

# Nonverbal and Verbal Expressions of Men's Sexism in Mixed-Gender Interactions

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**Abstract** This study examined the nonverbal and verbal expressions of hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is sexist antipathy and benevolent sexism is a chivalrous belief that women are warm yet incompetent. We predicted that hostile sexist men would display less affiliative expressions but benevolent sexist men would display more affiliative expressions during mixed-gender interactions. Twenty-seven pairs of U.S. male and female undergraduates from a private university in New England participated in this study. These mixed-gender dyads participated in two social interactions: a structured trivia game followed by an unstructured conversation period. During the trivia game, men with more benevolent sexism were perceived to be more patient overall when waiting for the woman to answer the trivia questions. Furthermore, we examined the men's nonverbal and verbal expressions during the unstructured interaction—naïve raters made impression ratings of the men's nonverbal and verbal behavior, and trained coders counted the frequency of specific nonverbal cues (e.g., smiles). A word count software was used for verbal content analysis. As predicted, more hostile sexism was associated with less affiliative nonverbal and verbal expressions (e.g., less approachable, less friendly, and less smiling), but more benevolent sexism was associated with more affiliative nonverbal and verbal expressions (e.g., more approachable, more likely to smile, and more positive word usage). The effects held after controlling for men's personality traits and partners' nonverbal behavior. Differential behavioral expressions of benevolent and hostile sexism have theoretical importance as we can examine how sexism maintains the status quo at the interpersonal level.

**Keywords** Benevolent sexism · Hostile sexism · Nonverbal · Verbal · Social interactions

## Introduction

From talking to friends to working alongside colleagues, mixed-gender interaction is common and inevitable (Rudman and Glick 2008). Given the ubiquitous nature of such daily encounters, one would suspect that research examining the expression of gender attitudes during social interaction would be abundant. However, as noted by Logel et al. (2009), research investigating the role of sexism during mixed-gender interaction is surprisingly limited although it seems obvious that sexism would influence the interaction. The current article addresses this important gap by examining nonverbal and verbal expressions of men's sexism during interactions with women whom they have just met. By examining the behavioral expressions of sexism during mixed-gender interactions, research such as this can shed light on how sexism subtly influences social interactions to maintain the status quo of gender inequality (Rudman and Glick 2008). This work was conducted in the United States, and unless otherwise noted, the literature reviewed draws primarily from U.S. or Canadian samples.

Prejudice, as defined by Allport (1979), is antipathetic in nature. While this definition has been supported empirically, it does not necessarily reflect the dynamics of mixed-gender interactions in the current U.S. society (Rudman 2005). People generally hold more positive attitudes towards women in comparison to men (Eagly and Mladinic 1989), and both men and women perceived discrimination against women to be decreasing over the past 6 decades in the United States (Kehn and Ruthig 2013). Yet despite these findings, instances of

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gender discrimination are never difficult to find. Women are consistently underrepresented in various domains such as academia (National Science Foundation 2008), chief executive positions in Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst 2012), and parliamentary bodies around the world (Quotaproject 2013). These real-world examples are supported by controlled, empirical studies that have found that, as in the current society, women are often allocated fewer resources (Vescio et al. 2005) and are offered lower starting salaries (Moss-Racusin et al. 2012) relative to men. This discriminatory behavior is, however, accompanied by much praise (Vescio et al. 2005), suggesting that sexism may not always be negative in its expressions.

### Hostile and Benevolent Sexism

To reconcile the discrepancies in gender discrimination and positive attitudes towards women, Glick and Fiske (1996, 2001) proposed that the nature of sexism is ambivalent: Sexism can hold both hostile and benevolent properties. Hostile sexism is an antipathy towards women, consistent with Allport's (1979) definition, and it seeks to justify men's power in society through dominance and derogation of women. It is rooted in fear of women attempting to overthrow men's power through feminism or sexuality. Benevolent sexism, in contrast, is a chivalrous and subjectively positive view of women. Women are portrayed as pure and warm yet helpless and incompetent beings who require cherished protection from men. Benevolent sexism asserts men's power through paternalistic affection rather than dominance, and these affectionate behaviors may be insidious because they are not necessarily negative on the surface. For instance, opening a car door for a woman may reflect simple politeness that would be extended to anyone; however, it could also reflect benevolent sexist attitudes if the man does it because of his assumption that men are more competent than women and that women should be pampered or protected by men, and his action may, in his subjective opinion, be positive and not at all sexist in the traditional sense.

