DECONSTRUCTING DEPENDENCE AND GENDER CONCERNS IN MEN'S HOSTILE SEXISM

BY

MOLLY ISOBEL MARY FISHER

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Abstract

Hostile sexism describes attitudes characterising women as deliberately attempting to emotionally exploit men and challenge men's power. Men who endorse hostile sexism often employ negative strategies to reduce any risk of exploitation and feelings of dependence, such as withdrawing from difficult conversations. However, no research has identified whether this occurs due to concerns about depending on *women* or concerns about depending on others more generally. My thesis tests how men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with experiences of seeking support across different types of support providers (e.g., men vs. women) and contexts of dependence (e.g., romantic partners vs. non-romantic close others). Chapter Two tested support-seeking in heterosexual people across a context of romantic dependence (i.e., relying on a partner; Study 1) and non-romantic dependence (i.e., relying on friends of mixed genders; Study 2). Across both studies, men who endorsed hostile sexism were more resistant to seek support from people they were more dependent on—but there was no evidence that resistance emerged more strongly for relationships with women (vs. men). Chapter Three presents an observational study testing links between people's endorsement of hostile sexism and their patterns of support behaviour from an unknown person to accomplish a joint task. Results did not reveal any evidence that situational dependence (i.e., not having the resources to complete a task) was associated with expected patterns of support seeking by heterosexual men who endorsed hostile sexism. Instead, men who endorsed hostile sexism were generally resistant to support when paired with other *men* rather than women. Chapter Four focused on romantic dependence by testing whether heterosexual men who endorsed hostile sexism received less support from their female romantic partners over time. Dyadic analyses indicated that men's hostile sexism was linked with lower perceptions of partner support *and* partners' reports of providing less support. In sum, testing the characteristics of men's endorsement of hostile sexism by varying the

dependence and gender of relationships identifies: (1) that men's endorsement of hostile sexism is personally costly across a variety of relationships, and (2) that research often focuses on the gendered dynamic of men's hostile sexism (e.g., fears of exploitation by *women*) when negativity is more attributable to situations of *dependence* than gender.

Preface and Acknowledgements

The quote at the beginning of this thesis comes from an essay by the magnificent Audre Lorde. In this essay, she talks frankly about the unthinkable harm directed toward women by men who believe themselves superior. But, she also talks about the repercussions of these beliefs for men – how they become imprisoned in a box of their own making. This quote eloquently sums up my love of psychology and the reasons I was drawn to the questions in this thesis. It was not an easy decision to study the costs of men's endorsement of sexist attitudes for men when the costs for women are so grievous. And still, men are "trapped", and if we are to stop the harms against women, we need to understand why and how to get them out. At times throughout this journey, I myself felt stuck and overwhelmed and I want to acknowledge some of the people who helped get *me* out. First, to my supervisor Matt, thank you for inspiring me to start this journey, thank you for pulling me across the finish line, and for everything in between. To have worked alongside someone so brilliant for the last 5 years is truly an honour. Thank you to my colleagues who have contributed to this mahi – Marc, Tessa, Chris, Rob, and the rest of the Interpersonal Relationships Lab, both past members and present. To my clinical psychology whānau, especially Ara, Carrie and Róisín, for your unbelieveable kindness and unwavering support in the dying stages. And finally, to my real-life whānau – Janet, Brendan, Harry, O.P, and Ben – my love, just thank you, for everything and more.

Thesis Contributions

I (Molly) am the first author of this research programme, but I use the pronoun "we" in Chapters 2-4 as they are laid out as empirical manuscripts, either published or in preparation for journal submission. Below I describe the contributions of other researchers to this thesis.

Chapter One: Introduction and Overview of Studies

Molly Fisher: Research questions, writing – draft and revisions

Matt Hammond: Feedback on research questions, writing – revisions

Chapter Two: The Costs of Men's Hostile Sexism for Support

Molly Fisher: Research questions, writing—draft and revisions, statistical analysis, study design (Study 2), data curation (Study 2)

Matt Hammond: Feedback on study design, statistical analysis, writing—revisions.

Tessa Burgess: Study design (Study 1), data curation (Study 1).

This chapter is published in Fisher et al. 2021 (see page 25 for article details).

Chapter Three: How Men Who Endorse Hostile Sexism Seek Support

Molly Fisher: Research questions, writing – draft and revisions, data curation, data cleaning, coding, and statistical analysis.

Matt Hammond: Writing – revisions, study design, and statistical analysis.

Chapter Four: How Men Who Endorse Hostile Sexism Receive Support

Molly Fisher: Research questions, writing – draft and revisions, data cleaning, and statistical analysis

Matt Hammond: Study design, data curation, statistical analysis, and writing – revisions

Chapter Five: General Discussion

Molly Fisher: Writing – draft and revisions

Matt Hammond: Writing – revisions

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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

"Men who are afraid to feel must keep women around to do their feeling for them while dismissing us for the same supposedly "inferior" capacity to feel deeply. But in this way also, men deny themselves their own essential humanity, becoming trapped in dependency and fear" – Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*

Men's endorsement of hostile beliefs about women—including derogating women as inferior for having deep feelings or believing that women seek power by controlling relationship partners (Glick & Fiske, 1996)—are common, even in relatively egalitarian countries like Aotearoa New Zealand (e.g., Brandt, 2011; Glick et al., 2000, 2004). Although advances have been made toward greater gender equality across the globe, many people's beliefs about how men and women should behave in society still mimic those expressed in the quote above from an Audre Lorde (1984) essay: Men as the stoic providers, women as the emotional caregivers. Research has detailed the significant costs associated with men's endorsement of hostile sexism, including greater aggression and violence toward women (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Lynch & Renzetti, 2020; Renzetti et al., 2018) and lower relationship satisfaction expressed by both men and women (e.g., Cross & Overall, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013). Like Audre Lorde's sentiments about men being "trapped in dependency and fear", these findings are theorised to be driven by concerns about depending relationally on women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). For example, men who endorse hostile sexism are more aggressive toward female partners but only when they perceive themselves to be low in relationship power (Cross et al., 2019), or perceive their partner as less committed to the relationship (Cross et al., 2017). In both these contexts, men who endorse hostile sexism feel more vulnerable to potential exploitation by women and are responding in a way that aims to reestablish their power or reduce any feelings of dependency.

However, the theoretical conclusion that the consequences of men's endorsement of hostile sexism stem from concerns about depending on *women* may be premature. Thus far, most of the research examining men's hostile sexism has used heterosexual romantic couples

(e.g., Cross et al., 2017, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013)—for good reason. There is no context in which men are more dependent on women, and their concerns about depending on women more salient, than in heterosexual romantic relationships (Cross et al., 2019). Be that as it may, by only exploring men's hostile sexism in this context, dependence is being conflated with gender. In other words, we cannot be sure that men who endorse hostile sexism have concerns about depending on *women* or concerns about depending on others in general. Equally, men who endorse hostile sexism may behave negatively toward *women* in their lives, or negatively toward close others regardless of gender. The primary aim of the current thesis is to attempt to disentangle the extent to which patterns of negative evaluations and behaviours that are linked with men's hostile sexism occur under different conditions of dependence and genders of social partners.

To disentangle dependence and gender, I focus on a social context where both variables are likely to be salient—social support. This thesis comprises three articles investigating how men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with their perceptions and behaviour when seeking and receiving support across different contexts of dependence (e.g., romantic vs. non-romantic close others vs. situational dependence) and when the gender of the support provider differs (e.g., men vs. women). In this chapter, I provide an overview of ambivalent sexism theory, discuss the utility of social support contexts for investigating dependence and gender concerns within men's hostile sexism, and outline the rationale for the empirical chapters in this thesis.

The Fundamentals of Ambivalent Sexism Theory

Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) states that sexist attitudes comprise two related yet distinct ideologies. *Hostile sexism* portrays women as seeking to undermine men's social power using malicious and deceitful strategies, such as humiliating men in relationships (e.g., agreement with the belief that "Once a woman gets a man to commit to

her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash"; Ambivalent Sexism Inventory [ASI]; Glick & Fiske, 1996). However, these attitudes are incompatible with satisfactory romantic relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996); men who endorse hostile sexism experience lower relationship quality and tend to be more aggressive toward partners, indicating little capacity to fulfil fundamental relationship needs (see Hammond & Overall, 2017, for a review). *Benevolent sexism* functions to counterbalance the harm of hostile sexism by glorifying and romanticising women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). For instance, benevolent sexism expresses that women are pure yet vulnerable to harm, making them an ideal romantic pairing for men (e.g., "Women should be cherished and protected by men"; ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996). While subjectively positive, benevolent sexism is a patronising view of women that reinforces traditional heterosexual relationship roles of men as 'breadwinners' and women as 'housewives' (Chen et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2010).

Hostile sexism functions to maintain men's societal advantages by devaluing women's competence in high status roles and endorsing aggressive action against women who are seen to challenge men's dominant societal position (see Connor et al., 2017; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Overall & Hammond, 2018). In fact, hostile sexism is associated with the categorisation of women as either 'good' or 'bad' depending on the level of threat they pose to men's social status; women who pose a lesser threat are 'good' (e.g., housewives, traditional women), while women who pose a greater threat are 'bad' (e.g., feminists and non-traditional women). Unsurprisingly, people who endorse hostile sexism report less favourable evaluations of 'bad' women (e.g., career women; Glick et al., 1997), describing them as jealous, sly, and selfish (Glick et al., 2000). These negative evaluations then justify physical and sexual aggression toward women to keep them in their place (Wood, 2004). Indeed, men's endorsement of hostile sexism is linked to beliefs that women who stray from the traditional, docile ideal (e.g., hostile temptresses) deserve to be reprimanded (e.g., Chen et al., 2009) and that

women's sexual teasing is often to blame for sexual assaults (e.g., Glick et al., 2002; Sakalli, 2001). In this way, endorsement of hostile sexism contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequality by punishing women who are seen to be rebelling against the status-quo.

According to ambivalent sexism theory, benevolent sexism also functions to maintain men's societal advantages in unison with hostile sexism (see Connor et al., 2017; Glick & Fiske, 2001; Overall & Hammond, 2018). In fact, benevolent sexism is critical in framing gender inequality in a way that is palatable to women—the 'carrot' to hostile sexism's 'stick' (Glick & Fiske, 2011). For example, where hostile sexism uses admonishment to keep women in lower status roles, benevolent sexism rewards women who uphold traditional gender roles, encompassing views of these women as moral, pure, and the perfect complement to the stoicism of men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The reward of benevolent sexism for women is physical and financial protection, which according to research can be regarded by women as relatively innocent (Becker & Swim, 2012; Bosson et al., 2010) or sometimes even romantic and attractive (Gul & Kupfer, 2018; Rudman & Heppen, 2003). However, while this provision is offered to women who conform to traditional prescriptions of femininity, it is easily withheld from women who do not (e.g., Sibley & Wilson, 2004), thereby trapping women in positions of dependency and subjugation. In sum, endorsement of both hostile sexism and benevolent sexism ultimately maintains societal inequalities through pervasive evaluations and behaviours that advantage men and disadvantage women.

Contexts of Power and Dependence are Critical for Understanding Hostile Sexism

Ideas about *power* and *dependence* are fundamental to hostile sexism. Hostile sexism portrays the relationship between men and women as a competition for power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Indeed, items indexing hostile sexism refer to women as "seeking to gain power by getting control over men" and putting men "on a tight leash" (Ambivalent Sexism Inventory [ASI]; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Examinations of the individual differences underlying

hostile sexism offer further evidence of power-related motives. For example, research reveals that higher levels of social dominance orientation (SDO) —worldviews about power and status being achieved through intergroup competition—reliably predicts stronger endorsement of hostile sexism (Sibley & Becker, 2012; Sibley et al., 2007). Moreover, men's endorsement of hostile sexism is linked with holding greater zero-sum beliefs about gender status and power, including that "the more power women gain, the less power men have" (Ruthig et al., 2017). In this way, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism tend to be particularly aware of the power dynamics between men and women, including building up the meaning of those power dynamics as part of a perceived conflict that results in genders losing and gaining power.

Traditional areas of research on hostile sexism focus on power dynamics that occur in career and political domains. Theoretically, men who endorse hostile sexism can 'justify' their negativity toward women by characterising them as calculating and devious— particularly career women, feminists, and non-traditional women—because they are perceived as a threat to men's instituitional power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Indeed, men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with negative evaluations of women in managerial and leadership positions (Gervais & Hillard, 2011; Ratliff et al., 2019; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), less support for female political candidates (Valentino et al., 2018) and engagement in actions that place men above women, such as hiring a less qualified man over a more qualified woman (Christopher & Mull, 2006). In contrast, when men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are asked to evaluate traditional women (e.g., homemakers), the negative effect observed with non-traditional women disappears (Glick et al., 1997), presumably because women who stay in the home are not considered threats to men's social standing. Thus, research has robustly linked men's endorsement of hostile sexism with costs for women's success in professional spheres.

However, power doesn't just exist at a societal level; intimate relationships also place restrictions on power and should therefore be particularly worrying for men who endorse hostile sexism. Interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) states that interpersonal power is determined by one person's dependence on another. For example, a person whose needs, goals, and desires are more dependent on another person lacks power, while a person who has influence over decisions and resources, and is therefore less dependent on another person, possesses power (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). In intimate relationships, both partners are invariably dependent upon each other meaning, although each partner is able to *influence* the other, each partner is also open to being *influenced* (e.g., Cho & Keltner, 2020; Kelley et al., 2003; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). For example, one person's goal to learn a new language online after work will be helped by their partner's support and encouragement but hindered by their partner's tendency to have friends over in the evenings (Fitzsimons & Finkel, 2015). For heterosexual men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism, the constraint on power in intimate relationships highlights concerns that they are vulnerable to potential exploitation by women. Indeed, men who endorse hostile sexism tend to hold negatively biased perceptions of female partners as manipulative and controlling (Hammond & Overall, 2013) and report more jealously and power-related problems in their romantic relationships (Cross & Overall, 2019). Thus, the power concerns linked with hostile sexism reliably arise *within* intimate relationships as well as outside of the home in political and career domains.

By contrast, men's endorsement of benevolent sexism does not express concern about depending on women. In fact, benevolent sexism idealises romantic interdependence by suggesting that men are "not truly complete" without the love of a woman (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996). In this way, men who endorse benevolent sexism do not display the same patterns of underestimating power (Cross et al., 2019) or attempting to resist their partner's influence (Overall et al., 2011) as men who endorse hostile sexism. Indeed, in some studies

men's benevolent sexism is associated with perceptions of *higher* relationship power (Cross et al., 2019), suggesting that men who endorse benevolent sexism are comfortable relying on women for relational needs. Moreover, evidence suggests that men's endorsement of benevolent sexism, when compared to hostile sexism, may reduce competition over power between romantic partners and instead facilitate cooperation. For example, men's benevolent sexism is linked with feeling less manipulated by romantic partners (Hammond & Overall, 2013) and with fewer concerns about power or jealousy in relationships (Cross & Overall, 2019). Consequently, as this thesis is interested in understanding the costs of dependence-related concerns in men's sexist attitudes, the focus is primarily on men's endorsement of hostile sexism rather than benevolent sexism.

