of women.

Affect

As previously mentioned, we want to examine the affect that women have after being exposed to benevolent sexism compared to a non-benevolent sexism condition (neutral control condition). Women have a more positive affect after being exposed to benevolent sexism due to

the positive feeling of benevolent sexism (Becker & Wright, 2011). According to previous research, benevolent sexists are less likely to be seen as sexist, they are evaluated more positively than hostile sexists (Killianski& Rudman, 1998; Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). Hostile sexist statements result in more hostility than benevolent sexism statements (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005). As a result of this positive feeling and subtleness of benevolent sexism we expect women to report more positive affect towards benevolent sexism versus a neutral control condition. This is our first hypothesis: Women who are exposed to benevolent sexism report more positive affect than women who are not exposed to benevolent sexism (neutral control condition).

System justification.

In this research we also want to examine the effect benevolent sexism has on system justification. System justification refers to psychological processes contributing to maintaining existing social norms (Jost & Banaji, 1994). When women are being exposed to benevolent sexism it creates an image for them that in an ideal society, everybody benefits from a big gender difference (Jost & Kay, 2005). The previously made benevolent sexists idea that women should be put on a pedestal and need to be protected by men is an example of this. Women think this is beneficial for them, because they are put on a pedestal and protected. However it also states the idea that women are incapable of protecting themselves and need men to protect them. Due to the positive feeling benevolent sexism has towards women, women are less likely to see that the statements are sexist. Because their own group is viewed more positively, women will accept these stereotypical images (Becker & Wright, 2011). This is our second hypothesis: Women who are exposed to benevolent sexism report more system justification than women who are not exposed to benevolent sexism (neutral control condition).

Hostile justification is negatively related to life satisfaction, meanwhile benevolent justification is positively related to life satisfaction (Napier, Thorisdottir & Jost, 2010). Connolly and Heesacker (2012) found almost the same effect of benevolent sexism on life satisfaction. They found an indirect relationship between benevolent sexism and life satisfaction. This is related to each other through system justification. People are more satisfied with their life after benevolent justification because their own group is put in a positive perspective. Benevolent justification creates the idea that everybody benefits from this gender inequality. On the contrary, Connolly and Heesacker (2012) did not find a relationship with hostile sexism, in contrast to Napier, Thorisdottir and Jost (2010). However, the effect that benevolent sexism has on the gender inequality acceptance of women does not occur within every woman the same way. Sibley, Overall & Duckitt (2007) found that threat-driven authoritarian motivations for collective security and social cohesion causes women to actively participate in an ideological system that perpetuates gender inequality. Therefore, we want to examine which types of women will be most influenced by benevolent sexism.

Gender Identity Model.

Becker and Wagner (2009) used in their research the Gender Identity Model (Conder,1984), this model is based on *the Social Identity Theory* and the *Social Role Theory*. *Social Identity Theory* (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, in Becker & Wagner , 2009) states that a part of our self –concept is developed within and between groups. We know who we are because we are a part of that group, being in that group is a part of our identity. For example, we know men or women because we can identify with those groups. *The Social Role Theory* (Eagly & Wood, 1999, in Becker & Wagner ,2009) suggests that almost all behavioral differences we know about between man and women is the result of cultural stereotypes on gender. These social roles teach

us how men and women are supposed to act, what stereotypical behavior they should have. For example, women do more housework or men should protect women from physical harm because they are not capable of doing that themselves. The *Social Categorization Theory* (Turner et al., 1987, in Becker & Wagner ,2009) is also important within the *Gender Identity Model*. This theory states that groups are partially defined by their stereotypical attributes, and that people will self-categorize themselves as a group member in those groups for which the stereotypical representation and self-concept overlap in this way, both self-concept and stereotypes are important for predicting group membership.

Within de *Gender Identity Model* there is a difference between progressive and traditional identity content. Traditional identity content is a traditional perspective on differences between man and women. For example, men are better at working and women are supposed to look after the children. The progressive identity content is the more emancipated, feminist identity content. The perspective holds that men and women are each other's equals. This represents the difference in progressive or traditional gender roles. Next to this distinction, there is also a distinction made between high and low gender identifiers, for example high gender identifiers feel more connected to women who are stereotypically viewed as more feminine and low gender identifiers feel less connected to these stereotypes (Becker & Wright, 2009).