According to Glick and Fiske (2001), benevolent sexism is attractive ideologically for women because they may find it difficult to resist the allure of sexism in such a form. After all, benevolent sexist men hold women in high regards and are willing to sacrifice themselves to protect and save women. This may subsequently lead women to be more complacent with the status quo of gender inequality as it is presented in a manner that will not incite defiance. However, benevolent sexist men perceive women as the weaker gender at the same time. By incentivizing women with benevolence and affection, men can assert their power in society without too much resistance. On the other hand, hostile sexism seeks to assert men's power in society by subjugating women. Due to its negative nature, hostile sexism often incurs resistance and thus less likely to be accepted by women. Indeed, research has

found that women generally rated benevolent sexists more favorably than hostile sexists, and they are less likely to perceive benevolent sexism as "sexism" (Good and Rudman 2010; Kilianski and Rudman 1998). Across 19 countries, Glick et al. (2000) found few gender differences in the endorsement of benevolent sexism, and in certain countries such as Cuba and Nigeria, women even endorsed benevolent sexism to a higher degree than men did; in contrast, gender differences were significant for hostile sexism in all 19 countries such that men, compared to women, consistently expressed stronger endorsement of hostile sexism.

But despite its allure, benevolent sexism is also insidious. In both German and U.S. samples, women who read statements supporting benevolent sexism (e.g., "Men are incomplete without women"), as opposed to hostile sexist statements (e.g., "Women are too easily offended"), were subsequently more willing to support the status quo of gender inequality and less motivated to participate in collective action against it (Becker and Wright 2011; Jost and Kay 2005). Furthermore, women in general overestimated the negative emotional impact of hostile sexism and underestimated the negative impact of benevolent sexism when compared to actual experiences of encountering benevolent and hostile sexism (Bosson et al. 2010).

Unfortunately, researchers working within the ambivalent sexism framework have not examined the potential impact of benevolent sexism at an interpersonal level during actual social interactions. We did so by including an interpersonal component in which we proposed that the allure of benevolent sexism is inherent in the nonverbal and verbal expressions of benevolent sexist men. We predicted that the nonverbal and verbal expressions of benevolent sexism are affiliative to mirror its subjectively positive beliefs and that the expressions of hostile sexism are non-affiliative and dominating.

### Nonverbal and Verbal Expressions of Attitudes

It is known that attitudes can be revealed, willfully or not, in nonverbal and/or verbal expressions. For instance, interpersonal attitudes in the form of expectations for another person are conveyed through a host of verbal and nonverbal cues (Harris and Rosenthal 1985). The expression of intergroup attitudes has also been studied, but mainly with regard to interracial interaction (for a review, see Dovidio and LaFrance 2013). A meta-analysis examining dyadic interracial interactions concluded that across 37 studies, participants were generally more negative in their nonverbal expressions towards other-race partners compared to same-race partners (Toosi et al. 2012). This is unsurprising given that interracial interaction is often considered to be stressful and marked with anxiety (Stephan 2014). During interracial interactions, participants expressed more nonverbal anxiety (e.g., more averted eye gaze, more leaning away, and fewer smiles) and

experienced heightened cortisol level (Trawalter et al. 2012). During interracial interactions relative to same-race interactions, participants with more implicit prejudice were perceived to be less friendly (Dovidio et al. 2002). McConnell and Leibold (2001) found that participants with more implicit prejudice spoke more, smiled more, and made fewer speech errors and hesitations when they interacted with a White experimenter compared to a Black experimenter. Such expressions of racial attitudes can even be identified by observers who are exposed to brief excerpts of the target person's nonverbal expressions: Richeson and Shelton (2004) found that Black participants were better than White participants in detecting White targets' prejudice through visible nonverbal expressions alone.

Because most research on expressions of intergroup attitudes focused on interracial interactions, it is difficult to generalize to mixed-gender interaction. Interracial interactions are often made difficult due to intergroup anxiety and prejudice as evident through anxious and negative nonverbal expressions. Mixed-gender interactions, on the other hand, are not necessarily marked by anxiety. After all, mixed-gender interactions are common and routine. Furthermore, attitudes towards women are generally positive, but the same positivity is not extended to racial outgroup members (Eagly and Diekmann 2005). Thus, we reasoned that the expression of gender attitudes, benevolent sexism in particular, would not be the same as expressions of racial attitudes.