To conclude this section, men who endorse hostile sexism hold deep concerns about depending on women in heterosexual romantic relationships. Indeed, the dependence-related concerns held by men who endorse hostile sexism are theorised to be a major component of the reason they judge partners more negatively, behave aggressively toward partners, and feel worse about their relationships (see Hammond & Overall, 2017). In addition, these dependence-related fears are one factor that makes hostile attitudes toward women conceptually distinct from the highly associated attitudes expressed by benevolent sexism. In this thesis, I examine men's hostile sexism across different contexts of dependence to study their interpersonal behaviours more closely and to investigate the construct of hostile sexism from a new lens. Next, I summarise the existing research on men's hostile sexism and dependence and outline a critical gap in our understanding that forms the basis of this thesis.

Dependence Concerns Underlying Hostile Sexism Have Costs for Relationships

Concerns about dependence within relationships will inevitably be a conflict for heterosexual men who endorse hostile sexism. That is, there is a constant tension between fundamental needs for acceptance, support, and affection, and the underlying fear that women

will exploit this need for dependence (see Glick & Fiske, 1996). As a result, men who

endorse hostile sexism are often resentful of how romantic relationships highlight their

dependence on women. Indeed, there is growing evidence linking men's hostile sexism to

other measures of relationship-based insecurity (Fisher & Hammond, 2019; Hart et al., 2012;

Yakushko, 2005). In their meta-analysis of the links between attachment orientation and

sexist beliefs, Fisher and Hammond (2019) revealed that men who more strongly endorsed

hostile sexism were higher in attachment anxiety—a strong desire for relationship intimacy

that prompts fears of rejection by intimate partners—and, for those *in* romantic relationships,

also higher in attachment avoidance—a desire for self-reliance coupled with a fear of

depending on intimate partners. In other words, men's endorsement of hostile sexism was

simultaneously linked with a heightened (but fearful) desire for relationships and

expectations that they need to be self-reliant due to others' tendency to be rejecting or

unreliable. Thus, meta-analytic evidence supports that men's hostile sexism is associated with

insecurities around being vulnerable to exploitation by women in relationships.

Feeling vulnerable in relationships with women is a potential explanation for many of

the relationship costs associated with men's hostile sexism. Indeed, research has long

established how men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with physical and verbal

aggression toward female intimate partners (e.g., Forbes et al., 2004; Juarros-Basterretxea et

al., 2019; Martinez-Pecino & Durán, 2019). Addressing this link, recent studies have revealed

that men who endorse hostile sexism are only more aggressive toward romantic partners

when they perceive a threat within their relationship. For instance, Cross et al. (2017)

illustrated that men's endorsement of hostile sexism was linked to aggression only when they

perceived their partners to be low in relationship commitment. Similarly, investigation of the

effects of power on aggression found men who endorsed hostile sexism were more aggressive

toward female partners but only when they perceived themselves to be low in relationship

power (Cross et al., 2019). In both studies, aggression specifically occurred in contexts of heightened dependence rather than as retaliation toward a perceived context of challenge or an attempt to gain dominance. Thus, the theorised explanation for aggression was that men who endorse hostile sexism felt they were at risk of being rejected or exploited and were reacting in ways that aimed to reestablish their relative independence and reduce feelings of vulnerability.

Intriguingly, there is also evidence to suggest that relationship-based dependence concerns can influence evaluations of women in non-relationship contexts. Across a series of six studies, Sheppard and Johnson (2019) asked men to rate the trustworthiness of attractive (vs. unattractive) women in the workplace. In general, men tended to rate more attractive women as less trustworthy—a finding dubbed the "femme-fatale" effect. Untrustworthy women were then rated as more deserving of termination. However, by priming men to feel secure and committed in their romantic relationship this bias was attenuated, suggesting that even outside of close relationship contexts getting men to think about a faithful or committed romantic partner can remove the negative bias they have about women being manipulative and untrustworthy in career domains. Although workplace contexts specifically are beyond the scope of this thesis, these results suggest that men's insecurities about having their dependence exploited by a female *romantic* partner can spill over into harmful and debilitating generalisations about women *in society*.

Interdependence is typically high in romantic relationships so examining the effects of dependence on men's hostile sexism in heterosexual romantic contexts is highly relevant. However, all the research reviewed above detailing the importance of dependence in understanding men's hostile sexism has been conducted using heterosexual romantic couples (e.g., Cross et al., 2017, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013, 2020). In doing so, prior research has conflated any effects that are due to relationship interdependence (i.e., men feeling

dependent in a relationship) with effects that are due to gender (i.e., men being in relationships with women). Thus, without exploring the links between men's hostile sexism and dependence *outside* of romantic relationship contexts, it is unclear whether men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism fear depending *on women*, versus the possibility that they have concerns about dependence in general, and thus behave negatively toward others regardless of gender.

Therefore, the primary aim of the current thesis is to disentangle the concerns associated with men's hostile sexism—concerns about dependence and concerns about gender—by exploring the experiences these men have within a context in which dependence concerns are salient, but the gender of the other person can be variable—contexts involving the seeking and receiving of social support (e.g., seeking support from close vs. distant non-romantic others, or from an unknown other). As discussed below, examining the outcomes of men's endorsement of hostile sexism in social support contexts allows for the dissection of dependence and gender concerns. In addition, the following section will discuss the theoretical implications for studying men's endorsement of hostile sexism in support contexts. Specifically, this thesis will illustrate the previously under-researched but crucial costs for men that are linked with their *own* endorsement of hostile sexism.

The Upsides and Downsides of Social Support

Social support is defined as "the perception or experience that one is loved and cared for, esteemed, and part of a mutually supportive social network" (Taylor, 2011, p. 1). A large literature has documented the benefits of social support for personal health and wellbeing. For example, social support is associated with greater quality of life and positive mood (e.g., Wang et al., 2003), enhanced satisfaction in close relationships and personal growth (Overall et al., 2010), and even increased lifespan (Berkman & Syme, 1979; Herbst-Damm & Kulik, 2005; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010; Seeman, 1996). Indeed, social support can also protect

against negative wellbeing by reducing psychological distress (see Gariépy et al., 2016 and Cohen & Wills, 1985 for a review), and buffering people from the effects of cognitive decline (Seeman et al., 2001) and heart disease (Sorkin et al., 2002). Although some of the benefits come from the actual reciept of social support (Cohen, 2004), even the perception that one is part of a supportive network can help dampen the effects of stress by boosting the belief that one can cope and allowing reappraisal of the problem (Cohen & Wilis, 1985). Thus, receiving and perceiving social support can have benefits for the self.

Social support can also promote positive relationship wellbeing. For example, receiving social support from an intimate partner can build relationship trust (Murray et al., 2006; Murray et al., 2000), foster feelings of acceptance and love (Collins et al., 2014; Kane et al., 2012; Reis & Shaver, 1988), and increase overall feelings of relationship closeness both in the moment (Gleason et al., 2008; Overall et al., 2010; Reis et al., 2010) and over time (Sullivan et al., 2010). Moreover, the benefits of social support can be observed dyadically, with support providers also reporting boosts in satisfaction and trust within relationships (Feeney & Collins, 2015). This is because the process of giving and receiving support signals commitment, dependability, and responsivity to needs (Cutrona et al., 2005). Indeed, the benefits of support for wellbeing translate across different types of relationships. For example, perceptions that non-romantic others are responsive to your needs and goals enhances relationship quality and trust between roommates (e.g,. Canevello & Crocker, 2010; Crocker & Canevello, 2008), between mentors and mentees (e.g., Pryce, 2012), and between close friends (e.g., Deci et al., 2006). In sum, there are myriad effects of both giving and receiving social support that are reliable features of relationships of varying levels of closeness.

Despite the numerous benefits, support interactions also tend to magnify the support seekers feelings of vulnerability and dependence (Cavallo et al., 2014). Support interactions

are typically characterised by some level of *non-mutual* dependence—the support seeker is dependent on the support provider (in the moment) in ways that rarely occur in reverse (i.e., providers rarely feel they need help from support seekers within that specific discussion; Collins & Feeney, 2000). Indeed, evidence from the attachment literature illustrates how support interactions heighten concerns about vulnerability and insecurity for people who are more apprehensive about their close connections. In particular, people who are higher in attachment avoidance—an orientation toward independence and self-reliance in relationships—are less likely to seek and provide support in times of distress, while people lower in attachment avoidance are more likely to turn to trusted others for assurance when needed (Simpson et al., 1992). Those higher in attachment avoidance likely withdraw from or reject support as a way of protecting against the feelings of discomfort associated with depending on others (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Rusbult et al., 2004). Given that men who endorse hostile sexism also have concerns about dependence, examining their behaviour in social support contexts has the potential to aid in untangling concerns about dependence from concerns about gender. In the following section, I review the existing literature and the previously un-tested questions regarding men's endorsement of hostile sexism, dependence, and social support.

Initial Evidence on Men's Hostile Sexism and Social Support

Men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism express concerns about relationally depending on women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Given that seeking support from others requires a certain level of dependence, men who endorse hostile sexism may be more resistant to seek and receive social support. The one study to assess men's hostile sexism within a support context supports this assertion. Hammond and Overall (2020) used heterosexual romantic couples to examine how men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism perceived the support they were given from their partner for a personal goal they were working towards.

Findings indicated that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism tended to *underestimate* support behaviours that were affectionate and loving (compared to partner reports), suggesting a bias away from information that signals a partner's dependability in support interactions (Hammond & Overall, 2020). Consistent with the theorised salience of indicators of *dependence* (i.e., concerns about attaining love and care) for men who endorse hostile sexism, there was no evidence of biased perceptions of support behaviours that were offers of goal-focused and practical help (Hammond & Overall, 2020). However, as described previously, prior research on hostile sexism in relationships commonly conflates dependence and gender. Indeed, in Hammond and Overall (2020), the support provider for each man was always a woman who shared a relatively high level of romantic (inter)dependence (i.e., the average couples' relationship length was 3.25 years). In addition, levels of partner dependence varied depending on the specific goal they were working towards. Thus, the one study to examine men's hostile sexism and support illustrated that men who endorse hostile sexism miss seeing their partner's expressions of love and care, but it is an open question as to whether this occurs due to the *gender* of the other person, the *relationship dependence* that comes with being in a committed relationship, and/or the *situational dependence* that specifically occurs when in a position of needing support.

In the following section, I address how examining social support interactions across a variety of contexts can further our understanding of the effects of men's hostile sexism and the situations in which those effects are more likely to occur. As displayed in Table 1.1., the empirical chapters of this thesis examine men's endorsement of hostile sexism across four

Table 1.1

Summary of the different support contexts and study outcomes of each thesis chapter, alongside the type of dependence and gender contexts used.

Thesis Chapter	Support Context	Study Outcome	Dependence Context	Gender Context
Chapter Two	*Study 1*: Retrospective support seeking	*Study 1*: Satisfaction with support	*Study 1*: Romantic dependence	*Study 1*: People in heterosexual romantic relationships
	Study 2: Hypothetical support seeking	*Study 2*: Likelihood of seeking support	*Study 2*: Hypothetically manipulated *relational* dependence	*Study 2*: Hypothetically manipulated
Chapter Three	Shared, task-based goal	Support seeking behaviour	Experimentally manipulated *situational* dependence	Experimentally manipulated
Chapter Four	Dyadic, goal-based support over time	Received partner support	Romantic dependence	Heterosexual romantic couples

studies that consider differences in the dependence of the relationship (i.e., a stranger versus a romantic partner), the dependence in an interaction (i.e., help for a task versus help for an important ongoing goal), and the gender of the support provider (i.e., men or women). These research directions also establish important theoretical advances; by testing the link between men's hostile sexism and resistance to support, I consider how poor experiences of support are an unexplored cost of men's hostile sexism for *men* (Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4), in a way that is distinct from romantic attachment style (Chapter 2) and generalised adherence to masculinity norms (Chapter 3), and are present across multiple time-points (Chapter 4). I describe each chapter in more detail in the following sections.

Chapter Two: The Link Between Men's Hostile Sexism and Support Seeking is Costly for Men

Much of the existing literature on sexist beliefs has examined the costs of men's endorsement of hostile sexism for women. This is not surprising given the consequences of men's hostile sexism for women are particularly severe, including sexual and physical violence toward relationship partners (e.g., Begany & Milburn, 2002; Lynch & Renzetti, 2020; Renzetti et al., 2018). Yet, given that the level of negativity associated with men's hostile sexism interrupts their capacity to establish fulfilling relationships, there should be costs for men too. Indeed, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism report lower satisfaction (e.g., Cross & Overall, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013) and more jealousy and power-related problems (Cross & Overall, 2019) in their romantic relationships. But are these specific to relationships with women, or are the costs more generalised because men's endorsement of hostile sexism prompts discomfort for men in non-romantic contexts as well? Theory suggests that people's personal beliefs and orientations toward others, such as their attachment style, influence their perceptions and evaluations of the support they are given (Collins & Feeney, 2000, 2004; Simpson et al., 1992), and drive decisions to avoid seeking

support (Simpson et al., 1992). Given that social support interactions likely activate the concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have about relational dependence, the failure to seek support when distressed may be an unrecognised cost of men's endorsement of hostile sexism for men themselves.

In studying the potential self-afflicted costs of men's endorsement of hostile sexism in disrupting access to support, this chapter also investigates the specific concerns involved in sexist expectations about depending on women. Specifically, prior research has assumed that when men who endorse hostile sexism are dependent on women they feel (a) *threatened* by imagined manipulation by women (i.e., "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash"; Glick & Fiske, 1996) and (b) *vulnerable* and ashamed of their dependence on women (i.e., "Listening to his wife shames a man"; Chen et al., 2009). Indeed, references to concerns about men being vulnerable to potential exploitation by women are popular in literature on men's hostile sexism (e.g., Cross et al., 2019, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall et al., 2011). However, the specific content of these concerns is yet to be empirically tested in hostile sexism research. As such, this chapter is the first to test whether the negative behaviours and evaluations associated with men's hostile sexism are linked to concerns about potential exploitation and/or being vulnerable.

As outlined in Table 1.1., Chapter Two of this thesis aims to establish links between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and their perceptions and experiences of seeking support. Across two cross-sectional studies, Chapter Two examines whether men who endorse hostile sexism are more resistant to support from romantic partners (Study 1) and non-romantic close others (Study 2), and whether this resistance is associated with specific beliefs about (a) being at risk of potential exploitation by the other person, and/or (b) being emotionally vulnerable in front of the other person. By testing these links first in romantic

contexts and then in non-romantic contexts, Chapter Three provides an initial foundation for the pattern of effects we expect to see when men are seeking support from female romantic partners (Study 1), and then, through manipulation of a hypothetical support provider, begins to disentangle dependence and gender concerns linked with men's hostile sexism (Study 2).