As previously mentioned we want to examine the effect benevolent sexism has on different types of women. We will use the different dimensions of the *Gender Identity Model* to examine this. We expect women who are high gender identifiers to have a more positive affect after being exposed to benevolent sexism than high identifiers who are not exposed to benevolent sexism (hypothesis 1a). According to the *Social Identity Theory* (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) high

identifiers feel the need to distinguish their group identity from other groups. Highly identified women will react positive to benevolent sexism because its states a positive gender difference. We expect the same effect of benevolent sexism on women with a more traditional attitude towards gender roles. Benevolent sexism states the same idea as the traditional gender role perspective. Women who have a more traditional attitude towards gender roles report more positive affect after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women who have a more traditional attitude towards gender roles in the neutral control condition (hypothesis 1b).

On system justification we expect the same positive effect. Women who are highly gender identified report more system justification after being exposed to benevolent sexism than highly gender identified women in the neutral condition (hypothesis 2a). Benevolent sexism is positive about the female identity, therefore women who highly identify with this female identity will accept this benevolent sexism and see this as a justified system (Becker & Wright, 2009). The same for women with a more traditional attitude towards gender roles. We expect women who have a more traditional attitude towards gender roles report more system justification after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women who have more traditional attitude towards gender roles who were not exposed to benevolent sexism (hypothesis 2b).

Feminism

Next to the dimensions of the *Gender Identity Model* we will also examine the feminist identity. Feminism refers to a belief in gender equality (Jackson et al., 1996), men and women being each other's equals. As previously mentioned, this also relates to a more progressive gender role (Becker & Wagner, 2009). The feminist identity and progressive gender role in theory may look the same, but nowadays they have different stereotypes. The previously

mentioned *Social Categorization theory* (Turner et al., 1987) states that stereotypes are important when we categorize our self to groups. When the stereotypes of a group are negative people will not easily define themselves with this group. Women are progressive in their attitude towards gender role, but due to the negative stereotypes of being a feminist, women will avoid this feminist identity. This is the “I’m not a feminist but” phenomenon (Leaper & Arias, 2011). People will support the feminist ideas but do not identify themselves with the feminist identity (Burn, Aboud & Moyles, 2000). Prior research has shown that one of the most common negative stereotypes about feminist is that they are unfeminine or sexually unattractive. These stereotypes may influence women not identifying themselves as a feminist (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007). The self-identification towards the feminist identity is more internalized than the identification of progressive attitude towards gender roles. Therefore, we expect that having a high feminist identification is more important than having a more progressive attitude towards gender roles.

This leads us to our last hypotheses. Hypothesis 1c: women who are highly feminist identified report less positive affect after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women who are highly feminist identified who are not exposed to benevolent sexism (neutral control condition). Benevolent sexism has a positive tone and is more subtle, yet still states that there is a difference between men and women. We expect the same negative effect of benevolent sexism on system justification of high feminist identified women. Feminism states that men and women should be equal. Women who are high feminist identifiers do not believe differences between men and women are just, therefore they will have less system justification after being exposed to benevolent sexism. Hypothesis 2c: women who are highly feminist identified report less system justification after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women who are high feminist identified who are not exposed to benevolent sexism.

Method

Participants

We wanted to examine a more general population, therefore we chose not to administer our online survey among students. Instead we administered our online survey by social media and with the help of our own social circle. The survey was in Dutch, therefore all participants were able to understand Dutch otherwise they could not complete our survey. The 104 participants were all female. Men and 'others' were excluded from the survey. All participants who completed the survey were promised a chance at one of the four gift certificates when participating. Participants were between the ages of 18 and 70, with an average age of 36.22. Most of the participants had a romantic partner (N = 80). Among all participants 38.5 percent had children (N = 40) and 72.1 percent had a job. Most of the participants were not religious (N= 66).