In one of the few studies on men's nonverbal expressions of sexism during mixed-gender interactions, Logel et al. (2009) paired male engineering students with a female confederate. Sexism was measured using a sentence completion task. Participants' responses to various sentence stems (e.g., "Jenny went home to cook dinner") were coded as high on sexism if women were portrayed in historical roles (e.g., "...for her family") or as sex objects (e.g., "...naked"); sentences were rated as low on sexism if women were portrayed in modern roles (e.g., "...after work") or as equal to men (e.g., "...because her husband cooked last night"). This measure was positively associated with subscale of Modern Sexism Scale but negatively with the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. The researchers found that male students who exhibited more of such implicit gender bias exhibited more nonverbal expression of dominance and sexual interest towards a female confederate. This nonverbal expression of dominance and sexual interest was formed by combining the men's proximity, open postures, looking time, and impression of confidence, dominance, sexual motivation. That work, however, did not account for possible differences between hostile and benevolent sexism and their associated nonverbal and verbal expressions.

Another study coded the nonverbal expressions of men who scored high on the Likelihood to Sexually Harass (LSH) Scale (Murphy et al. 1999). Men who had high LSH, relative to those with low LSH, maintained more direct eye

contact, had more direct body orientation, and spent less time interviewing a female confederate. The two groups did not differ in smiling. These studies suggest that sexism does indeed have nonverbal correlates. Similar to Logel et al. (2009) and Murphy et al. (1999) only used one measure of sexism. This is problematic because one study found that LSH is better predicted by hostile sexism than by benevolent sexism (Begany and Milburn 2002). Thus, the findings cannot be directly generalized to the goals of the current research.

While research has suggested that nonverbal behavior is more indicative of implicit rather than explicit racial bias, verbal behavior, in contrast, is more indicative of explicit rather than implicit bias because verbal behavior is more controllable and is subject to self-presentation in general (Dovidio et al. 2002; Wilson et al. 2000). Rudman and Borgida (1995) found that men who scored highly on the LSH Scale asked more sexist questions when interviewing a female confederate compared to men who were low on LSH. Furthermore, men with strong sexist attitudes as measured by the Modern Sexism Scale were more likely to personally use, and less likely to detect, sexist language (e.g., using "he" or "man" to describe both genders) than those with low modern sexist attitudes (Swim et al. 2004). These studies, however, did not differentiate between hostile and benevolent sexism either. Nevertheless, it is clear from these studies that sexism, in its various forms, can potentially be expressed through nonverbal and verbal behaviors.

### Current Study

The present study is the first to capture both nonverbal and verbal expressions of benevolent and hostile sexism during mixed-gender interactions. Specifically, we predicted that benevolent sexism would be expressed in an appealing and affiliative manner, while hostile sexism would be expressed in a non-affiliative and dominating manner, reflecting different ways in which men assert their power when interacting with women. We defined affiliative behavior broadly to include behaviors that may signal affiliation such as smiling, warmth, friendliness, patience, and positivity in general. Understandably, given that a single behavioral cue such as smiling can serve a multitude of different functions (Abel 2002), we utilized various nonverbal and verbal coding techniques in order to construe affiliation broadly, thus allowing us to provide a fuller picture to address the hypotheses. Specifically, naïve raters made impression ratings of the men's overall nonverbal and verbal behavior (e.g., *warmth*, *patience*, *friendliness*), and trained coders counted the frequency of specific nonverbal cues (e.g., smiles). A word count software was used for verbal content analysis (e.g., frequency of positive emotional words). Benevolent and hostile sexism were simultaneously entered as predictors with each behavioral

expression as dependent variable in separate regression models. Our hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Given that benevolent sexism seeks to assert men's power in society through paternalistic affection rather than dominance, benevolent sexist men should be more affiliative in their nonverbal and verbal expressions.

Hypothesis 2: Given that hostile sexism seeks to assert men's power in society through dominance and derogation of women, hostile sexist men should be less affiliative in their nonverbal and verbal expressions.

Hypothesis 3: Building on Hypothesis 2 and the literature that found dominant expressions of sexism, we predicted that hostile sexist men should also be more dominant in their nonverbal and verbal expressions.