Chapter Three: How Men who Endorse Hostile Sexism Seek Support During a Task

Ambivalent sexism theory suggests men's endorsement of hostile sexism is partly underpinned by specific concerns about women's capacity to manipulate men with emotions and sexuality (Glick & Fiske, 1996). From this perspective, men who endorse hostile sexism feel that a committed romantic relationship is the context in which women exert the most influence and power over men (e.g., Hammond et al., 2020). To illustrate, beliefs about women's dyadic power are exemplified through endorsement of beliefs such as "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to keep him on a tight leash" (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996). However, men's endorsement of hostile sexism also impacts how they view women outside of romantic relationships, and thus, in contexts that involve no romantic interdependence. For example, in the workplace, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are less likely to recommend female candidates for managerial positions (Masser & Abrams, 2004), are more critical of women in leadership roles (Gervais & Hillard, 2011; Ratliff et al., 2019; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000) and are more likely to attribute the gender pay gap to women's personal choices rather than systematic biases (Connor & Fiske, 2019). Together, these results imply that contexts of task-based power—such as needing to work alongside women to complete a job or being required to follow the orders of leaders who are women—are linked with negativity from men who endorse hostile sexism. However, the extent to which this negativity is specifically driven by concerns about depending on women has never been tested. Thus, it remains unclear whether the concerns men who endorse

hostile sexism have about depending on women in relationship contexts extend to depending on women in task-based contexts.

Although examination of men's hostile sexism outside of romantic contexts is limited, research on gender-related beliefs that are similar to hostile sexism indicates that the process of men's support seeking is associated with heightened concerns about vulnerability, *even* in non-romantic contexts. For example, researchers have demonstrated that men who more strongly adhere to traditional masculine norms around emotional control and self-reliance are less likely to seek support in a range of areas, including from professionals—such as a GP or mental health practitioner (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Caldwell et al., 2004), family and friends (McDermott et al., 2018) and colleagues or organizational leaders (O'Donnell & MacIntosh, 2015). While adherence to masculine norms is theorised to be a separate construct to hostile sexism—masculinity adherence concerns involve *intra*personal comparison to views about traditional gender norms, whereas hostile sexism encompasses beliefs about the *inter*personal relations between men and women—there are conceptual similarities. For instance, hostile sexism expresses ideas about competition (e.g., "When women lose to men in fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against"; Glick & Fiske, 1996) as do masculinity norms (e.g., "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing"; Mahalik et al., 2003). Similarly, both hostile sexism and masculinity norms contain restrictive ideas that men's role ought to be dominant and independent, which should be incompatible with seeking support in positive and productive ways (e.g., Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Therefore, it is possible that concerns similar to those that prevent men who conform to masculine norms from seeking support in non-romantic contexts, also disrupt the support seeking of men who endorse hostile sexism in these contexts.

Chapter Three of this thesis examines whether endorsement of hostile sexism is linked with the behaviours men display when seeking support from another person to complete a

task. By examining these links in an experimental context using pairs of people who do not know each other, Chapter Three tests whether the dependence concerns associated with men's hostile sexism are also prompted in non-romantic settings where the focus is on *situational* dependence rather than relationship dependence. It also enables tests of whether the support behaviours of men who endorse hostile sexism differ depending on whether they are paired with a man versus a woman. In this way, Chapter Three contributes to the untangling of dependence and gender within men's hostile sexism by simultaneously analysing the effect of task-based dependence (i.e., having the instructions for the task vs. having the resources to complete the task) and the gender of the interaction partner (i.e., man vs woman). Chapter Three also builds on Chapter Two by providing robust, *in-vivo* data that tests the links between men's hostile sexism and observed behaviours in a support-relevant context. Finally, given the potential overlap between hostile sexism and masculinity norms in predicting support seeking, Chapter Three also tests the extent to which each is uniquely related to men's resistance to support in a task. We expected hostile sexism and masculinity norms would be distinct predictors of men's behaviour in the task because, despite their content, hostile sexism focuses on intergroup concerns (i.e., men's perceived competition with women in society) and masculinity norms encompass intragroup concerns (i.e., men's perceived relative standing to other men in society).

Chapter Four: A Dyadic Perspective on Men's Hostile Sexism and Partner Support

The final empirical chapter of this thesis tests the links between men's hostile sexism and experiences of support in a context of high relationship dependence—being supported by their romantic relationship partner as they pursue a personally-important goal. For the most part, the previous chapters of this thesis examine men's hostile sexism in non-romantic support contexts to attempt to disentangle the extent to which support outcomes are linked with concerns about gender, concerns about non-romantic relationship dependence, and/or

concerns about situational dependence. However, there is no context in which men are more relationally dependent on women than in heterosexual romantic relationships (Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2020). Therefore, it is within this context where the effects of men's endorsement of hostile sexism should be most obvious. In this way, heterosexual intimate relationships provide the ideal context to examine the dyadic links between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and the support they receive from others.

Chapter Four tests whether men's suppression of their emotional expressions is a potential reason for why men who endorse hostile sexism feel less supported. A large literature is dedicated to understanding when people seek support, including the characteristics that influence people's decisions to approach others when distressed or to withdraw from others (e.g., Murray et al., 2006). Generally, seeking support directly by explicitly asking for help is associated with better quality support provision because the request is less ambiguous (Don et al., 2013). By contrast, *expressive suppression* in which people seek to downplay or hide their emotions and support needs, such as hiding sadness or withdrawing from partners, predicts a lack of interpersonal connection and support (e.g., Lebowitz & Dovidio, 2015; Srivastava et al., 2009; Tickle-Degnan & Rosenthal, 1990) and undermines relationship quality for both partners (e.g., Sasaki et al., 2021). Thus, in Chapter Four, I extend the investigations of Chapter Two and Chapter Three by testing a potential process-based mechanism for why men who endorse hostile sexism have more negative support experiences.

Chapter Four uses dyadic, longitudinal data from 117 romantic couples to investigate whether men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with less received support (both enacted and perceived) and whether this is in part explained by a tendency to suppress their emotions. Chapter Four does *not* seek to untangle dependence and gender, instead, Chapter Four utilises a context in which men who endorse hostile sexism should be most concerned

about relationship dependence on women—heterosexual romantic relationships—and thus their support needs should be most unmet. Nonetheless, Chapter Four contributes to the thesis aims by returning to test the prediction that resistance to support specifically occurs for *men* who endorse hostile sexism when they are *relationally* dependent on *women*. Chapter Four builds on Chapters Two and Three by examining the real-life consequences of men's endorsement of hostile sexism and by testing the theoretical expectation that these consequences are prompted by a desire to resist expressions of emotionality.

Summary of Thesis Aims

Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and associated research suggests that men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with fears that their relational dependence on women will be exploited (e.g., see Overall & Hammond, 2020 for a review). However, most of this research has used heterosexual romantic couples (e.g., Cross et al., 2017, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013, 2020), which conflates men's interdependence within a relationship with their relationships with women. Thus, it is unclear whether the negative behaviours and judgments associated with men's endorsement of hostile sexism are due to concerns about depending on *women* or concerns about depending on others in general. This thesis makes novel contributions to the literature by utilising contexts of social support to attempt to disentangle dependence and gender concerns within men's hostile sexism. As shown in Table 1.1., each chapter investigates the links between men's hostile sexism and support outcomes across different contexts of relationship dependence, situational dependence, and gender of interaction partners. Across two studies, Chapter Two lays the foundation for the associations between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and poorer perceptions of romantic partner support, and then assesses these links in non-romantic relationships where relationship dependence and support provider gender are manipulated. Chapter Three examines the actual behaviours men who endorse hostile sexism use to seek or

resist support from an unknown person (either a man or a woman) to complete a task. Chapter Three therefore focuses more on the effects of situational dependence (rather than relationship dependence) and provides an additional test of the effect of interaction partner gender. Finally, Chapter Four returns to heterosexual romantic relationships to test whether the costs of support are specific to contexts where *men* who endorse hostile sexism are relationally dependent on *women*. This chapter utilises dyadic modelling to explore whether expressive suppression can explain why men who endorse hostile sexism receive less support from their romantic partner. Thus, this thesis expands our understanding of the contexts in which men's endorsement of hostile sexism is costly for men.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LINK BETWEEN MEN'S HOSTILE SEXISM AND

SUPPORT SEEKING

Hostile sexism encompasses derogatory beliefs about women as manipulative and attempting to use their sexuality to deliberately undermine men's societal power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Understandably, men's endorsement of hostile sexism has serious costs for women and romantic relationships. For example, men's hostile sexism is associated with attitudes that limit women's career success (e.g., Gervais & Hillard, 2011; Ratliff et al., 2019; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), undermine women's personal safety (e.g., Begany & Milburn, 2002; Lynch & Renzetti, 2020; Renzetti et al., 2018), and disrupt important relationship processes, such as being open to their partner's perspective during conflict discussions (Overall et al., 2011). Traditional approaches to sexism research attribute these negative outcomes of men's hostile sexism to a desire to maintain men's societal dominance and have linked hostile sexism to other status and power-related ideologies, like social dominance orientation (SDO)—a worldview that expresses a preference for hierarchical social structures (Sibley et al., 2007).

However, recent research offers a different explanation; men's endorsement of hostile sexism and the associated consequences are driven by concerns about depending on women for relational needs (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Evidence for this interdependence perspective is compelling. For example, while men who endorse hostile sexism are more aggressive toward female romantic partners, this is only the case when they sense a relationship-based threat, such as perceiving their partners as low in relationship commitment (Cross et al., 2017) or themselves as low in relationship power (Cross et al., 2019). Importantly, across these studies, there was no evidence that the aggressive behavior displayed by men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism was related to a desire to dominate their romantic partner (Cross et al., 2017, 2019). Thus, it appears heterosexual romantic relationships highlight the

concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have about depending on women, which results in retaliatory behaviours that are costly for women and romantic relationships.

But are hostile sexist concerns about depending on women *also* costly for the men? Prior research has focused on the consequences of men's endorsement of hostile sexism for women and has generally overlooked the consequences for men—possibly due to a tendency to conceptualise men's endorsement of hostile sexism as a desire for dominance. However, if men who endorse hostile sexism feel particularly uncomfortable about their relational dependence on women being exploited, then contexts that emphasise dependence, such as social support, should prompt behaviours that are costly for men who endorse hostile sexism. In this chapter, I present two studies that establish links between men's hostile sexism and poor social support outcomes and lay the foundation for the future chapters in this thesis. Moreover, I provide evidence that feelings of vulnerability and potential threat link men's endorsement of hostile sexism with poorer support outcomes. This predicted model offers further support for the idea that the negative outcomes associated with men's hostile sexism are—at least in part—driven by concerns about the vulnerability and exploitation risks of relationship dependence.

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Abstract

Hostile sexism encompasses beliefs about the risks of depending on women, so men's endorsement of hostile sexism should interrupt access to the social support they need. Across two studies, heterosexual men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism expressed lower satisfaction with support received from romantic partners (Study 1; N = 293) and lower desire to receive support from close others in stressful scenarios (Study 2; N = 396). Moderated mediation analyses identified more (vs. less) interdependent relationships as a key context of support resistance and two potential mechanisms: Men who endorsed hostile sexism perceived support as potentially threatening and felt more vulnerable when seeking support, partially explaining their support resistance. Surprisingly, results for women's hostile sexism showed similar patterns of resistance to support. Our findings illustrate that endorsing hostile sexism has costs for men themselves, but also suggest the effects of hostile sexism are less gender-specific than previously theorised.

Men Who Endorse Hostile Sexism Feel Vulnerable and Exploited When Seeking

Support in Close Relationships

Hostile attitudes that characterise women as pursuing "control over men" by keeping men "on a tight leash" are still common even in relatively egalitarian societies (Brandt, 2011; Glick, et al., 2000, 2004). Men's endorsement of *hostile sexism* is theorised to protect men's privileged social position at the expense of women and intimate relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996). For example, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are more physically and sexually violent toward women (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Lynch & Renzetti, 2017), including more negative toward long-term relationship partners (e.g., Cross et al., 2017; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall et al., 2011). Collectively, these findings illustrate the outward-facing harm of men's hostile sexism but the picture is incomplete. The costs of men's hostile sexism for *men* remain largely unexplored. According to ambivalent sexism theory, men who endorse hostile sexism resist dependence in romantic relationships, such as by being wary of relying on women for support (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Seeking support from romantic partners and non-romantic close others is critical for maintaining a healthy and satisfying life (e.g., Diener & Seligman, 2002). Thus, men's endorsement of hostile sexism should be costly for men themselves because the felt dangers associated with being dependent on women undermines their support seeking experiences, both in romantic *and* non-romantic relationships. In the current studies, we test whether hostile sexism impedes men's support seeking and acceptance of support, including the extent to which support resistance occurs in conditions of high vs. low dependence, and are accounted for by felt threat and vulnerability.

The Harm of Hostile Sexism for Women and for Intimate Relationships

Men's endorsement of hostile sexism is consistently linked with harm to women's career success and personal safety. Hostile sexism encompasses core beliefs that men and

women compete for power and that women do so using emotionally and sexually manipulative strategies (Glick & Fiske, 1996). By portraying women as calculating and devious, men who endorse hostile sexism can 'justify' chastising women they believe are a threat (Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). Indeed, people who endorse hostile sexism tend to view non-traditional women as selfish and greedy (Glick et al., 1997) and favour male leaders over equally (or more) qualified female leaders (Gervais & Hillard, 2011; Ratliff et al., 2019; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). Additionally, views of women as manipulators or 'sexual teases' are espoused to justify violence toward women. For example, men who endorse hostile sexism are more likely to suggest female victims of sexual abuse actually wanted sex and "led on" the perpetrator (Abrams et al., 2003).

For all the harms detailed for women, the literature on men's hostile sexism has only shown one cost for men: Men's endorsement of hostile sexism impedes fundamental processes involved in the fulfillment of relational needs and goals. Men who endorse hostile sexism expect women to exploit men's dependence on love, sexual intimacy, and support (Glick & Fiske, 1996). These fears are antithetical to maintaining relationship satisfaction, including the need to manage dependence when communicating to attain desired goals or when giving and receiving support (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Rusbult et al., 2004). As a result, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism tend to mistrust their partner's love and affection. For instance, men who endorse hostile sexism percieve their partners as less committed (Cross et al., 2019) and less loving and caring (Hammond & Overall, 2020) than is justified by their partner's reports. In turn, these men tend to report lower relationship satisfaction (Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Leaper et al., 2020), greater fear of intimacy (Fisher & Hammond, 2019; Yakushko, 2005), and more serious relationship problems (Cross & Overall, 2019; Leaper et al., 2020). In the current research we consider another harm of fearing dependence—impeding men from seeking and accepting support. As

we discuss next, seeking support from friends and romantic partners is an essential component of wellbeing that should be relatively more difficult for men who endorse hostile sexism.

Men's Hostile Sexism and Resistance to Support

People have a fundamental need to feel supported (Feeney & Collins, 2015; Murray & Holmes, 2009). Receiving social support is one of the strongest predictors of mortality (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010) and happiness (Taylor, 2011), and has powerful effects on reducing psychological distress following both traumatic events (Simeon et al., 2005) and relatively less serious events, such as failing an exam (Kim et al., 2006). Even short interactions with peripheral social contacts, such as a barista, can upregulate people's positive affect by providing a sense of belonging (Sandstrom & Dunn, 2013; 2014). However, while seeking support facilitates closeness and negates distress, it can be accompanied by feelings of vulnerability and worries about rejection (Cavallo et al., 2014). For example, a person's request for support may be met with exploition or rebuffed entirely leaving the person feeling hurt. People typically negotiate the costs of this *situational* dependence by preferring to seek support from a person on whom they are *relationally* dependent, such as a close friend or a romantic partner. Thus, the social rewards of distress reduction and relationship-promotion outweigh the potential risks of rejection (Nadler, 1997).