Design

We used an online survey with two conditions to examine our hypotheses. An experimental condition in which participants were manipulated with benevolent sexism statements and a neutral control condition. To examine our hypotheses we used the same manipulation as Ramos et al. (2015). Some participants (N=53) were given the neutral control condition, in this condition the memory task contained six statements of flowers and pictures of flowers. The six control statements were: "Water lilies are aquatic plants that can often cut the flow of water", "The wax plant bloom is formed by a star-shaped flower that looks as if it was made of wax or porcelain", "Tulips are thought to originate from turkey and have a special meaning in the Netherlands", "Daisies may be used for tea such as chamomile", "Pagans worshiped the roses

and believed in their mysticism according to the color that displayed” and “This flower’s name comes from the mythological character Narcissus”. The experimental condition (N=51) was a memory test with six benevolent sexist statements and pictures of male and females. The six benevolent sexism statements were: “No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he had the love of a woman”, “Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess”, “Women should be cherished and protected by men”, “Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores”, “A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man” and “Women, compared with men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility” Participants were asked to pay close attention to each of the six statements for 10 seconds. They were not allowed to skip this part or run through the manipulation faster.

Procedure

The online survey opened on 11th of May 2016 and was closed on 25th of May 2016, within these two weeks more than 200 participants opened the link. Most of them were later excluded, because they did not complete the survey. The online survey contained five components. First, we measured background variables. These were their gender, age, highest education, whether they had work and how much hours they worked a week, whether they were in a relationship, whether they had children and whether they were religious. The second part was the manipulation, which in order to cover up the actual goal, was presented as a memory task. The third part of the survey was an implicit association test (IAT). This measured their association between work and home, and male and female. This part of the experiment will not be discussed in this thesis. The fourth component of the survey measured the independent variables: gender identification, attitude toward gender roles, feminism identification, and the

dependent variables system justification and affect. The fifth part referred back to the memory task. Participants were asked in the control condition which statements they previously had seen. In the benevolent sexism condition participants were asked to place the right statement to the right picture. If the participants wanted to have a chance to win one of the four gift certificates they were asked to fill in a six completely separate part asking for their email.

Measurements.

The *Implicit Association Test* was later excluded from further analyses, because we were not able to IAT scores due to technical issues.

All measures for gender identification, attitude toward gender roles, feminist identification and system justification were translated into Dutch and measured by the use of a seven- points Likert scale (1= totally don't agree - 7= totally agree).

Gender identification was measured with four statements: "I feel strong ties to other women", "I feel has if I am part of the group of women", " Being a women is an important part of my self-image" and "Being a women is important for me". These statements were based on the statements also used by Becker and Wagner (2009). Internal consistency was very satisfactory ($\alpha = .87$). The four item were averaged into one gender identity variable. A high score on this variable means the participant is a high gender identifier ($M = 4.91, SD = 1.14$).

Attitude towards gender role was measured with the same eight statement measurement system used by Becker and Wagner (2009). These statements were: "I prefer to stay at home instead of getting ahead", "I would feel foolish keeping my maiden name after marriage", "I would go to work even though I do not have to for financial reasons", "I would not interfere in

politics since it is a men's business", "If possible, I would not work as long as my kids go to school", "When I date a man, I feel unpleasant if I had to pay", "It is more important for me to support the career of my partner than to get ahead by myself" and "I would not propose marriage to a man since it is a men's business". The statement "I would go to work even though I do not have to for financial reasons" was recoded. None of the items were excluded, because internal consistency for the gender role was not very high but enough to be computed into one variable ($\alpha = .615$). Therefore, all seven items were averaged into one attitude towards gender roles variable. A high score means a more traditional attitude towards gender roles ($M = 2.53, SD = .93$).

Feminist identification was measured with four statements: "I feel strong ties to other feminist", "I feel as if I am part of the group of feminist", "Being a feminist is an important part of my self-image" and "Being a feminist is important for me". We used the same statements based on the research of Becker and Wagner (2009) as we used with gender identification, only changed women into feminist. Internal consistency was very satisfactory ($\alpha = .97$). Therefore, all four items were averaged into one feminist identity variable. A high score means a high feminist identity ($M = 3.31, SD = 1.57$).

System justification was measured with seven statements: "In general, relations between men and women are fair," "The division of labor in families generally operates as it should", "Gender roles need to be radically restructured", "For women, the Netherlands is the best country in the world to live in", "Everyone (male or female) has a fair shot at wealth and happiness", "Sexism in society is getting worse every year" and "Society is set up so that men and women usually get what they deserve". These statements were based on the research of Jost and Kay

(2005). Statement three and six were recorded in this way a higher score is correlated with more system justification. Internal consistency was also satisfactory ($\alpha = .69$). Therefore all seven items were averaged into one system justification variable ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .87$).