Additionally, to control for possible confounding, we measured female partners' nonverbal behavior and men's own personality traits. In dyadic interactions, a person's nonverbal expressions are often influenced by his or her partner's expressions. Therefore, we controlled for female partners' smiling in order to draw a stronger conclusion regarding men's sexism and its behavioral correlates. Furthermore, we considered personality traits as possible confounding variables. Extraversion and agreeableness were of particular interest because these two traits have been associated with affiliative nonverbal cues such as more nodding, smiling, and eye-contact (Gifford 2013). Therefore, men's extraversion and agreeableness were controlled for to ensure that the behavioral correlates of sexism were not due to association with personality.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

Participants were 27 male Northeastern University undergraduates ( $M_{\text{age}}=19.46$ ,  $SD=1.33$ ; range=18–22) who each interacted in the laboratory with one of 27 female undergraduates. The 27 dyads did not include six that were recorded but whose videos could not be used because there was a camera malfunction, participants declined to sign the video release, did not speak English comprehensively, or knew one another prior to the study. All participants were recruited through the Psychology Department's Participant Pool and participated in exchange for partial course credit towards introductory psychology courses. Of the 27 men, 20 were Caucasian Americans, three Asian/ Asian Americans, two Hispanic/ Latin Americans, one African American, and one chose not to reveal any racial/ ethnic information.

Each dyad engaged in two back-to-back videotaped social interactions—a structured interaction and then an unstructured interaction. First, they played a structured game of trivia with

one another in which they separately selected 20 questions and took turns asking their partner the questions. This was followed by an unstructured 3-min interaction in which they introduced themselves and discussed any topic they wished. Participants were not previously informed that the study was on expressions of sexism. After the two interactions, participants completed a battery of surveys on personality traits and the crucial Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick and Fiske 1996) and were then debriefed.

### Structured Interaction

After signing the informed consents, participants played a game of trivia with their partners and their task was to select 20 questions that ranged from easy to hard. All trivia questions were taken from Ken Jennings's (2008) *Trivia Almanac* in which questions were precoded as easy, medium, or hard. Participants were also informed that the game was not competitive but simply a social interaction game. Once participants selected 20 questions, they took turns asking one another the question until all questions had been asked. The trivia game lasted for approximately 9 min.

### Coding Procedure

Two research assistants made impression ratings of the trivia game according to three slices: the beginning 30 s, the middle 30 s, and the last 30 s of the game. The coders rated their impressions of the men's *patience*, *helpfulness*, *praise*, *positive climate*, and *enjoyment* after watching each slice based on 7-point bipolar scales (e.g., 1 = not helpful; 7 = very helpful). Inter-rater reliabilities were high (all Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranged from .74 to .93), so the two coders' scores for each of the five impression ratings were averaged across all three slices to give a composite overall rating (e.g., overall patience, overall helpfulness). We also averaged the five composite ratings to form an overall impression variable during the trivia game ( $\alpha=.90$ ).

### Unstructured Interaction

After the trivia game, dyads engaged in an unstructured 3-min social interaction. Participants were allowed to talk about anything they wished. Most conversations centered on getting acquainted, the trivia game, and their classes. This part of the interaction underwent two different coding procedures. On the global level, naïve raters were recruited to make impression ratings of the men based on thin-sliced silent videos or transcripts. On the molecular level, two research assistants coded frequency of specific nonverbal cues, and a word count software was used to categorize word usage.



### Participants and Procedure

Third-party naïve raters were 42 Northeastern University undergraduates ( $M=12$ ;  $F=30$ ;  $M_{\text{age}}=19.12$ ) enrolled in introductory psychology courses who participated in exchange for partial course credit. Raters participated in groups of one to three, and groups either watched silent videos (nonverbal impressions) or read transcripts (verbal impressions) of all 27 men. Impression ratings were aggregated across raters.

### Videos and Transcripts

The 27 useable videos were reduced to the middle min of the 3-min conversation, and only the men were visible. Videos were muted to ensure that ratings were based only on the men's visible nonverbal expressions. A research assistant transcribed the men's conversational part for the same 1-min. The 27 transcriptions were compiled in a booklet for analysis of verbal expressions.

### Nonverbal Expressions

Twenty-one naïve raters made impression ratings of the men's nonverbal expressions on nine scales: *approachable*, *friendly*, *warm*, *comfortable*, *relaxed*, *smooth*, *condescending*, *dominant*, and *masculine*. All impression ratings were based on 7-point bipolar scales (e.g., 1 = very unfriendly; 7 = very friendly). Participants also rated their general impression of the men's sexism on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all sexist; 7 = very sexist). Participants were simply asked to rate their impressions of the men after watching each clip; no explicit definitions of the rating adjectives were given. Inter-rater reliabilities for all impressions were within acceptable range; Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranged from .71 to .90. We made an a priori decision to group all ten impression ratings into three larger categories: affiliation, comfort, and dominance. Affiliation was the average of *approachable*, *friendly*, and *warm* ( $\alpha=.99$ ). Comfort was the average of *comfortable*, *relaxed*, and *smooth* ( $\alpha=.98$ ). Dominance was the average of *condescending*, *dominant*, *masculine*, and *sexist* ( $\alpha=.88$ ).