People who are particularly concerned about the threat or vulnerability associated with dependence, such as those orientated towards independence and autonomy, tend to protect themselves by resisting support needs (Cavallo et al., 2014; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Rusbult et al., 2004). As we described above, men's hostile sexism encompasses similar feelings when depending on women, including (1) feeling *threatened* by imagined manipulation by women (i.e., "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash"; Glick & Fiske, 1996), and (2) feeling *vulnerable* and ashamed of their

dependence on women (i.e., "Listening to his wife shames a man"; Chen et al., 2009).

Accordingly, for men who endorse hostile sexism, seeking support from women, and

therefore being dependent on women, is perceived as potentially dangerous and humiliating,

which should prompt support resistance. If so, support resistance should be particularly

obvious when men feel *greater* dependence on women. Indeed, relational dependency is

shown to magnify other harmful outcomes of hostile sexism: Men's endorsement of hostile

sexism is linked with heightened negativity when they perceive their partner is relatively low

(vs. high) in relationship commitment (Cross et al., 2017) and when feeling powerless (vs.

powerful) in their relationship (Cross et al., 2019). Therefore, men who endorse hostile

sexism should feel relatively more threatened and vulnerable when seeking support from

someone they are more dependent on (e.g., a long-term friendship vs. an acquaintance).

Current Research

Across two studies, we investigated a personal cost of endorsing hostile sexism by

testing whether it was linked with support resistance. In Study 1, we asked heterosexual

people to recall a time they sought support from their romantic partner, including how they

felt in that support interaction and how they evaluated the support received. We examined

whether men's endorsement of hostile sexism was linked with more negative evaluations of

support they received from their romantic partner (Study 1). Because romantic relationships

inherently involve high levels of interdependence, we next tested whether these same links

were present *outside* romantic relationships. We utilised a vignette-based experiment to test

links between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and desires to seek support from non-

romantic close others (Study 2).

Our secondary aim was to examine potential mechanisms and relational contexts

involved in support resistance. Our proposed model is displayed in Figure 2.1. We expected

two perceptions inherent to hostile sexism—concern about the threat of other people

Figure 2.1

Hypothesised model showing the link between hostile sexism and resistance to support
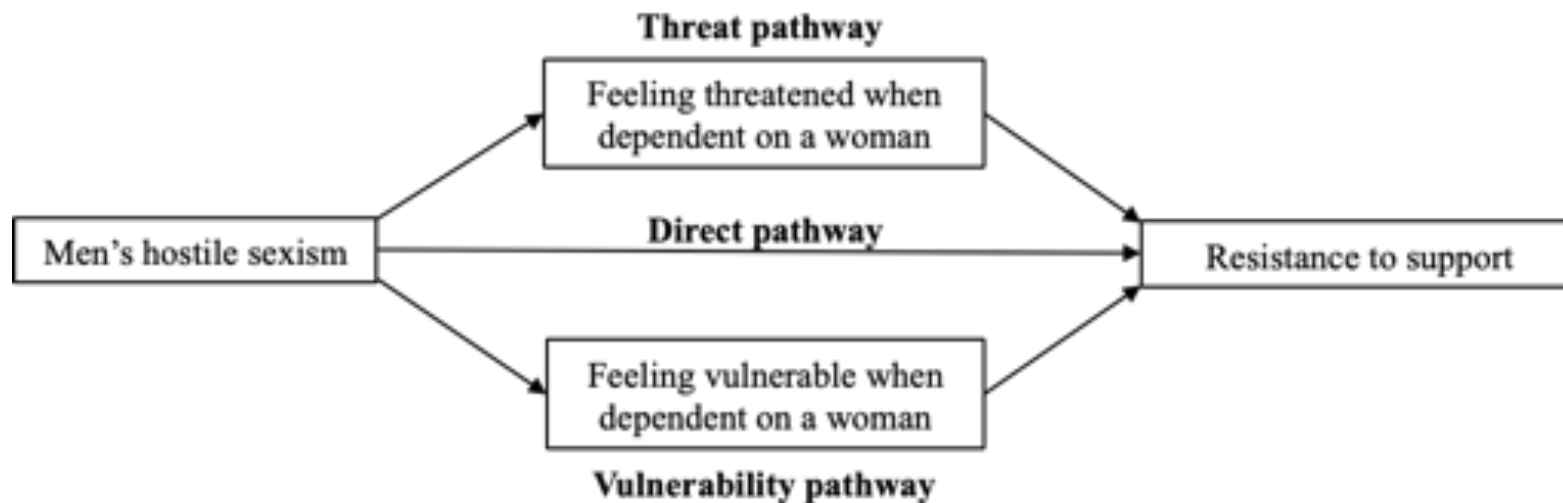
Note. In Study 1, due to the use of heterosexual romantic couples, dependence (i.e., high dependence) and support provider gender (i.e., seeking support from a woman) is inherent within the sample. In Study 2, dependence (i.e., high vs low) and support provider gender (i.e., seeking support from a man vs a woman) is manipulated.

exploiting one's need for support and feeling vulnerable and weak when needing support (Glick & Fiske 1996)—would account for greater resistance to support. In both Study 1 and Study 2 we tested whether feelings of threat and feelings of vulnerability mediated the link between endorsement of hostile sexism and support resistance. Additionally, the vignette-based design of Study 2 allowed for manipulation of the level of relational dependence between the participant and hypothetical support providers (e.g., a close friend vs. an acquaintance). Thus, in Study 2 we examined whether endorsement of hostile sexism was linked with heightened feelings of threat and vulnerability in relationships that were relatively more (vs. less) interdependent.

Our final aim was to examine the extent to which the effects of hostile sexism were specific to the gender of the support seeker and support provider. In Study 1 and Study 2 we gathered samples of men and women to test the links between hostile sexism and support resistance. We expected support resistance should occur most strongly for *men* seeking support *from women* because hostile sexism expresses specific concerns about *men's* vulnerability and the threat of *women* exploiting men (Chen et al., 2009; Glick & Fiske, 1996). By contrast, women who endorse hostile sexism have stronger beliefs about men's interpersonal dominance and women's interpersonal submission (e.g., Chen et al., 2009; Glick & Fiske, 1996) so we did not expect women's endorsement of hostile sexism to be linked with support resistance via perceptions of threat and vulnerability. In Study 2 we utilised advantages of the vignette design to present participants with different scenarios that manipulated the gender of the support provider, to see the extent to which men's endorsement of hostile sexism was linked with resistance to support from *women* vs. resistance to support in general.

STUDY 1

Study 1 provided an initial test of the predicted associations shown in Figure 2.1 by asking people to recall experiences of seeking support from a romantic partner. Specifically, we predicted heterosexual men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were relatively less satisfied with the support they received (Hypothesis 1). Additionally, we examined whether lower satisfaction with support was explained by feelings of threat (Hypothesis 2a) and vulnerability (Hypothesis 2b). Finally, as in prior research on hostile sexism (e.g., Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2020), we also tested the alternative explanation that people's attachment orientation (i.e., scores on anxious attachment and avoidant attachment) accounted for the links between hostile sexism and support resistance, given similar patterns of support resistance have been observed for people higher in attachment avoidance (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Simpson et al., 1992).

Method

Participants

Our a priori power analyses suggested a sample size of 170 was sufficient based on an estimated effect size of $r = .20$ based on prior research (e.g., Hammond & Overall, 2020), but we wanted to ensure enough power to potentially detect smaller indirect effects so we targeted a sample size of 300 participants via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). We oversampled to account for sample attrition and collected 395 participants. Of these participants, 47 (8.7%) were excluded for straight-line responding and 55 were excluded because our measures are only valid for heterosexual cisgender populations ($n = 52$ had a same-sex partner; $n = 3$ described their gender as non-binary). The final sample comprised 152 men and 173 women (total $N = 293$). Men were aged between 18 and 72 ($M = 35.38$, $SD = 9.69$ years), and women were aged between 20 and 68 ($M = 37.52$, $SD = 10.73$ years). Of this sample, 65.2% identified their ethnicity as White/Caucasian, 10.6% as Black/African American, 10.6% as Asian, 7.2% as Latinx/Hispanic, 3.4% as Mixed Race, and 1.4% as

Other. Participants were directed to a survey hosted on Qualtrics to complete the study and were compensated US$1.00. The study received ethical approval from the Victoria University of Wellington Ethics Committee

Materials and Procedure

Ambivalent sexism. Sexist attitudes toward women were measured using a 12-item, short-form version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Six items indexed hostile sexism (e.g., "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her she usually tries to put him on a tight leash"; -3 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*; α = .80). Six items assessed benevolent sexism (e.g., "Women should be cherished and protected by men"; α = .81). The short-form scales exhibit strong correlations (rs > .90) with the full scale (Sibley & Perry, 2010).

Attachment insecurity. To account for more generalised distrust of others that might be associated with sexist attitudes (Fisher & Hammond, 2019; Hart et al., 2012) and lower support seeking (Collins & Feeney, 2004; Simpson et al., 1992), we also assessed attachment insecurity using the 17-item Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ; Simpson et al., 1996). Eight items measured attachment avoidance (e.g., "I'm not very comfortable having to depend on romantic partners"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; α = .90) and nine items measured attachment anxiety (e.g., "I often worry that my romantic partners don't really love me"; α = .85).

Feelings of threat and vulnerability in support discussion. Participants were asked to recall in detail a time they sought support from their romantic partner for a negative event only they experienced (e.g., work or financial problems, an argument with a friend or family member, or struggling with a hobby) following directions adapted from Gable et al. (2006).

Following the descriptions, participants reported their feelings about the event. We assessed participants' subjective feelings of threat and vulnerability when seeking support

using single-item responses. Single-item measures were chosen to maximise face validity and are appropriate for assessing concrete constructs, such as feelings about a specific event (see Cheung & Lucas, 2014; Elo et al., 2003). The vulnerability item asked, "How vulnerable did you feel seeking support from your partner in that interaction?" (1 = *not at all vulnerable*, 7 = *very vulnerable*) and the threat item asked, "How concerned were you that your partner would use this information against you?" (1 = *not at all concerned*, 7 = *very concerned*).

Satisfaction with support discussion. Finally, participants' overall satisfaction with their partner's response was measured using the average of two items: "How satisfied were you with your partner's response during that interaction?" (1 = *extremely satisfied*, 7 = *extremely unsatisfied* – reverse coded) and "Overall, how happy were you that you sought support from your partner in that interaction?" (1 = *not happy at all*, 7 = *extremely happy*). These two items were strongly correlated (*r* = .53).

Results

Table 2.1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations across the primary measures for Study 1 for men (below the diagonal) and women (above the diagonal). As expected, men's (but not women's) endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with lower satisfaction with support from their partner. Additionally, both men's and women's hostile sexism was linked with feeling more threatened when seeking support, but was unrelated to vulnerability. However, analyses using structural equation modelling were required to appropriately test our predictions. These analyses were conducted using MPlus (Version 8.4; Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017) with maximum likelihood estimation (10,000 bootstrap samples).

Hostile Sexism and Support Satisfaction

Table 2.1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Primary Measures (Study 1)

Note. Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism were assessed on scales with a midpoint of 0 (-3 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*); all

	Men	Women	Gender diff.					
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*t*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Satisfaction with support	5.46 (1.51)	5.44 (1.79)	0.08	—	-.27**	-.36**	-.10	-.05
2. Vulnerability	3.89 (1.88)	3.86 (2.08)	0.11	-.22*	—	.36**	.01	-.04
3. Threat	2.68 (1.97)	2.16 (1.76)	2.40*	-.33**	.32**	—	.24**	.22**
4. Hostile Sexism	-0.36 (1.19)	-1.01 (1.27)	4.71**	-.21*	.08	.44**	—	.39**
5. Benevolent Sexism	0.43 (1.24)	-0.14 (1.26)	4.11**	-.00	.16	.21*	.24**	—

other measures had a midpoint of 4 (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). Correlations above the diagonal are for women (*N* = 173); correlations below

the diagonal are for men (*N* = 152). **p < .05. **p < .01.*

We first tested whether men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were less satisfied with the support they received from their partner. As is typical, we included benevolent sexism as a covariate to adjust for the positive association between sexist ideologies (see Table 2.1). We also estimated the main and interaction effects of participant gender to test whether the parameters signficantly differed across men and women (-1 = *women*, 1 = *men*). As predicted, hostile sexism was associated with lower support satisfaction (B = -.21, 95% CI [-.39, -.03], t = -2.30, p = .022); however, there was no evidence this link differed by participant gender (B = -.07, 95% CI [-.25, .11], t = -0.76, p = .448). Thus, both men and women who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were less satisfied with the support they received from their partner. No other effects were significant.

Hostile Sexism, Feelings of Threat and Vulnerability, and Support Satisfaction

Second, we tested whether the link between men's hostile sexism and lower support satisfaction could be explained via feelings of threat and vulnerability (Hypothesis 2a and 2b respectively). We conducted the structural equation model displayed in Figure 2.2, including benevolent sexism as a covariate. Our model proposed hostile sexism should predict heightened feelings of threat and vulnerability, which in turn should predict lower satisfaction with support. However, gender should moderate the link between hostile sexism and feelings of threat and vulnerability.

To test our model, we first regressed feelings of threat and feelings of vulnerability on hostile sexism, and participant gender, and the Hostile Sexism x Participant Gender interaction term. Results are shown in Table 2.2 and model parameters are shown in Figure 2.2. Results showed stronger endorsement of hostile sexism predicted feeling more threatened when seeking support and as predicted this association was moderated by gender (see Table 2.2 Path a[1]). Analysis of simple slopes indicated the link between hostile sexism and feeling threatened when seeking support was stronger for men (slope = .67, 95% CI [.44,

.90]*, t* = 5.77, *p* < .001) than for women (slope = .25, 95% CI [.01, .49]*, t* = 2.01, *p* = .045). Unexpectedly, there was no evidence hostile sexism predicted feelings of vulnerability (see Table 2.2 Path a^2).

Next, we regressed support satisfaction on feelings of threat and vulnerability. Results showed both threat and vulnerability predicted lower support satisfaction (see Table 2.2 Paths b^1 and b^2 respectively). Thus, people who felt at risk from being exploited or being weak were relatively less satisfied with the support they received. Importantly, when including threat and vulnerability in the model, hostile sexism no longer predicted support satisfaction, indicating potential mediation. Accordingly, we estimated indirect effects to test whether feelings of threat mediated the link between hostile sexism and lower support satisfaction. As the link between hostile sexism and feelings of threat was moderated by gender, we estimated indirect effects for men and women separately. As displayed in Table 2.5, only the indirect effect for men was significant, supporting Hypothesis 2a: Men's, but not women's, endorsement of hostile sexism predicted feeling more threatened when seeking support, and these feelings of threat in turn predicted lower satisfaction with support.