Affect was measured with the use of a seven-point scale. Participants were asked how the previous memory task statements had made them feel. They were asked which emotion these statements gave them. They were asked to give their answer on a scale from one to seven. The measured six primary emotions scales were: “not happy- happy”, “not tense- tense”, “not relaxed- relaxed”, “not calm- calm”, “not nervous- nervous” and “not pleasant- pleasant”. These emotions were translated into Dutch. The emotions “not tense- tense” and “not nervous – nervous” were recorded. In this way, a higher score means a more positive affect. Internal consistency was very satisfactory ($\alpha = .82$). All six emotions were averaged into one “Affect” variable ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.04$).

Results

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, alpha coefficients, and bivariate Spearman correlations (N=104)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age											
2. Education	-.21*										
3. Work	.01	.270**									
4. Relationship	.20*	-.50	-.04								
5. Children	.75***	-.13	.10	.29**							
6. Religion	.31**	-.24*	-.06	.18 ^M	.221*						
7. Gender identity	-.10	.108	-.01	.02	-.08	.03					
8. Attitude GR	.07	-.47***	-.18 ^M	-.03	-.05	.32***	.22*				
9. Feminist identity	-.13	.17 ^M	-.15	.02	-.18 ^M	-.15	.19*	-.15			
10. System justification	-.16 ^M	-.02	-.07	-.13	-.23*	.05	.24*	.34***	-.27**		
11. Affect	.07	-.08	-.11	.01	.07	.18 ^M	-.27 ^M	.00	-.33***	.04	
M	36.22	4.88	.72	.77	.38	.37	4.91	2.53	3.31	4.06	5.14
SD	14.06	1.38	.45	.42	.49	.48	1.14	.925	1.574	.872	1.04
Range	18-70	1-6	0-1	0-1	0-1	0-1	1-6	1-7	1-6	1-7	1-7
α	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.87	.62	.97	.69	.82

n/a=not applicable. Work, relationship, children and religious were made into dummy variables

^Mp<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Correlations.

The analyses of correlations between background variables (age, education, work relationship children and religion, independent variable (gender identification, attitude gender role and feminist identification) and dependent variable (system justification and affect; see Table 1) showed that a higher gender identification and a more traditional attitudes towards gender roles was positively related to system justification. Meanwhile a higher feminist identification was negatively correlated to system justification. Further, the background variables age and children were negatively related to system justification. Older women and women with children showed less system justification.

Meanwhile the dependent variable, affect was only marginal positively related to gender identification and there was no significant correlation between attitude towards gender role. However, affect was also negatively related to feminist identity. Further, background variable religion was only marginal related to affect. Women who were religious showed more positive affect.

Overview of Regression analyses.

We tested the effect of benevolent sexism on affect and on system justification. Therefore, we performed two different models of hierarchical regression analysis. In step 1, the main effects of the condition (0= control condition; 1= Benevolent sexism) and the standardized dependent variables (gender identification, attitude towards gender roles and feminist identification) were entered. In Step 2 the interactions between condition and each of the standardized dependent variables (condition x gender identification, condition x feminist identification and condition x attitude towards gender roles) were entered.

Effect of benevolent sexism on affect.

When we analyzed the main effect of the condition on affect, we only found a marginal effect, $b = -.35$, $SE = .20$, $t(102) = -1.80$, $p = .075$, *semipartial* $r^2 = -.03$. Women in the benevolent sexism condition ($M_{bs} = 4.95$, $SD = .99$) reported less positive affect than women in the control condition ($M_c = 5.32$, $SD = 1.06$). Although only marginal there was an effect of condition on affect, as a result we accepted hypothesis 1.

High and low gender identification on affect

Gender identification had no significant main effect on affect, $b = -.10$, $SE = .10$, $t(102) = -1.0$, $p = .319$, *semipartial* $r^2 = -.01$. The affect women reported was not significantly related to

their gender identification. The interaction effect of gender identification with condition was also not significant, $b = .15$, $SE = .21$, $t(102) = .73$, $p = .466$, *semipartial* $r^2 = .00$. Women's affect was not related to their gender identity and there was no interaction with condition. Hypothesis 1a was rejected.