Two research assistants both coded all the video clips for the frequency of men's nonverbal behavior: *smile*, *nod*, *forward lean*, *open posture*, *gesture*, *looking away*, *object-touch*, and *self-touch*. These cues fall loosely under the three a priori categories for the impression ratings (i.e., affiliation, comfort, and dominance), but we did not average these cues together because while certain cues may imply the same construct, they do not necessarily correlate positively. For instance, although object-touch and self-touch both imply nervousness, they are negatively correlated ( $r=-.60$ ) because it is difficult and awkward to touch oneself while simultaneously holding an object. Following Hypothesis 1 and 2, the primary cues for affiliation are *smile*, *nod*, and *forward lean*. Consistent with previous research, *open*

*posture* was used as expression of dominance (Hypothesis 3). Using the same 1-min slice as the impression raters, the research assistants indicated if a certain cue was present or not during each 5-s interval within the 1-min. For instance, if a man smiled during the entire 1-min slice, the man would receive a total score of 12 because there are 12 5-s intervals. Similarly, if a man smiled in 6 of the intervals, he would receive a score of 6 for smiling. Coders were instructed that if a man smiled within a given interval (regardless of the frequency or duration of the smile), a score of 1 would be given for that interval alone. Inter-rater reliabilities were high (all Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranged from .81 to 1.00), so the two coders' scores for each behavior were averaged. Because smiling emerged as a significant behavioral correlate of hostile and benevolent sexism (see below), additional coding for the women's smiles was conducted because within dyadic interactions, a person's behavior influences his or her partner's behavior and vice versa. Therefore, we controlled for the female partners' smiling when looking at men's smiling. Two research assistants coded for the frequency of female partners' smiles using the same procedure and the same 1-min slice as used for coding the men ( $\alpha=.84$ ).

### Verbal Expressions

Twenty-one naïve raters read transcripts of the men and made the same impression ratings of their verbal communication as were used in the nonverbal condition. Participants were asked to rate their impressions of the men after reading each clip, and we did not give explicit definitions for each impression. Inter-rater reliabilities for all impression ratings of verbal expressions were within acceptable range; all  $\alpha$  ranged from .65 to .86. These ratings were again grouped in the same manner as nonverbal impression ratings into three a priori categories: affiliation ( $\alpha=.97$ ), comfort ( $\alpha=.96$ ), and dominance ( $\alpha=.48$ ).

For molecular measurement of verbal expressions, transcripts were analyzed with the Linguistic Inquiry Word Count software (LIWC; Pennebaker et al. 2007). The LIWC calculates percentages of word usages in more than 70 categories in the LIWC Dictionary such as pronouns, affective words, and verbs. We were primarily interested in the category of positive emotion words (e.g., fun, nice, warm) as it held the closest resemblance to affiliation.

### Materials

#### *Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)*

The ASI contains 22 items that measure both benevolent and hostile sexism on a 6-point rating scale (0 = disagree strongly; 5 = agree strongly). Examples of hostile sexism items are "Women exaggerate problems they have at work" and "Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist." Examples of benevolent sexism items are "A good woman

should be set on a pedestal by her man” and “In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men” (reverse-scored). Both scales showed strong internal reliability: for hostile sexism,  $\alpha = .88$ ; for benevolent sexism,  $\alpha = .81$ .

### Personality Measures

In addition to the ASI, participants completed two other personality measures: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg 1965) and the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling et al. 2003). The RSE is a 10-item scale that measures participants' self-esteem level on a 4-point scale (0 = Disagree Strongly; 3 = Strongly Agree). Examples of RSE items are “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself” and “I certainly feel useless at times” (reverse-scored). The TIPI is a brief, 10-item measure of the Big-Five personality traits: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Participants rated their agreement on ten pairs of words (e.g., “Extraverted, enthusiastic” vs. “Reserved, quiet”) on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree). These scales were included to distract participants from the main purpose of the study. However, we also used the agreeableness and extraversion trait measures from the TIPI as controls as described in the Results section.