Attachment Insecurity as an Alternative Explanation

Finally, we conducted additional models statistically adjusting for attachment insecurities given their association with hostile sexism (Fisher & Hammond, 2019; Hart et al., 2012; Yakushko, 2005) and negative evaluations of support (Collins & Feeney, 2004; Simpson et al., 1992). When attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were included in the model, hostile sexism no longer directly predicted support satisfaction (*B* = -.03, 95% CI [-.15, .10], *t* = -037, *p* =.710). Instead, lower support satisfaction was predicted by both higher attachment anxiety (*B* = -.30, 95% CI [-.50, -.10], *t* = -2.91, *p* =.004) and higher attachment avoidance (*B* = -.39, 95% CI [-.60, -.17], *t* = -3.56, *p* < .001). These results are unsurprising given seeking support from romantic partners is likely to activate attachment-

Figure 2.2

Structural equation model showing the effects of hostile sexism on support satisfaction as simultaneously mediated by feelings of threat (top pathway) and feelings of vulnerability (bottom pathway).
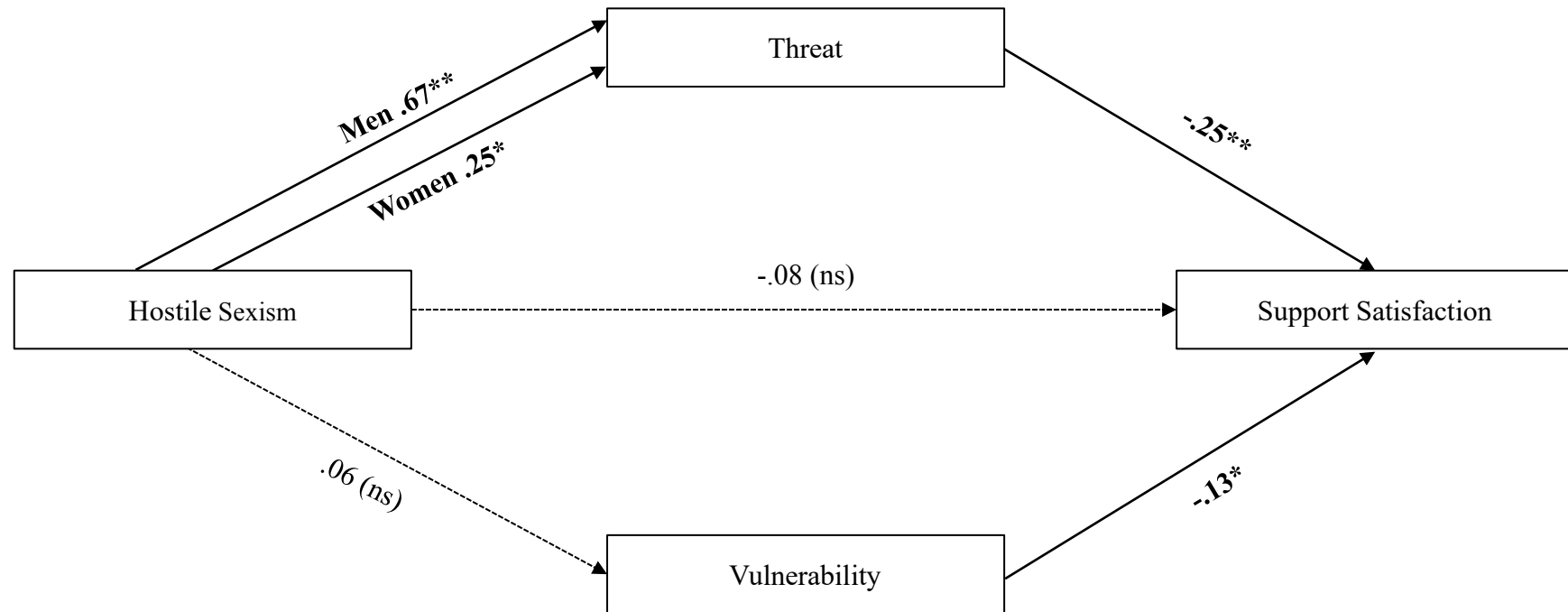
Note. The effect of hostile sexism on threat was moderated by participant gender (top arrow shows effect for men, bottom arrow shows effect for women). All other effects were not moderated by participant gender and therefore show the effect across both men and women. Significant effects are presented in bold. *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 2.2

The Effects of Hostile Sexism, Feelings of Threat and Feelings of Vulnerability, and Satisfaction with Support (Study 1)

	Path c'				*Path a*[1]				*Path a*[2]			
	Support satisfaction				Feelings of threat				Feelings of vulnerability			
		95% CI				95% CI				95% CI		
	B	Low	High	*t*	*B*	Low	High	*t*	*B*	Low	High	*t*
Gender	.08	-.11	.26	0.81	.06	-.14	.26	.55	-	-.28	.21	-.28
Hostile sexism	-.08	-.27	.11	-0.87	**.46**	**.29**	**.63**	**5.42****	.06	-.14	.26	.60
Benevolent sexism	.08	-.08	.24	0.99	.19	.03	.36	2.24*	.07	-.14	.28	.62
Hostile sexism x Gender	-.01	-.19	.16	-0.16	**.21**	**.05**	**.38**	**2.51***	.01	-.19	.21	.09
Benevolent sexism x Gender	.05	-.12	.22	0.61	-.01	-.17	.17	-.02	.16	-.05	.37	1.53
Feelings of threat (*Path b*[1])	**-.25**	**-.39**	**-.12**	**-3.61****	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Feelings of vulnerability (*Path b*[2])	**-.13**	**-.24**	**-.02**	**-2.33***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. CI = confidence interval. Path c' tests the direct effects of sexist attitudes and the interaction effects of sexist attitudes and participant

gender on support satisfaction accounting for the feelings of threat and vulnerability. Predicted effects are shown in bold.

*p < .05, ** *p* < .01.

related insecurities more strongly than gender-related insecurities, particularly as beliefs about gender were not primed. However, the link between hostile sexism and threat was still significant when controlling for attachment insecurities ($B = .23$, 95% CI [.07, .40], $t = 2.77$, $p = .006$), suggesting feared exploitation by a romantic partner were specific to hostile sexism rather than more general attachment-based insecurities.

Discussion

As predicted, heterosexual men's endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with lower satisfaction with support from their romantic partner. Additionally, mediation analyses revealed the link between men's hostile sexism and lower support satisfaction was partially explained by feelings of potential threat, but not by feelings of vulnerability. Analyses examining women's hostile sexism revealed an unexpected result: Heterosexual women who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were also less satisfied with support, although this link was not explained by concerns about either threat or vulnerability. Additional analyses ruled out people's attachment orientations as an alternative explanation for our findings. The patterns suggest men's (and women's) endorsement of hostile sexism is linked with support resistance in romantic contexts.

STUDY 2

In Study 2 we aimed to (a) conceptually replicate Study 1 by testing links between men's hostile sexism and lower desire for support (Hypothesis 1), mediated by feelings of threat and feelings of vulnerability (Hypotheses 2a and 2b), and (b) extend Study 1 by examining the conditions that should heighten the predicted associations: a greater (vs. lower) level of interdependence, and the support provider being a woman (vs. a man). We employed a vignette-based design describing four different scenarios in which participants would imagine needing support. In each scenario we manipulated both the level of dependence of the close relationship (e.g., a best friend vs. an acquaintance) and the gender of support

provider (woman vs. man). In line with the inherently high-dependence relationships examined in Study 1, we predicted men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism would report relatively *less* desire to seek support when the relationship was more interdependent (i.e., from a close other rather than acquaintance; Hypothesis 3) due to heightened feelings of threat and feelings of vulnerability when experiencing heightened dependence (Hypotheses 3a and 3b).

For the predictions involving participant gender and support provider gender, we had no strong predictions following Study 1. Prior studies examining hostile sexism and interpersonal negativity have used heterosexual samples (e.g., Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2020) and therefore conflated relationship interdependence (i.e., men's investment in a close relationship) with gender (i.e., men being in relationships with women). However, in line with the gendered content of hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), we expected support resistance to be strongest when *men* imagined seeking support from *women* (vs. men; Hypothesis 4). Finally, as in Study 1, we tested participants' attachment insecurities as an alternative explanation for people's patterns of support resistance.

Method

Participants

We aimed to collect data from 400 participants via MTurk, and again oversampled to account for sample attrition. Our exclusion criteria were the same as Study 1: Of our initial sample of 430 participants, 33 (7.2%) were excluded for straight-line responding and one person was excluded for identifying as non-binary. The final sample comprised 196 men and 200 women (total $N = 396$). Men were aged between 19–74 ($M = 36.36$, $SD = 10.71$ years), and women were aged between 19–69 ($M = 39.73$, $SD = 12.89$ years). 66% of the sample were in relationships (47% married, 6.9% living together, 8.2% serious relationship, 4% casually dating) while 34% of the sample were single. Of the final sample, 69.7% identified

as White/Caucasian, 8.3% Asian, 8.1% as Black/African American, 5.6% as Latinx/Hispanic, 4.5% as Mixed Race, and 3.5% as Other. Participants were directed to a survey hosted on the online site Qualtrics and were compensated US$1.00 for completing the study. The study received ethical approval from the Victoria University of Wellington Ethics Committee.

Materials and Procedure

Participants completed the study entirely online. They gave informed consent, provided demographic information, and then answered the same individual-difference and relationship-related measures described in Study 1. Finally, participants read and responded to the support seeking vignettes.

Ambivalent sexism. Participants completed the same 12-item version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory described in Study 1 (Glick & Fiske, 1996). The scales for hostile sexism ($\alpha = .82$) and benevolent sexism ($\alpha = .82$) showed good reliability.

Attachment insecurity. Participants completed the same 17-item Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ; Simpson et al., 1996). People who indicated they were partnered (i.e., were dating, living together, or married) were answered while thinking about their current partner (attachment anxiety $\alpha = .86$, attachment avoidance $\alpha = .89$), while single people answered thinking about romantic partners in general (attachment anxiety $\alpha = .84$, attachment avoidance $\alpha = .91$).

Support seeking vignettes. Participants were randomly presented with four hypothetical support seeking vignettes (see supplemental materials). Each vignette described a stressful situation (i.e., being passed over for promotion; having been broken up with; being unable to complete an important task on time; having failed a test) adapted from prior research on support seeking (Barbee et al., 1990). Each vignette also described a hypothetical non-romantic close other as a potential support provider (i.e., a colleague, a roommate, a friend, a classmate). We manipulated two aspects of the support provider across the vignettes.

Dependency was manipulated by describing the support provider as either a close, long-term, and committed relationship (e.g., closest friend since high school) or as a more distant or recent relationship (e.g., friend of a friend; see Rusbult et al., 1998). *Gender* of the close other was manipulated using gendered names chosen for a North American population (i.e., Jessica and Mark), and gendered pronouns. Each participant saw every vignette and every condition (i.e., each dependence × gender combination) once. The order of the vignettes and the manipulations, and the pairings of each vignette with each support provider, were counterbalanced.

Feelings of threat and vulnerability when seeking support. After reading each vignette, participants completed the same single-item measures described in Study 1 (see Cheung, 2014; Elo et al., 2004), altered to include the name of the hypothetical support provider so items referred to the specific event. Threat was assessed by the question "How concerned would you be that [name] would use this information against you?" and vulnerability was assessed by the question "How vulnerable would you feel seeking support from [name]?" (1 = *not at all threatened/vulnerable*, 7 = *extremely threatened/vulnerable*).

Support seeking intention. After each vignette, participants were also asked about their support seeking intention. This was measured using a single-item asking, "How likely would you be to seek support from [name] for your concerns?" (1 = *extremely unlikely*, 7 = *extremely likely*).

Results

Table 2.3 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations across the primary measures for Study 2 for men (below the diagonal) and women (above the diagonal). As in Study 1, men's and women's hostile sexism was associated with feeling more threatened when seeking support, but was not linked to feelings of vulnerability. Unexpectedly, when collapsed across higher and lower dependence relationships, men's hostile sexism was not

directly linked with support seeking intention. However, we used structural equation modelling to model our predicted effects. To account for the inherent statistical dependence of each person responding to multiple vignettes, we analyzed our results using a multi-level random intercepts model, nesting vignettes within people. All analyses were conducted using MPlus (Version 8.4; Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017).

Hostile Sexism and Support Seeking Intention

We first examined the link between men's hostile sexism and resistance to support from more dependent close others. As in Study 1, we included benevolent sexism as a covariate in all analyses. We also estimated the main and interaction effects of participant gender to test whether the parameters signficantly differed across men and women (-1 = *women*, 1 = *men*).

Results revealed a main effect of dependence on support seeking intention; people were more likely to seek support if the relationship was described as more (vs. less) dependent (B = 1.77, 95% CI [1.62, 1.89], t = 23.40, p < .001). As expected, there was a significant interaction between hostile sexism and dependence on support seeking intention (B = -.26, 95% CI -.37, -.15), t = -4.63, p < .001). In support of Hypothesis 3, further examination of this effect revealed, people who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism reported relatively lower intentions to seek support from someone they were more dependent on (slope = -.17, 95% CI [-.28, -.07], t = -3.30, p = .001) but no association emerged for low-dependence relationships (slope = .08, 95% CI [-.00, .17], t = 1.93, p = .054). There was no evidence this link differed by participant gender (B = -.06, 95% CI [-.17, .05], t = -1.15, p = .252). Thus, evidence suggested that men and women who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism resisted seeking support from more dependent relationships.

When including gender of the support provider as an additional predictor and moderator of the model parameters, results revealed a significant main effect of support provider gender: People expressed greater likelihood of seeking support from women rather

Table 2.3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Primary Measures (Study 2)

	Men M (SD)	Women M (SD)	Gender diff. t	1	2	3	4	5
1. Intention to seek support	4.27 (1.85)	4.39 (1.94)	-1.25	—	-.46**	-.28**	.07	.12**
2. Vulnerability	4.27 (1.85)	4.34 (2.02)	-1.44	-.30**	—	.36**	-.04	-.07
3. Threat	3.09 (1.91)	2.98 (1.95)	1.05	-.13**	.43**	—	.13**	.10**
4. Hostile Sexism	-.57 (1.32)	-.88 (1.36)	4.57**	-.04	.06	.23**	—	.45**
5. Benevolent Sexism	.07 (1.33)	-.22 (1.31)	4.29**	.17**	.07	.08*	.26**	—

Note. Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism were assessed on scales with a midpoint of 0 (-3 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*); all other measures had a midpoint of 4 (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). Correlations above the diagonal are for women (*N* = 195); correlations below the diagonal are for men (*N* = 184). *p < .05. **p < .01.

than men (B = .28, 95% CI [.13, .43], t = 3.54, $p < .001$). There were no interactions between support provider gender and any other predictor (Bs = -.12 to .20; ts = -1.51 to 1.52, ps > .128). Thus, unexpectedly, while men who endorsed hostile sexism were less likely to seek support from higher dependence close others, there was no evidence they desired relatively less support from close women compared to close men.

Hostile Sexism, Feelings of Threat and Vulnerability, and Support Seeking Intention

Next we tested whether the link between men's hostile sexism and lower intentions to seek support from a more dependent close other was (1) mediated by feelings of threat and vulnerability, which were (2) magnified when the relationship was relatively more dependent. We conducted the multilevel moderated mediation model presented in Figure 2.3. As before, we included benevolent sexism as well as the main and interaction effects of participant gender (-1 = *women*, 1 = *men*).