Attitude towards gender roles on affect

Attitude toward gender roles also had no significant main effect on affect, $b = -.01$, $SE = .10$, $t(102) = -.12$, $p = .905$, *semipartial* $r^2 = -.00$. An interaction effect of attitude towards gender roles with condition was also not significant, $b = .10$, $SE = .21$, $t(102) = .49$, $p = .624$, *semipartial* $r^2 = .00$. Women's affect was not related to their attitude toward gender roles and there was no interaction with condition. Hypothesis 1c was rejected.

High and low feminist identification on affect

Feminist identification had a significant main effect on affect. Highly feminist identified women report less positive affect than low feminist identified women, $b = -.34$, $SE = .10$, $t(102) = -3.4$, $p = .001$, *semipartial* $r^2 = -.10$. The interaction of feminist identification with condition was not significant, $b = -.03$, $SE = .21$, $t(102) = -.13$, $p = .901$, *semipartial* $r^2 = -.00$. In both of the condition (benevolent sexism condition and control condition) highly feminist identified women report less positive affect than low feminist identified women. Hypothesis 1c was rejected.

Effect of benevolent sexism on system justification.

When we analyzed the main effect of the condition on system justification, we did not find a significant main effect, $b = .09$, $SE = .16$, $t(102) = .60$, $p = .547$, *semipartial* $r^2 = .00$. System justification of women in the benevolent sexism condition ($M_{bs} = 4.12$, $SD = .86$) was not

significantly different from the neutral control condition ($M_c = 4.0$, $SD = .89$). As a result we rejected hypothesis 2.

High and low gender identification on system justification

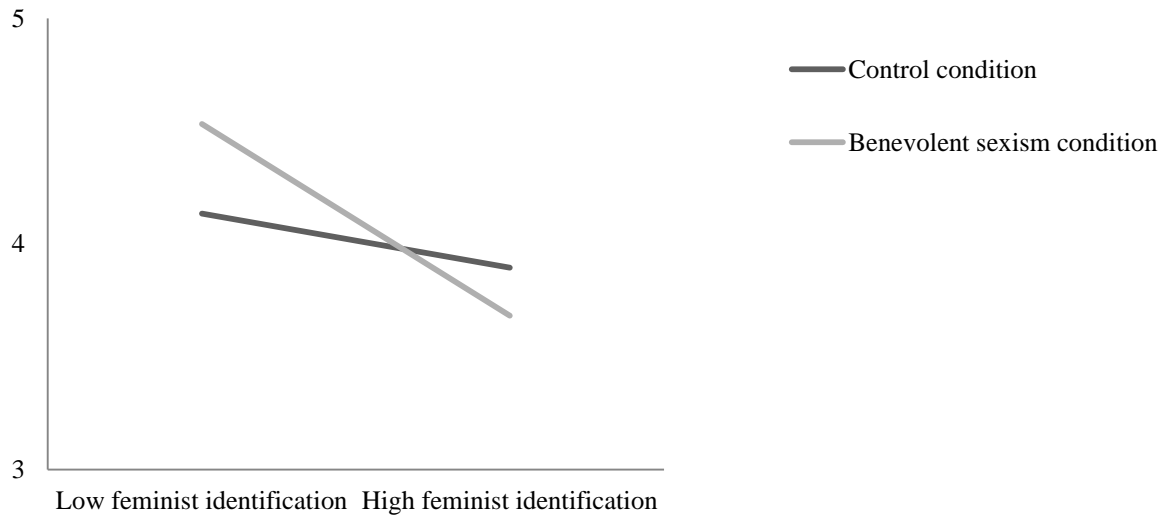
Gender identity had a significant main effect on system justification, $b = .20$, $SE = .08$, $t(102) = 2.45$, $p = .015$, *semipartial* $r^2 = .05$. Women who were highly gender identified reported more system justification than women who were low gender identified. However, there was no significant interaction effect of gender identity with condition, $b = .144$, $SE = .17$, $t(102) = .87$, $p = .387$, *semipartial* $r^2 = .01$. Women who were highly gender identified reported more system justification compared to women who were low gender identified, but the difference of this effect of gender identification on system justification did not vary between the two conditions. Hypothesis 2a was rejected.