## Results

As recommended by Glick and Fiske (1996), the other form of sexism was controlled for in all analyses owing to a positive correlation between the scales (in the present study,  $r = .15$ ). For instance, we controlled for hostile sexism when examining the relationship between benevolent sexism and smiling. By controlling for the other form of sexism, a purer measure of benevolent sexism or hostile sexism is achieved. See Table 1 for all means and standard deviations and Table 2 for all correlations among the measures.

In the following analyses, the personality traits of extraversion and agreeableness were controlled for as possible confounds. Tables 3 and 4 present the findings with and without controlling for the traits. It is also possible to measure for the interaction effect of benevolent and hostile sexism, but we did not hold any specific predictions regarding this and because the interaction term did not yield any significant results, this was not discussed further.

### Structured Interaction

All behavioral correlates of sexism were entered as dependent variables in separate regression models with benevolent and hostile sexism as predictors. We ran the same models with and without the personality covariates (see Table 3). During the trivia game, neither benevolent nor hostile sexism predicted

**Table 1** Means and standard deviations for all measures

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Benevolent sexism	2.64	.81
Hostile sexism	2.34	.87
Overall impressions	4.46	.83
Patient	5.80	.92
Helpful, encouraging	2.92	.95
Praise, compliments	3.97	.80
Positive climate	4.94	.95
Enjoying, having fun	4.66	1.22
Nonverbal impressions		
Affiliation	4.60	.70
Comfort	4.16	.70
Dominance	3.67	.47
Verbal impressions		
Affiliation	4.54	.44
Comfort	4.24	.59
Dominance	3.30	.31
Smile	4.96	2.99
Positive emotion words	4.73	2.87

Benevolent and hostile sexism were scored on a 6-point rating scale (0 = disagree strongly; 5 = agree strongly). All impression ratings were scored on a 7-point bipolar rating scale. Smile and positive emotion words were based on frequency

the overall impression rating (average of *patience*, *helpfulness*, *praise*, *positive climate*, and *enjoyment*),  $p > .37$ . However, when the five individual impressions were examined in separate regression models as dependent variables, benevolent sexist men were more patient when waiting for their female partners to answer the questions,  $\beta = .43$ ,  $p = .024$ , consistent with Hypothesis 1, which stated that benevolent sexist men would be more affiliative.

The three slices were further examined individually. Men with more benevolent sexism appeared more patient at the beginning,  $\beta = .42$ ,  $p = .034$ , and in the middle of the trivia game,  $\beta = .40$ ,  $p = .040$ . However, by the end of the game, benevolent sexism was no longer predictive of patience,  $\beta = .26$ ,  $p = .188$ .

### Unstructured Interaction

The same models were run for the unstructured interactions as in the structured interactions with each behavior as the dependent variable in separate regression models with benevolent and hostile sexism as the predictors. The same regression models were also run with and without the personality covariates (see Table 4).

### Nonverbal Expressions

Hypothesis 1 stated that men's benevolent sexism would be associated with more nonverbal expressions of affiliation, but hostile sexism would be associated with less affiliation (Hypothesis 2). As can be seen in Table 4, benevolent sexism

**Table 2** Correlations among all the measures during the trivia game and unstructured 3-min interaction

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Benevolent sexism	–														
2. Hostile sexism	.15	–													
3. Overall impressions	.17	–.08	–												
4. Patient	.46*	.22	.69***	–											
5. Helpful, encouraging	–.12	–.23	.79***	.26	–										
6. Praise, compliments	.24	.02	.85***	.64***	.48**	–									
7. Positive climate	.06	–.17	.96***	.55**	.77***	.82***	–								
8. Enjoying, having fun	.12	–.13	.96***	.55**	.80***	.76***	.93***	–							
9. Nonverbal affiliation	.39*	–.12	.53**	.35 <sup>+</sup>	.59***	.24	.49**	.55**	–						
10. Nonverbal comfort	.22	–.25	.61***	.33 <sup>+</sup>	.64***	.40*	.61***	.59***	.69***	–					
11. Nonverbal dominance	–.03	–.03	.10	.03	–.03	.26	.16	.05	–.23	.37 <sup>+</sup>	–				
12. Verbal affiliation	–.04	–.38*	.15	.13	–.03	.18	.21	.17	.07	–.06	–.02	–			
13. Verbal comfort	–.14	–.30	.09	–.03	–.01	.09	.19	.13	.01	–.06	.03	.91***	–		
14. Verbal dominance	–.09	–.03	–.19	–.23	–.06	–.38*	–.10	–.12	–.10	.02	.16	.05	.27	–	
15. Smile	.46*	–.26	.22	.07	.27	.10	.22	.25	.67***	.49**	.01	–.13	–.16	–.14	–
16. Positive emotion words	.35 <sup>+</sup>	–.17	.37 <sup>+</sup>	.33 <sup>+</sup>	.21	.30	.34 <sup>+</sup>	.37 <sup>+</sup>	.25	.44*	.25	.04	.07	.18	.27