Results are presented in Table 2.4 and model parameters are displayed in Figure 2.3. Examining Path a[1], a significant interaction emerged between hostile sexism and dependence predicting feelings of threat. Simple slopes analysis indicated the link between hostile sexism and feeling more threatened was stronger when seeking support from a more dependent close other (slope = .31, 95% CI [.15, .47], t = 3.78, $p < .001$) compared to a less dependent close other (slope = .16, 95% CI [.03, .30], t = 2.42, p = .016). Unexpectedly, this effect did not significantly differ for men and women. Examining Path a[2], a significant 3-way interaction emerged between hostile sexism, dependence, and participant gender on feelings of vulnerability. Greater endorsement of hostile sexism predicted feeling more vulnerable when seeking support but only for men, and only when dependence was high (slope = .20, 95% CI [.03, .37], t = 2.32, p = .020). No significant effects emerged for men in lower dependence relationships (slope = -.07, 95% CI [-.26, .08], t = -0.80, p = .425) or for women (low dependence slope = -.02, 95% CI [-.21, .14], t = -0.22, p = .830, high dependence slope = -

.02, 95% CI [-.24, .12], t = -0.24, p = .814). These results indicated men (but not women) who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism felt relatively more vulnerable when approaching a close (vs. distant) other for support.

Examining Paths b^1 and b^2 (see Table 2.4), people who imagined feeling more threatened or more vulnerable reported relatively lower intentions of seeking support. When these parameters were included in the model, the direct relationship between hostile sexism and lower support seeking was reduced (see Table 2.4 Path c'), indicating the potential for partial mediation by threat and/or vulnerability.

Finally, we estimated indirect effects to test whether feelings of threat and vulnerability mediated the link between hostile sexism and lower support seeking intentions, differing by whether the relationship with the support provider was high or low in dependence. Results are displayed in Table 2.5. First, men and women who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism felt more threatened when seeking support, which in turn predicted lower intention of seeking support, *heightened* when the relationship with the support provider was more dependent. Second, we estimated four potential indirect effects via feelings of vulnerability (i.e., more vs. less dependent relationships; men vs. women). As seen in Table 2.5, supporting Hypothesis 4b, only the indirect effect for men at high levels of dependence was significant. Thus, men (but not women) who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism felt relatively more vulnerable when seeking support from a more dependent close other, which in turn predicted lower intention to seek support.

Attachment Insecurity as an Alternative Explanation

As in Study 1, we conducted additional models controlling for attachment insecurity. Including attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance as controls did not account for the significant interaction between endorsement of hostile sexism and dependence predicting

Figure 2.3

Structural equation model showing the effects of hostile sexism on support seeking intention as simultaneously mediated by feelings of threat (top pathway) and feelings of vulnerability (bottom pathway).
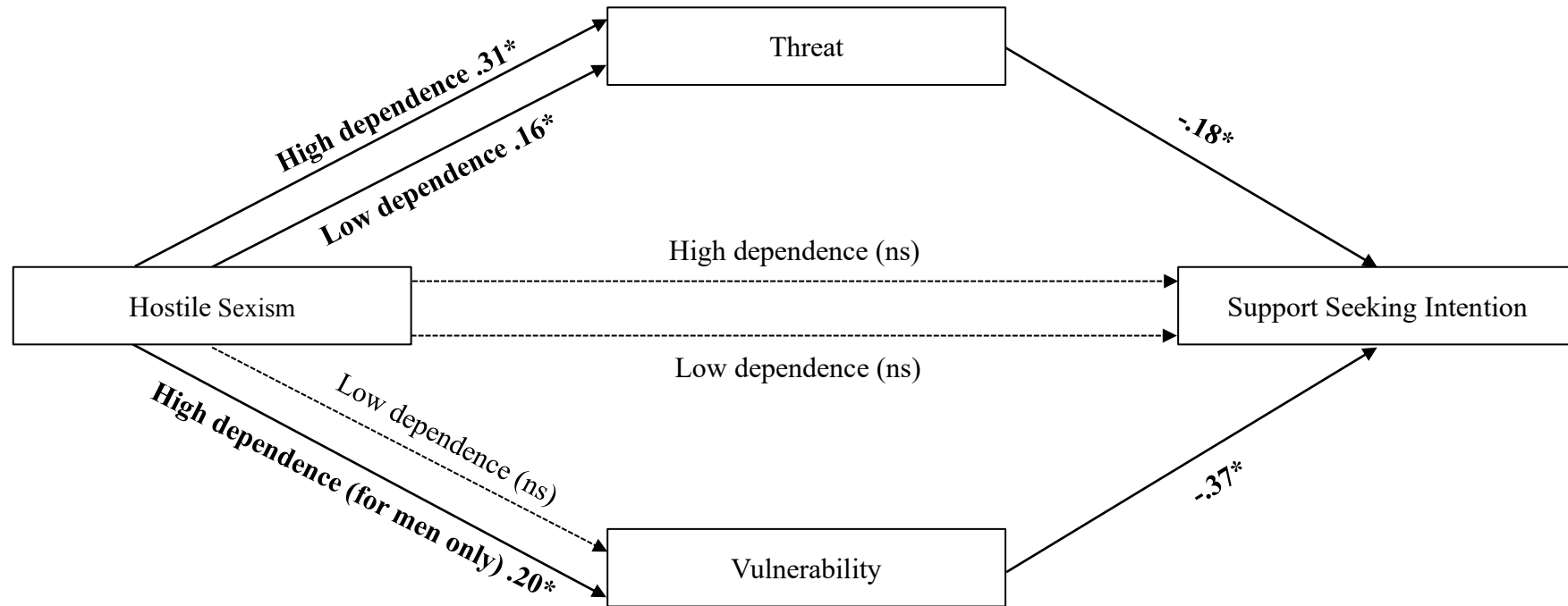
Note. The effects of hostile sexism on threat and vulnerability were moderated by dependence. The effect for hostile sexism on vulnerability in contexts of high dependence was additionally moderated by participant gender so the effect shown is for men only. All other effects were not moderated by participant gender and therefore show the effect across both men and women. Significant effects are presented in bold. *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2.4

The Effects of Hostile Sexism, Dependence, Feelings of Threat and Feelings of Vulnerability on Intention to Seek Support (Study 2)

	Path c'			Path a[1]			Path a[2]		
	Intention to seek support			Feeling threatened			Feeling vulnerable		
	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Gender	-.04	.13	-0.33	.03	.16	.17	.27	.16	1.68
Dependence	1.20	.07	16.58*	-.79	.09	-12.79*	-1.14	.09	-12.79*
Hostile sexism	.08	.05	1.65	.16	.07	2.42*	-.05	.07	-.70
Benevolent sexism	.25	.05	4.82*	.05	.07	.80	-.05	.07	-.77
Hostile sexism x Gender	.10	.10	0.97	-.12	.13	-.94	.05	.14	.39
Benevolent sexism x Gender	.02	.10	0.24	.03	.13	.21	-.24	.14	-1.77
Dependence x Gender	.31	.13	2.32*	-.09	.17	-.51	-.24	.17	-1.44
Hostile sexism x Dependence	**-.18**	**.06**	**-3.27***	**.15**	**.07**	**2.19***	**.14**	**.07**	**2.08***
Benevolent sexism x Dependence	-.04	.06	-0.66	.01	.08	.13	.09	.08	1.20
Hostile sexism x Dependence x Gender	.01	.11	0.06	-.10	.14	-.71	-.27	.14	-2.02*
Benevolent sexism x Dependence x Gender	-.21	.12	-1.85	.06	.16	.37	.13	.15	.90
Threat (*Path b[1]*)	**-.18**	**.02**	**-7.27***	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vulnerability (*Path b[2]*)	**-.37**	**.02**	**-16.31***	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. CI = confidence interval. Path c' tests the direct effects of sexist attitudes and the interaction effects of sexist attitudes and participant

gender on satisfaction with support accounting for the feelings of threat and vulnerability. The direct effects of sexist attitudes and the interaction

effects of sexist attitudes and participant gender on feelings of threat and feelings of vulnerability are shown in Path a[1] and Path a[2] respectively.

Predicted effects are shown in bold. *$p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

support seeking intention (B = -.18, 95% CI [-.15, .10], t = -2.93, p =.003). No evidence emerged for associations between attachment insecurities and support seeking intention (ps > .116), suggesting hostile sexism and attachment insecurity had distinct effects on people's intentions to seek support.

Neither attachment anxiety, nor attachment avoidance predicted feelings of vulnerability (ps > .787) and the three-way interaction between hostile sexism, dependence, and gender on vulnerability remained significant when accounting for attachment insecurity (B = .15, 95% CI [.01, .29], t = 2.07, p =.039). However, the significant indirect effect of men's hostile sexism on support seeking intention via feelings of vulnerability from more dependent close others dropped below significance (B = -.06, 95% CI [-.13, .00]), likely due to reduced statistical power when including so many additional parameters.

General Discussion

Men's endorsement of hostile sexism is personally costly due to their resistance to social support. Across two studies, heterosexual men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were less satisfied with support from their romantic partner (Study 1) and expressed lower intentions to seek support from non-romantic close others (Study 2). The current research is the first to identify a consistent pattern of support resistance by men who endorse hostile sexism and to outline a harm of men's endorsement of hostile sexism in romantic *and* non-romantic relationships. Unexpectedly, women who endorsed hostile sexism also displayed a general resistance to support in similar ways as men. Thus, women's endorsement of hostile sexism also appears to hinder access to support.

Both studies investigated the potential mechanisms and contexts of support resistance support and identified effects specific for men who endorsed hostile sexism. The link between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and support resistance was partially explained by heightened perceptions of the inherent risks—the threat of others exploiting their need for

Table 2.5

Indirect Effects Between Men's Hostile Sexism, Feelings of Threat and Feelings of Vulnerability, and Support Satisfaction (Study 1) and Support

Seeking Intention (Study 2).

Indirect effect tested	Indirect effect	95% CI Low	High
Study 1			
Feelings of threat as mediator			
Men's hostile sexism → feelings of threat → support satisfaction	**-.17**	**-.28**	**-.06**
Women's hostile sexism → feelings of threat → support satisfaction	-.06	-.13	.00
Study 2			
Feelings of threat as mediator			
Hostile sexism → feelings of threat → support seeking intention (Low Dependence)	-.03	-.05	-.01
Hostile sexism → feelings of threat → support seeking intention (High Dependence)	**-.06**	**-.09**	**-.02**
Feelings of vulnerability as mediator			
Men's hostile sexism → feelings of vulnerability → support seeking intention (Low Dependence)	.03	-.04	.10
Women's hostile sexism → feelings of vulnerability → support seeking intention (Low Dependence)	.01	-.06	.08
Men's hostile sexism → feelings of vulnerability → support seeking intention (High Dependence)	**-.08**	**-.14**	**-.01**
Women's hostile sexism → feelings of vulnerability → support seeking intention (High Dependence)	.01	-.05	.07

Note. Tables 3 (for Study 1) and 4 (for Study 2) present the estimates for the associations between variables indicated by →. Predicted effects are

shown in bold. Confidence intervals (CIs) which do not overlap "0" are significant.

support (Studies 1 and 2), and the feeling of being vulnerable when relying on others for support (Study 2). In two out of three cases, this mediation occurred for men but not women, consistent with the prediction of ambivalent sexism theory that hostile sexism encompasses heightened fears about *men*'s dependence (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Additionally, when examining the role of dependence, the mediation by threat and vulnerability was relatively stronger for closer (vs. more distant) relationships, consistent with the prediction that hostile sexism involves concerns about the risk of investing emotionally in a relationship (see Hammond et al., 2020). Finally, supplementary analyses indicated these links between hostile sexism and support resistance were not accounted for by *relationship-specific* insecurities (i.e., attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance).

Our results illustrate that men's endorsement of hostile sexism, including beliefs about vulnerability and risk of exploitation in close relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996), carries a personal cost via their heightened resistance to seeking or accepting support from close others. Our findings also provide details about the contexts in which men's hostile sexism is harmful. For example, not only were men who endorse hostile sexism dissatisfied with the support they received from romantic partners, it is unlikely they get support needs met from elsewhere in their social network. These results are novel in suggesting that the patterns of negativity reported by men who endorse hostile sexism in their romantic relationships may be generalizable across their other close relationships. Additionally, our results demonstrate this support resistance is heightened for men who endorse hostile sexism due to expectations of being exploited or feeling vulnerable when depending on others. When considered alongside findings that men who endorse hostile sexism tend to exaggerate the unavailability of their romantic partners' love and affection (Hammond & Overall, 2020) and underestimate their partners' relationship commitment (Cross et al., 2017), our results emphasise that the harm of men's hostile sexism is present for *themselves* and others. For example, in addition to

experiencing less satisfactory romantic relationships, men who endorse hostile sexism are unlikely to receive many of the valuable benefits of support, such as reduced psychological distress (e.g., Simeon et al., 2005) and greater personal growth (e.g., Overall et al., 2010).

Our results also underscore the theoretical principle that the negativity linked with men's endorsement of hostile sexism is heightened by relational interdependence (see Hammond et al., 2020). Indeed, no differences in support resistance emerged between men who endorsed (vs. rejected) hostile sexism when we experimentally manipulated support provision to be from an acquaintance (i.e., a less dependent other). The more dependent a person is on their partner, the more control their partner has over the outcome of an interaction (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Murray et al., 2006). Individuals who are particularly concerned about this dependence, such as those who endorse hostile sexism, and thus view dependence as a personal vulnerability and an opportunity to be exploited, tend to avoid support (e.g., Cavallo et al., 2014; Rusbult et al., 2004). This results in an atypical pattern of withdrawing from relationships which are normatively the *most* comfortable sources of support (Nadler, 1997). Conversely, more casual relationships are less likely to activate dependence concerns and therefore circumvent the process in which men who endorse hostile sexism shun support (e.g., Cavallo et al., 2014; Rusbult et al, 2004).

Implications for Understanding Hostile Sexism

Our findings extend the literature on how societal norms shape support seeking. Gender research typically focuses on how people who conform to masculine norms, particularly norms that emphasise toughness and emotional control, are less willing to seek help professionally (see Seidler et al., 2016 for a review), and informally (i.e., help from friends or romantic partners; Herbst et al., 2014; McDermott et al., 2018). Our research on hostile sexism is distinct from, and complements, this literature. Masculinity adherence involves a specific *intra*personal comparison between the self and traditional gender norms (Thompson

& Pleck, 1986), whereas hostile sexism encompasses prescriptions about men and women as societal groups (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Indeed, masculinity and hostile sexism independently predict intimate relationship negativity (see Harrington et al., 2020). Thus, by examining hostile sexist beliefs rather than masculinity adherence, we highlight how attitudes about gender relations on a societal level may impair men's perceptions of seeking support from close others. Accordingly, support seeking interventions should also address men's feelings of threat and vulnerability within interdependent contexts.

Our findings also have theoretical implications through challenging assumptions about the extent to which the harm of hostile sexism is specific to *men's* endorsement of hostile sexism. In both studies, unexpected evidence emerged that both men *and* women who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism resisted support. Perhaps endorsement of hostile sexism is not linked with an exclusive mistrust of women, but instead is linked with more general expectations about others' intentions to be exploitative. Indeed, men's *and* women's endorsement of hostile sexism is linked with higher Machiavellianism (i.e., a predisposition toward manipulating others for personal gain) and lower interpersonal warmth (Goh & Tignor, 2020). If hostile sexism is linked with a generalised distrust of others, the gendered patterns linked with endorsement of hostile sexism may only emerge when specific relational concerns arise (e.g., when perceiving a partner is not committed to the relationship; Cross et al., 2017). Indeed, in the current research, ideological components of hostile sexism toward women (i.e., concerns about being exploited; fears of being vulnerable) accounted for support resistance in men but not women. Thus, future research should consider the relational contexts that elicit the specific concerns inherent to hostile sexism, such as fears about women manipulating men in intimate contexts, to identify which specific patterns of negativity are gendered.