Effect of attitude towards gender role on system justification.

Attitude towards gender roles had a significant main effect on system justification. Women who had a more traditional attitude towards gender roles reported more system justification than women who had a more progressive attitude towards gender roles, $b = .21$, $SE = .08$, $t(102) = 2.63$, $p = .01$, *semipartial* $r^2 = .06$. However, there was no significant interaction effect of attitude toward gender roles with condition, $b = -.06$, $SE = .17$, $t(102) = -.38$, $p = .706$, *semipartial* $r^2 = -.00$). Women who had a more traditional attitude towards gender roles reported more system justification than women who had a more progressive attitude towards gender roles, but the difference of this effect of attitude towards gender roles on system justification did not vary between the two conditions. Hypotheses 2b was rejected

High and low feminist identification on system justification

Feminist identity had a significant main effect on system justification, $b = -.24$, $SE = .08$, $t(102) = -3.02$, $p = .003$, *semipartial* $r^2 = .07$. Women who were highly feminist identified reported less system justification than women who were low feminist identified. There was also a marginally significant interaction effect of feminist identity with condition, $b = -.31$, $SE = .17$, $t(102) = -1.85$, $p = .067$, *semipartial* $r^2 = .03$. Women who were highly feminist identified reported less system justification in the benevolent sexism condition than in the control condition. Meanwhile the amount of system justification in the control condition is almost the same between high and low feminist identified women. Hypotheses 2b was accepted.



Discussion and conclusion

The effect of benevolent sexism on affect.

First, we wanted to examine the effect that benevolent sexism has on affect. Previous research found that women report more positive affect after being exposed to benevolent sexism compared to hostile sexism (Becker & Wright, 2011). The effect of the condition on affect we found was only marginal. The difference in affect between the condition was not statistically significant enough, however there was a small difference. More important the effect we found was also negative opposed to the positive effect we expected. This means women in the benevolent sexist condition reported less positive affect than women in the neutral control condition.

An explanation for this could be that our participants affect were influenced by something other than the manipulation. We used the same manipulations as Ramos et al. (2015), within this research the validation of this type of manipulation was proven. Before the participant were asked how the manipulation statements made them feel, they were asked to fill in the other measurements (gender identification, attitude towards gender roles, feminist identification and system justification). Although, we explicitly asked how the benevolent sexism statements or the flower statements made them feel, the participants were probably influenced by the other measurements statements. The statements within "attitude towards gender roles" all refer to gender inequality. An example of one of these statements is "I would feel foolish keeping my maiden name after marriage". This statement has negative sexist tone, which probably causes women to have a less positive affect. The statements used to measure "attitude towards gender roles" probably influenced women's affect, which caused this marginal

significant negative effect. In both of the two conditions, attitude towards gender roles was measured which explains why the effect of the condition on affect was marginally significant. The negative sexist tone of these statements probably is the reason why the effect is negative instead of the positive effect we expected.

Next, we wanted to examine the effect that benevolent sexism has on affect of different types of women. According to previous research not all women react the same (Becker & Wagner, 2009; Becker & Wright, 2011; Sibley, Overall & Duckitt, 2007; Leaper & Arias, 2011). We distinguished different types of women by their gender identification, attitude towards gender roles and feminist identification. In line with the *Social Identity theory* (Tjafel & Turner, 1979) we expected women who were highly gender identified to report more positive affect after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women who were highly gender identified in the control condition. We did not find a significant main effect of gender identification on affect or a significant interaction effect of gender identification with condition. Based on the research of Becker and Wright (2009), we expected women who had a more traditional attitude towards gender roles to report more positive affect after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women with a more traditional attitude towards gender roles in the control condition. We did not find a significant main effect of attitude towards gender roles on affect or a significant interaction effect of attitude towards gender roles with condition. Therefore we can conclude that gender identification and attitude towards gender roles are no predictors for the affect women have.