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

predicted affiliative nonverbal impression ratings (average of *approachable*, *friendly*, and *warm* ratings),  $\beta = .41$ ,  $p = .037$ . Hostile sexism did not significantly predict affiliative nonverbal impressions,  $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p = .333$ , though the direction was as predicted. Neither benevolent nor hostile sexism predicted impressions of comfort and dominance, as had been predicted in Hypothesis 3.

Consistent with the affiliative nonverbal impressions, men’s benevolent sexism predicted more smiling,  $\beta = .51$ ,  $p = .006$ . In contrast, men’s hostile sexism predicted marginally fewer smiles,  $\beta = -.34$ ,  $p = .057$ . No other molecular nonverbal cues were associated with either form of sexism. As mentioned above, a person’s nonverbal behavior is influenced by his or her partner’s expressions, thus there is a need to control for partner’s nonverbal behavior. Men’s benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, and female partners’ smiling were entered into

a regression model simultaneously as predictors with men’s smiling as the dependent variable. Unsurprisingly, women’s smiles covaried with men’s smiles,  $\beta = .29$ ,  $p = .095$ . Importantly, men’s benevolent sexism still significantly predicted their own smiling behavior even after controlling for women’s smiles,  $\beta = .48$ ,  $p = .008$ . After accounting for the women’s smiles, however, men’s hostile sexism now predicted their smiling behavior more weakly than it had,  $\beta = -.26$ ,  $p = .141$ , though the direction was still negative.

*Verbal Expressions*

We predicted that hostile sexism would be negatively associated with verbal expressions of affiliation (Hypothesis 2), and

**Table 3** Standardized beta weights predicting impressions during trivia game

Impression rating	Benevolent sexism	Hostile sexism
Overall impressions	.18 (.18)	–.10 (–.14)
Patient	.43* (.44**)	.16 (.10)
Helpful, encouraging	–.09 (–.09)	–.22 (–.22)
Praise, compliments	.24 (.24)	–.02 (–.07)
Positive climate	.09 (.09)	–.18 (–.23)
Enjoying, having fun	.14 (.14)	–.15 (–.17)

Covaried results controlling for men’s extraversion and agreeableness are in parentheses

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$

**Table 4** Standardized beta weights predicting nonverbal and verbal impressions during unstructured 3-min interaction

Impression rating	Benevolent sexism	Hostile sexism
Nonverbal impressions		
Affiliation	.41* (.42*)	–.18 (–.19)
Comfort	.27 (.27)	–.29 (–.33 <sup>+</sup> )
Dominance	–.03 (–.03)	–.02 (–.06)
Verbal impressions		
Affiliation	.02 (.02)	–.38 <sup>+</sup> (–.41*)
Comfort	–.10 (–.10)	–.29 (–.31)
Dominance	–.09 (–.10)	–.02 (–.04)

Covaried results controlling for men’s extraversion and agreeableness are in parentheses

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$

the opposite was again predicted for benevolent sexism (Hypothesis 1). While there were no appreciable associations between benevolent sexism and impressions of men's verbal expressions, hostile sexism negatively predicted impression ratings of verbal affiliation,  $\beta = -.38$ ,  $p = .059$  (see Table 4).

At the molecular level, LIWC analyses demonstrated that benevolent sexist men used more positive emotion words,  $\beta = .38$ ,  $p = .056$ . Hostile sexist men did not use significantly fewer positive emotion words, but the direction was negative as predicted,  $\beta = -.22$ ,  $p = .247$ .