Further questions about the gendered effects linked with hostile sexism were raised by the lack of evidence when manipulating support provider gender (Study 2)—no evidence emerged that people who endorsed hostile sexism were any more resistant to seeking support from women compared to men. Our vignette-based design was the first systematic test of whether, for men who endorse hostile sexism, support seeking intentions differed according to the gender of the support provider. Prior research linking endorsement of hostile sexism and negativity toward women focused on romantic heterosexual partners (e.g., Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2017, 2020), and thus conflated high interdependence with heterosexual gender identities. Perhaps endorsement of hostile sexism involves mistrust of depending on any close relationship. In support of this assertion, research has linked gay men's endorsement of hostile sexism toward women with violence toward romantic partners (Li & Zheng, 2017), reiterating that harm of hostile sexism is not exclusive to contexts in which men experience dependence on women. Further research examining sexist attitudes in non-heterosexual relationships or platonic close relationships is needed to more thoroughly disentangle concerns about gender from concerns about dependence.

Strengths, Caveats, and Future Directions

The pattern of associations between hostile sexism, feelings of threat, and greater support resistance generally replicated across actual experiences of support and hypothetical support vignettes, as well as across romantic and non-romantic support provision. However, neither method is able to assess people's 'in-the-moment' feelings about receiving support. Emotions can elicit different effects on behavior depending on whether they are anticipated versus experienced (Baumeister et al., 2007); the current findings cannot inform theory on *how* men who endorse hostile sexism resist support. For example, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism may suppress asking for support or may be more direct by negatively quashing others' support attempts. Future research should examine these associations *in vivo*

through video-recorded support interactions and observer-rated resistance to support. Based on prior observational research linking men's hostile sexism to both lower openness to partners' opinions and greater resistance to partners' influence attempts (e.g., Hammond & Overall, 2015; Overall et al., 2011), we expect men who endorse hostile sexism would ask for support less explicitly and reject the support they do receive.

We made the directional assumption that men's endorsement of hostile sexism is a predictor of support resistance based on research indicating hostile sexism is relatively trait-like and stable across time (Hammond et al., 2018), and people's support seeking decisions are influenced by beliefs about themselves and others (Collins & Feeney, 2004). However, as the data were correlational, we were unable to conclude that hostile sexism *causes* support resistance. Indeed, it is possible reciprocal longitudinal processes will emerge between endorsement of hostile sexism and pessimistic expectations of others' support—men's negative experiences of support prompt beliefs that women are malicious and untrustworthy, which over time reinforces men's endorsement of hostile sexism. Future research should test this theory by employing longitudinal data to examine whether changes in hostile sexism, over time, are associated with equivalent changes in support resistance, or if experiences of support shape endorsement of hostile sexism.

Finally, future studies should examine the generalizability of our findings across different cultures. Although endorsement of sexist beliefs and support seeking practices both differ across cultures, more traditional societal gender beliefs are linked with lower levels of support seeking (e.g., Taylor et al., 2004). For example, Asian and Asian American men are relatively less likely to seek social support than their European American peers (Taylor et al., 2004). Meta-analytic results also demonstrate differences between men and women in support seeking are larger in Western cultures than in Asian cultures, explained partly by the tendency for Western women to seek more support than other groups (Nam et al., 2010). One

explanation for the smaller gender gap in Eastern cultures is that cultural norms are a stronger predictor of individuals' support behaviours than their personal endorsement of ideologies (e.g., the normative belief support-seekers are a 'burden' on others; Taylor et al., 2004, 2007). Cross-cultural research examining sexism and cultural norms about support could disentangle differences between people's personal gender attitudes from the gender attitudes that are normatively endorsed in their society.

Conclusion

Men's endorsement of hostile sexism is harmful for women and for intimate relationships, but little research has examined whether there are direct personal costs for men themselves. The current studies illustrated men's *and* women's hostile sexism was directly linked with greater support resistance, but resistance of support was more prominent for men, particularly when they were more dependent on the support provider. Mediation models identified this support resistance was partially due to men feeling threatened, and to some extent feeling vulnerable, when needing support. Overall, our results identify personal costs of both men's and women's endorsement of hostile sexism for support seeking and acceptance, and suggest this resistance likely stems from mistrust of close others' intentions.

CHAPTER THREE: HOW MEN WHO ENDORSE HOSTILE SEXISM SEEK

SUPPORT

Chapter Two focused on the costs arising from men's endorsement of hostile sexism for men. Specifically, this chapter examined the fears associated with men's hostile sexism that their relational dependence on women will be exploited—fears that have previously been shown to have significant costs for women and romantic relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Chapter Two provides evidence that men's hostile sexism is also detrimental for men because the same concerns about depending on women disrupt their perceptions and experiences of seeking support. Results across two studies indicated that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were less satisfied with the support they received from their female romantic partner and were less likely to seek support from a non-romantic close other. Moreover, these links were associated with feeling vulnerable and open to potential exploitation when seeking support. This research extends existing understanding of the contexts in which men's hostile sexism is costly by demonstrating that even in non-romantic close relationships (e.g., friendships and workplace relationships), depending on others can elicit feelings of vulnerability and threat that disrupt important support processes for men. Surprisingly though, there was no evidence that the disruption to the support process differed based on the gender of the support provider (i.e., when seeking support from a man vs. a woman), indicating that the specific role of gender in men's hostile sexism requires further examination.

Much of the research on men's hostile sexism has examined the costs for women and relationships because it is in romantic contexts where heterosexual men are most dependent on women and the consequences of men's hostile sexism most likely to be felt (e.g., Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013). However, the findings of this chapter indicate that the level of dependence within non-romantic relationships is still associated with concerns about

what others will do with that dependence, which in turn is associated with negative support outcomes. This poses a further question: Do men who endorse hostile sexism feel vulnerable and threatened in close relationships because this is the context in which they have the least power, or would they feel the same way when depending on a person in a non-relationship-based setting? Men's endorsement of hostile sexism is also linked with potentially destructive behaviours outside of romantic contexts. For example, in workplace settings, men's hostile sexism is associated with choices to promote less qualified men over more qualified women (Christopher & Mull, 2006), less favorable opinions of women in leadership positions (Gervais & Hillard, 2011; Ratliff et al., 2019; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000), and zero-sum beliefs that women's attainment of power in career domains takes power away from men (Ruthig et al., 2017). Moreover, examinations of non-romantic, mixed-gender social interactions reveal that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism tend to be less approachable, friendly, and warm—even when paired with someone they have never met and therefore, are not relationally dependent on (Goh & Hall, 2015). Together, these results demonstrate that men's endorsement of hostile sexism can negatively impact the behaviours and judgements men make in contexts outside of romantic relationships.

As I investigate in Chapter Three, when there is no relationship-based dependence to get under the skin of men who endorse hostile sexism, the outcomes within a support seeking context are less predictable. One perspective on hostile sexism suggests that men who are dependent on women should hold concerns about their vulnerability to potential exploitation even in contexts of situational, task-based dependence, such as when working toward a goal as a team or having to take direction from a woman manager. However, the behaviours linked with men's hostile sexism are yet to be formally examined in contexts of non-romantic interdependence. Thus, it is currently unclear whether the concerns men who endorse hostile

sexism have about depending on close others extend to non-relationship-based contexts where the type of dependence is *situational* rather than *relational.*

In Chapter Three, I present an observational study examining the associations between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and the naturalistic behaviours men employ when seeking support from an unknown person to complete a task. Utilising a non-romantic, experimental context, this study simultaneously manipulates both the level of task-based dependence (i.e., having the instructions for the task vs. having the resources to complete the task) *and* the gender of the interaction partner (i.e., man vs. woman)—furthering the primary aim of this thesis to disentangle the role of dependence-based concerns and gender-based concerns within men's hostile sexism. In line with ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and research linking men's hostile sexism to negativity outside romantic relationships (e.g., Connor & Fiske, 2019; Masser & Abrams, 2004), men who endorse hostile sexism should be more resistant to seeking support when they are more dependent on a woman to complete a task.

Abstract

Men's hostile sexism is associated with beliefs that women will exploit men's relational dependence and undermine men's power. These dependency fears have been shown to disrupt a range of relationship-based processes, including the perceptions and experiences men who endorse hostile sexism have about seeking support. However, it remains unclear *how* men who endorse hostile sexism seek or resist support. This observational study examined the support behaviours used by men who endorse hostile sexism when interacting with an unknown person ($N = 119$ dyads) to complete an experimental task. Results indicated that men who endorsed hostile sexism were less direct, more withdrawn, and used more expressive suppression in support interactions, but only with other *men* (not with women). These findings suggest that when examining the behaviours associated with men's hostile sexism *outside* of heterosexual romantic relationships, the expected patterns of dependence and gender become less consistent with theory.

How men's endorsement of hostile sexism influences support seeking from strangers:

An observational study

Men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism believe that women use manipulative and malicious strategies to undermine men's social power (Glick & Fiske, 1996). As such, heterosexual men who endorse hostile sexism tend to be wary of depending on women for relational needs (Glick & Fiske, 1996; see Hammond et al., 2020 for a review), resulting in lower satisfaction in their romantic relationships (Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Leaper et al., 2020; Sibley & Becker, 2012), and greater resistance to social support from both romantic partners and non-romantic close others (Fisher et al., 2021). However, it is unclear *how* men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism resist support. Resolving this issue has important implications for understanding the behavioural consequences of men's hostile sexism, and thus the type of intervention needed to improve men's access to social support (e.g., Seidler et al., 2016). For instance, do men who endorse hostile sexism actively resist asking for support when they need it, or do they attempt to seek support in more covert ways in order to reduce any obvious feelings of dependence? In the current study, we use observational coding to examine the links between men's hostile sexism and different support seeking behaviours, including the extent to which each behaviour occurs in conditions of high vs. low dependence, and when the interaction partner is a man vs. a woman.

Men Who Endorse Hostile Sexism Resist Support from Close Relationships

Hostile sexism encompasses beliefs that women seek to undermine men's social power using malicious and deceitful strategies, such as humiliating men in relationships (e.g., "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash"; Glick & Fiske, 1996). By portraying women as devious and manipulative, men who endorse hostile sexism can 'justify' chastising women who they see as a threat to men's power (Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). Unsurprisingly then, men's endorsement of hostile sexism is

consistently linked with harm to women and heterosexual romantic relationships. For example, men who endorse hostile sexism are more physically and sexually violent toward women (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Lynch & Renzetti, 2017), and more verbally aggressive toward female partners, even in relatively long-term relationships (Cross et al., 2017; Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall et al., 2011). Moreover, men's endorsement of hostile sexism is linked with lower relationship satisfaction (Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Leaper et al., 2020; Sibley & Becker, 2012), and more serious relationship problems regarding jealousy and power (Cross & Overall, 2019; Leaper et al., 2020).

Recent investigations, however, indicate that men's endorsement of hostile sexism has another cost; men who endorse hostile sexism resist seeking and accepting support from close others (e.g., Fisher et al., 2021; Hammond & Overall, 2020). Across two studies, Fisher and colleagues (2021) demonstrated how heterosexual men's endorsement of hostile sexism predicted (a) lower satisfaction with the support they received from their romantic partner, and (b) less intention to seek support from a hypothetical, non-romantic close other. This support resistance was linked to stronger feelings of potential exploitation and vulnerability when seeking support from close others—both of which are major concerns for men who endorse hostile sexism (Fisher et al., 2021). Similarly, heterosexual men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism tend to exaggerate the unavailability of their romantic partner as a support provider across both goal-oriented discussions and reports of goal-directed behaviours over time (Hammond & Overall, 2020). Together, these studies indicate that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are less likely to seek support from close others when feeling distressed, and then overperceive the negative aspects of the interactions in which they *do* seek support.

However, the extant evidence consists of associations between hostile sexism and self-reports of past interactions or responses to hypothetical scenarios. No research has examined

the links between men's hostile sexism and support-seeking behaviours within actual interactions. Understanding how men's beliefs about gender influence their actual behaviour within support interactions will inform more robust help seeking interventions for men (Galdas et al., 2005; Seidler et al., 2016). For example, perhaps men who endorse hostile sexism do not actively resist seeking support from others, but instead tend to seek support in more covert ways. In that case, an intervention targeting self-esteem or autonomy (e.g., Don & Hammond, 2017; Don et al., 2019) could be more effective than one which simply aims to increase support-seeking engagement. In the current research, we use observational coding procedures to examine the degree to which men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with different support seeking behaviours during live communication tasks, which require participants to give and receive informational support and encouragement. This test aims to replicate the link between men's hostile sexism and support resistance using more externally valid observational measures, thus advancing existing research by identifying the specific forms of support resistance used by men who endorse hostile sexism, and capturing a range of possible behaviours 'in the moment' that may not have been expected or reported by participants when using hypothetical scenarios.

People Use Different Behaviours to Seek (or Resist) Support

Seeking social support is an important component of living a healthy and satisfying life (see Taylor, 2011 for a review). Indeed, receiving social support is one of the strongest predictors of mortality (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010) and happiness (Taylor, 2011), has powerful effects on reducing psychological distress (e.g., Simeon et al., 2005), and helps facilitate closeness (Overall et al., 2010) and a sense of belonging (Sandstrom & Dunn, 2013; 2014). However, because the process of seeking social support involves being dependent on another person, it can also be accompanied by feelings of vulnerability and fears of rejection (Cavallo et al., 2014). This internal struggle between the need for assistance and concerns about self-

protection and 'saving face' is used to guide people's decisions around whether or not to seek support. For example, an individual might decide the social rewards of distress reduction outweigh the potential risks of rejection. Alternatively, they might react to their distress by emotionally withdrawing or avoiding support because the perceived risk of rejection is too high (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Murray et al., 2006). In other words, people's concerns about vulnerability when depending on others can influence how an individual will act in response to their support needs.

If an individual does decide to seek support, there are different behaviours they can use to do so (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998). For example, someone could seek support by directly asking for advice or assistance, openly and honestly discussing the problem they face, and/or clarifying the issue to aid the support provider's understanding (e.g., "I need directions to the library, can you help me?; Don & Hammond, 2017). Indeed, when individuals clearly explain the problem they have and are open to receiving help—known as *positive support seeking*—potential support providers are in a better position to offer effective support, which typically results in more constructive and satisfying support interactions (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Don et al., 2013). On the other hand, someone could use behaviours like blame, manipulation or anger to seek support—known as *negative support seeking* (e.g., "I need to get to the library, why are you not helping me?; Don et al., 2017). Seeking support in this way, such as by coercing or berating another person, typically results in poorer support interactions and more negative outcomes for the self and relationships (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Don et al., 2013).