We did find a significant main effect of feminist identification on affect. However, we did not find a significant interaction effect with condition. Highly feminist identified women reported in both of the two conditions less positive affect afterwards. We expected highly

feminist identified women to report less positive affect after being exposed to benevolent sexism than highly feminist identified women who were not exposed to benevolent sexism. The fact that high feminist identified women report less positive affect compared to low feminist identified women in both of the condition is probably also caused by the influence of the other measurements. As previously mentioned the statements used to measure attitude towards gender roles all indicate gender inequality. Women who are high feminist identifiers will have a less positive affect after reading these statements. This could explain the less positive affect of highly feminist identified women in both of the conditions.

In conclusion, we found a marginal significant influence of benevolent sexism on women's affect, which was negative instead of positive. The main reason for this was probably the sexist tone of the measurement "attitude towards gender roles", which caused the negative effect. These statements were part of an independent variable measurement, measured in both conditions. This probably is the reason why the effect between the conditions is only marginal. We did find that a less positive affect is related to a high feminist identification. We did not find a interaction effect because high feminist identified women are probably influenced by the statements used for measuring the attitude towards gender roles instead of only the manipulation.

The effect of benevolent sexism on system justification.

Second, we wanted to examine the effect of benevolent sexism on system justification. According to previous research benevolent sexism creates an image for women that everybody benefits from gender differences (Jost & Kay; Connolly & Heesacker, 2012). In this way, we expected women to report more system justification after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women who were not exposed to benevolent sexism. However, we did not find a significant

effect of the conditions on system justification. Gender identity, feminist identity and attitude toward gender roles all had a significant main effect on system justification. Women who were highly gender identified reported more system justification, as well as women who have a more traditional attitude towards gender roles. Meanwhile, women who were highly feminist identified reported less system justification. However, gender identification and attitude towards gender roles had no significant interaction effect with condition. Although we did find a significant interaction effect of feminist identification with condition. Women who were highly feminist identified reported less system justification after being exposed to benevolent sexism than women who were low feminist identified. Meanwhile the amount of system justification in de control condition did not significantly vary between high and low feminist identified women.

In conclusion, system justification is not directly influenced by benevolent sexism. Gender identification, attitude towards gender roles and feminist identification are significant predictors for system justification. We did find a significant interaction effect of feminist identification with condition. Women who are highly feminist identified women are more aware of gender equality of benevolent sexism which causes them to report less system justification.

Further research

First, we recommend for further research to conduct a similar study again. The results of our research are probably influenced by the method itself. The statements used to measure attitude towards gender roles influenced the participant's affect. Second, the IAT probably influenced the gender identification. Aidman and Carroll (2003) discuss the possible influence of the IAT on gender identification. After doing a gender bias IAT women will identify less strongly to their gender, which could result in a less significant effect. Therefore, we

recommend to split this type of research into two component. First, background variables, the manipulation, IAT and affect measurements. Second, on a different moment the measurements for gender identification, attitude toward gender roles, feminist identification and system justification. In this way, the different components will have less influence on one another. Due to the influence the other measurement statements had on affect, our results are less powerful. We did not only measure the effect benevolent sexism has on affect, but more the overall tone of the survey on affect.

The second recommendation for further research is repeating the research of Ramos et al. (2015) with a more variety of participants. In the beginning of our research we also wanted to examine the influence of benevolent sexism on the implicit stereotypes of women. We were not able to do this because of technical difficulties. However, the effect of benevolent sexism on implicit stereotypes is still very interesting. Ramon et al. (2015) did not find an effect of sexism on implicit stereotypes. However, they used an all student population. We previously mentioned that a higher education is correlated with less sexist attitudes and more progressive attitudes (Banaszak & Plutzer, 1993; Glick, Lameiras & Castro, 2002). Due to this correlation we can expect students to be motivated to not react stereotypical than less educated women.

In this research we did find that feminist identification moderates the effect benevolent sexism has on system justification. Women who were highly feminist identified reported less system justification after being exposed to benevolent sexism. They are probably also more motivated to react less stereotypically, however low feminist identified women are probably less motivated to react less stereotypically. Within this group (low feminist identified women) benevolent sexism could have a significant effect on implicit stereotypes. Therefore it is

interesting to examine the effect benevolent sexism has on the implicit stereotypes of different types of women.

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