## Discussion

Previous research on the role of sexism during mixed-gender interactions is surprisingly limited. The current study is the first to examine how men's hostile sexist and benevolent sexist beliefs are differentially expressed, nonverbally and verbally, during actual social interactions with women. Supporting the first hypothesis, benevolent sexism was associated with more patience, more smiling, higher nonverbal impressions of affiliation (average of *approachable*, *friendly*, and *warm* impressions), and more usage of positive emotion words. Hostile sexism, partly in support of Hypothesis 2, was marginally associated with less smiling and lower verbal impressions of affiliation. However, we did not find support for Hypothesis 3 in that hostile sexism was not associated with more dominant expressions. These findings advance theoretical understanding of sexism in that benevolent sexism is expressed differently than hostile sexism at an interpersonal level, not just at an ideological level.

It is interesting to note that hostile sexism negatively predicted affiliative nonverbal and verbal expressions. It is reasonable to assume that people may attempt to mask their own negative gender attitudes (i.e., hostile sexism) during social interactions, but this was not the case. In fact, hostile sexist men appeared non-affiliative. Given that the relationships were only marginally significant, conclusions should be drawn with caution regarding the negative relationship between hostile sexism and affiliative expressions. Moreover, we predicted that hostile sexism may have certain properties of dominant expressions (Hypothesis 3), but this was not supported. It is possible that the mundaneness of the social interactions we created did not allow for opportunities to express dominance. In one study that found that LSH was associated with dominant nonverbal expressions (Murphy et al. 1999), the male participants were in a position of power such that they were playing the role of the interviewers paired with a female confederate who acted submissively. While it is unclear why Logel et al. (2009) were able to find dominant nonverbal expressions in their male participants and we were unable to, different measurement of sexism may be an explanation. After all, the sentence completion task in that study

correlated negatively with benevolent sexism. Future studies should examine the conditions in which hostile sexist men will act more dominantly.

Benevolent sexism, in contrast, is appealing and attractive in its expressions. Although researchers have argued that nonverbal behavior is a nonconscious and uncontrollable expression of bias (e.g., Dovidio et al. 2002; McConnell and Leibold 2001), recent evidence from the nonverbal behavior literature has suggested that certain behaviors originally thought to be beyond volitional control, such as the Duchenne smile, can be produced deliberately (e.g., Gunnery et al. 2013). Thus, it is unclear whether the nonverbal and verbal expressions of sexism are mainly conscious or nonconscious. It is, however, evident from Table 4 that benevolent sexism was a stronger predictor of nonverbal impressions than of verbal impressions, and hostile sexism was a stronger predictor of verbal impressions than of nonverbal impressions. Though further research would be required to confirm this pattern, it suggests that the more subtle form of sexism (benevolent sexism) is conveyed predominantly through the more subtle and out-of-awareness cue modality (nonverbal), while the more blatant form of sexism (hostile sexism) is conveyed in the more explicit cue modality (words). This difference supports evidence suggesting that benevolent sexism is the more covert and hard to resist form of sexism.

The present research is limited in its generality because the behavior of men interacting with other men was not examined. Therefore, we cannot be sure that the behavioral correlates of benevolent and hostile sexism uncovered here are unique to male–female interaction or if they might be evident even when sexist men interact with other men as well. Although we doubt that would be the case, future research can include male–male dyads in order to find out if the two kinds of sexism are associated with a general behavioral style or if certain behaviors are correlated with sexism only when talking to a woman. But even if it is a general behavioral style and not specifically woman-directed, if there were negative consequences of the man's behavior they would accrue more, or exclusively, to female recipients of such behavior.

And indeed there may be negative consequences. Research suggests that benevolent sexism has greater influence in fostering gender inequality beliefs in women than hostile sexism. Jost and Kay (2005) exposed women to benevolent sexist or hostile sexist items taken from the ASI and found that benevolent sexist exposure promoted increased support of the status quo (i.e., the belief that the society we live in is largely fair for all). Becker and Wright (2011) found that exposure to benevolent sexism not only promoted increased justification of gender inequality but also less motivation to participate in collective action against gender inequality as a consequence. We propose that affiliative expressions, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, operate as another possible mechanism by which benevolent sexism can perpetuate support for gender



inequality among women at an interpersonal level. These supposed gestures of good faith may entice women to accept the status quo in society because sexism literally looks welcoming, appealing, and harmless. The present study laid the foundation to examine the consequences of interacting with benevolent sexist men and future research should directly address this question further by exposing women to affiliative nonverbal expressions from benevolent sexist men and examining their subsequent beliefs.

While many people are sensitive to sexist verbal offenses, they may not readily associate sexism with warmth and friendliness. Unless sexism is understood as having both hostile and benevolent properties, the insidious nature of benevolent sexism will continue to be one of the driving forces behind gender inequality in our society.

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