The behaviours described above encapsulate *direct* methods of seeking support; however, individuals can also use *indirect* behaviours with the goal of receiving support. Indirect support seeking typically involves supplicatory-type behaviours such as sulking, whining, or expressing sadness without any disclosure of the issue at hand—usually with the

aim of eliciting support from others without needing to explicitly ask (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Barbee et al., 1998; Don et al., 2019). However, due to the often ambiguous nature of indirect support behaviours, potential support providers are not always given adequate information to provide support effectively, which typically results in less constructive support interactions (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Don et al., 2013). In fact, research suggests that indirect support seeking can be met with blame, rejection and withdrawal by others—resulting in further exacerbation of the support seeker's distress and negative outcomes for relationships (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Don et al., 2013). In sum, there are different behaviours people use to garner support from others. However, sometimes people decide that the vulnerability and dependence risks associated with approaching others for support is too risky. Next, I introduce two types of avoidance-based behaviours that are pertinent to the support process.

When an individual is distressed or in need of help they could use one of the behaviours outlined above. However, they could also withdraw from others and avoid seeking support altogether. Indeed, individuals may take effort to avoid asking for support by changing the subject, downplaying the problem, or avoiding questions they receive about the problem (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995). Theoretically, withdrawal is described as a self-preservation behaviour. When an individual seeks support, they are placing themself in a position of increased vulnerability and are risking potential rejection or ridicule (Collins & Feeney, 2000). Therefore, by not seeking support, individuals are able to avoid the potential dangers associated with opening up to others. However, while withdrawal may alleviate any concerns about potential vulnerability, there are costs associated with not seeking support—namely, that individuals have less access to the numerous benefits associated with receiving social support, such as increased closeness, enhanced relationship satisfaction, and improved mental health (see Feeney & Collins, 2015 for a review on social support and thriving).

In addition to withdrawing physically from support interactions, individuals can also escape by using emotion regulation behaviours, such as *expressive suppression*. Expressive suppression involves inhibiting the outward expression of emotions to hide how one is feeling from others (Gross & John, 2003). For example, an individual may stifle an expression of laughter, or maintain a neutral facial expression when something has upset them. Importantly, expressive suppression does not decrease the intensity of the felt emotion—people who use expressive suppression do not necessarily feel their emotions less intensely (Gross, 2003). The role of expressive suppression is to regulate how emotions are conveyed to others. Given that emotional expression is one way in which people signal approachability (Simpson et al., 1996) and a need for interpersonal connection and support (e.g., Srivastava et al., 2009; Tickle-Degnan & Rosenthal, 1990), expressive suppression can be seen as a way of avoiding the communication of support needs to others. To conclude, there are several behaviours individuals use to seek support that can be broken into positive, negative, and indirect support seeking, and several behaviours, such as withdrawal and expressive suppression, that individuals can use to resist support. So which support behaviours do men who endorse hostile sexism use and what are the roles of contextual factors such as the level of dependence and gender of the interaction partner? The following section outlines how the current study aims to address these questions.

Overview of Study

The current study was designed to examine how men's endorsement of hostile sexism shapes how men interact with another person, particularly when in need of support. In particular, we were interested in the links between men's hostile sexism and five distinct support behaviours: informational support (positive support behaviour), coercive support and manipulative support (both negative support behaviours), supplicatory support (indirect support behaviour), and withdrawal. To examine these behaviours in real-time, we video-

recorded pairs of participants engaging in two experimental tasks that required participants to work together to achieve a task-based goal. Two observational coders then independently rated how often each participant displayed each of the five support behaviours.

By utilising this type of experimental design, we were also able to investigate a key question around whether the concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have about relationally depending on others extend to contexts of *situational* dependence. Importantly, in each of the experimental tasks, one participant had the instructions for the task (i.e., the 'instructor role') and the other participant had the resources to complete the task (i.e., the 'completer role'). In setting up this protocol, we were able to manipulate the level of task-based dependence between the participants. To illustrate, imagine a couple become lost driving in a new country and require a map. They decide the most efficient way of getting to their destination is for one person to be responsible for driving the car, while the other be responsible for giving directions. Both people are dependent on each other to get to their destination (i.e., the driver is reliant on accurate directions from the passenger, and the passenger is reliant on the driver to physically get them there); however, the passenger is more dependent on the driver because if the passenger gives poor directions, the driver cannot physically get them to their destination (see Williams & Kessler, 2002 for further description). In the current study, the instructor is more dependent on the completer because, if the instructor does not provide the completer with accurate instructions, the completer is unable to physically perform the task.

In addition, by examining men's hostile sexism in non-romantic dyads, we were able to manipulate the gender pairings of the dyads. In other words, we included pairings of men with men, men with women, and women with women. The conflation of interdependence and gender through the almost exclusive use of heterosexual romantic couples in past research on men's hostile sexism (e.g., Cross et al., 2017, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013) has made it

difficult to discern whether men who endorse hostile sexism have concerns about depending on women specifically, or concerns about depending on others regardless of gender. Therefore, by using both same-gender and mixed-gender dyads, as well as a manipulation of task-based dependence, the current study was able to examine the role of gender vs. situational dependence within men's hostile sexism.

Observational analyses. Depending on others in support contexts highlights the concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have about vulnerability and potential exploitation (Fisher et al., 2021). Therefore, we expected men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism to display *less* informational support seeking as doing so openly acknowledges a need for interpersonal assistance (Hypothesis 1a). However, given that men's hostile sexism is associated with increased negativity and aggression toward others—especially when feeling vulnerable or threatened (Cross et al., 2017, 2019)—we also expected men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism to display *more* coercive support (Hypothesis 1b) and manipulative support (Hypothesis 1c). Indeed, people experiencing more depressive symptoms—who tend to be focused on avoiding rejection and vulnerability—use more blame-based and manipulative behaviours to elicit love and care from their romantic partners (Overall & Hammond, 2013).

The same concerns about depending on others that make informational support seeking less desirable for men who endorse hostile sexism, should make indirect support seeking behaviours like supplication *more* desirable. Although seeking support indirectly often results in less successful support interactions, doing so reduces the potential vulnerabilities of openly asking for support, at least initially (Don et al., 2013; 2019). Indeed, people higher in attachment avoidance—an interpersonal orientation toward independence and self-reliance— tend to use more indirect strategies when seeking support from their romantic partner (Collins & Feeney, 2000). Thus, we expected men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism to seek

support using *more* supplicatory behaviours (Hypothesis 1d). Finally, because previous research has revealed links between men's hostile sexism and a resistance to seek support (Fisher et al., 2021), we expected that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism would be *more* withdrawn from support interactions (Hypothesis 1e).

Exploratory analyses. Alongside our predictions about support seeking behaviour, we were also interested in whether men who endorse hostile sexism use more expressive suppression. Given that the expression of emotions can be used as a signal for interpersonal support needs (Gross & John, 2003), we expected men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism to use *more* expressive suppression during the tasks (Hypothesis 2).

Contextual analyses. We were also interested in the contexts in which the effects of men's hostile sexism on support behaviours and emotion suppression are stronger (or weaker). When examining dependence, we predicted the effects outlined in the primary analyses (Hypotheses 1a-1e and Hypothesis 2) would be heightened for men (vs. women) when they were in the instructor role (i.e., the higher dependence role) rather than the completer role (i.e., the lower dependence role). We further predicted the effects outlined in the primary analyses (Hypotheses 1a-1e and Hypothesis 2) will be heightened for men (vs. women) when their interaction partner was a woman rather than a man. In other words, the links between men's hostile sexism and each support behaviour, and between men's hostile sexism and expressive suppression, should be moderated by both the level of dependence (i.e., higher vs. lower), and the gender of their interaction partner (i.e., woman vs. man).

Discriminatory analyses. Finally, we examined whether hostile sexism was distinct from another theoretically relevant construct related to men's support seeking—adherence to masculine norms. Men who more strongly adhere to masculinity norms, such as dominance and winningness, tend to be more resistant to seek support (e.g., Addis & Mahalik, 2003) and men's endorsement of masculinity beliefs is correlated with men's hostile sexism (Harrington

et al., 2020). Therefore, we wanted to be sure that any associations revealed between men's hostile sexism and particular support behaviours were independent of men's conformity to masculine norms.

Method

Participants

In total, we recruited 126 pairs of participants through the Introduction to Psychology Research Programme (IPRP). Participants were unknown to each other and were paired together to complete the study. Participants received credit toward their course requirements for their participation. Of this initial sample, five pairs were excluded for poor quality data or technical failure. As the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) has only been validated for people who identify as men or women and our predictions involved gender comparisons, the data from a further two pairs of non-binary participants was not analysed for the following tests. The final sample comprised 119 pairs. Of the 238 participants included in the analyses, 114 were men (47.9%), and 124 were women (52.1%). Of the 119 pairs, 39 were men paired with men (32.8%), 36 were men paired with women (30.3%), and 44 were women paired with women (37.0%). 62.7% of participants identified as Pākehā, 10.7% identified as Māori or Māori/Pākehā, 6.3% identified as Asian, 3.2% identified as Indian, 4.4% identified as European (non-NZ), 1.6% identified as Pacific Nations, and 11.1% identified as 'Other' or indicated multiple ethnic groups. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 46 years.

Procedure

In the first part of the study session, participants individually completed a questionnaire, which included questions regarding demographic information as well as about individual-difference and relationship-related measures. Following the completion of the questionnaire, participants engaged in a 'warm-up' discussion about the events of their week

to familiarise them with the video-recording procedure. Next, participants engaged in two 5-minute tasks described as "communication games". For each task, participants sat opposite each other across a metre-wide coffee table. Before leaving the room, a researcher instructed participants that they each had a set of instructions for the game that they would "complete together", and that they could read the instructions but could not talk or begin the game until directed via intercom.

In each task, one participant was given the instructions for the game ("instructor"; higher dependence role) and the other participant was given the resources to complete the task ("completer"; lower dependence role). Thus, for the successful completion of each task, participants needed to cooperate (i.e., the task was interdependent), but there was relatively more demand on the person in the *instructor* role to communicate in ways the *completer* understands, and thus the instructor's behaviours are situationally more dependent on the completer's needs (for similar examples see Williams and Kessler's [2002] driver-navigator paradigm; Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs' [1986] matcher-director paradigm). Tasks were counterbalanced for order and side of the room the participants were sitting on (i.e., left or right). The instructor and the completer roles were switched for the second task. Both participants were given information that they started with 100 points, which would be deducted each time they broke a rule to incentivise task engagement. One task required the completer to construct specific structures behind a screen using coloured building blocks. The other task required the completer to select particular geometric shapes from a matrix of shapes printed on their paper. After 5 minutes had elapsed, participants were instructed that the time was up and then individually completed a short questionnaire about how they felt immediately before and during the interaction.

Measures

Endorsement of ambivalent sexism. Sexist attitudes toward women were measured using a 12-item, short-form version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Six items indexed hostile sexism (e.g., "When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against"; -3 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*; α = .76). Six items assessed benevolent sexism (e.g., "Women should be cherished and protected by men"; α = .70). These short-form scales exhibit strong correlations (*rs* > .90) with the full scales (Sibley & Perry, 2010) and predict observed relationship behaviour (Overall et al., 2011).

Conformity to masculine norms. To account for the possible alternative explanation that support behaviours linked with men's hostile sexism were instead due to (related) concerns about masculinity, participants completed two sub-scales from the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Mahalik et al., 2003). Five items indexed *dominance* (e.g., "I like to be in charge"; α = .78) and five items indexed *winningness* (e.g., "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing"; α = .82).

Self-reported expressive suppression. Participants' subjective rating of their expressive suppression during each task was measured using four items taken from the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003) and adapted to be appropriate for a dyadic task (e.g. "I tried to hide my thoughts and feelings from my partner"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Observational coding of support seeking behaviours. Two trained coders independently rated the support seeking behaviours of each participant using a modified version of a coding scheme developed by Overall and colleagues (2010). The original procedure integrates the most commonly used support seeking behaviours from prior schedules, including the Support Interaction Coding System (Pasch & Bradbury, 1998), the Support Behavior Code (Cutrona & Suhr, 1992), and the Interactive Coping Behavior Coding

System (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995). In the current study, we added an indirect support seeking behaviour—supplication—and included withdrawal as a way of measuring resistance to seek support.

Coders watched the video-recorded interactions and globally rated the extent to which each participant displayed the following behaviours: informational support seeking (e.g., directly asking for help, seeking factual information, clarifying the situation), coercive support seeking (e.g., demanding support, using criticism to seek support), manipulative support seeking (e.g., guilting others into providing support), supplicatory support seeking (e.g., portraying self as less capable, whining), and withdrawal (e.g., not seeking support when clearly struggling, resisting attempts of others to provide support). Intraclass correlation coefficents (ICCs) suggested that coder ratings were adequately consistent (informational, ICC = .92; coercive, ICC = .89; manipulative, ICC = .95; supplicatory, ICC = .92; withdrawal, ICC = .89).

Results

Table 3.1 displays the descriptive statistics across primary variables for men (below the diagonal) and women (above the diagonal). As expected, men's hostile sexism was positively correlated with benevolent sexism, withdrawal, expressive suppression, and conformity to masculine norms. Men's hostile sexism was not significantly associated with any of the other support behaviours at the correlational level; however, we hypothesised that these links would be more dependent on contextual variables, such as role (instructor vs. completer) and the gender of the interaction partner (man vs. woman). Expected correlations between support behaviours were observed. For example, informational support was negatively correlated with withdrawal, and coercive support was positive correlated with manipulative support, for both men and women. These findings suggest that coders were appropriately identifying the distinctions and similarities across each support behaviour.

Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Primary Measures

	Men	Women								
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Hostile Sexism	-0.78 (1.10)	-0.96 (1.12)	__	.43**	-.08	.05	.02	.04	.11	.09	.20**
2. Benevolent Sexism	0.08 (1.10)	-0.48 (1.02)	.48**	__	-.03	.00	-.05	.05	.06	.07	.26**
3. Informational Support	3.21 (1.68)	3.26 (1.70)	-.09	-.05	__	.18**	.03	-.35**	-.46**	-.01	-.09
4. Coercive Support	1.73 (1.13)	1.56 (0.94)	-.06	-.14*	.29**	__	.62**	-.16*	.02	-.09	-.01
5. Manipulative Support	1.41 (0.97)	1.27 (0.93)	-.01	.09	.12	.63**	__	-.11	.14*	-.07	-.04
6. Supplicatory Support	2.22 (1.50)	2.35 (1.40)	.02	.05	-.32**	-.21**	-.12	__	.24**	.04	-.01
7. Withdrawal	2.40 (1.32)	2.00 (1.07)	.21**	.09	-.52**	-.11	.06	.38**	__	.08	.02
8. Expressive Suppression	4.31 (1.44)	4.24 (1.73)	.23**	.24**	.02	-.01	.02	.10	.11	__	-.13*
9. CMNI	3.00 (0.70)	2.90 (0.65)	.53**	.20**	-.01	.03	.05	-.01	.08	.13	__

Note. Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism were assessed on scales with a midpoint of 0 (-3 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*); all other measures had a midpoint of 4 (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). CMNI = Conformity to Masculine Norms. Correlations above the diagonal are for women (*N* = 124); correlations below the diagonal are for men (*N* = 114). *p < .05. **p < .01.

Associations between contextual variables and support behaviours

To establish the baseline patterns of support behaviours across contextual variables, we tested the extent to which participant gender (man vs. woman), partner gender (man vs. woman), and role (instructor vs. completer) predicted each support behaviour. Results are presented in Table 3.2. For the most part there was no evidence of any specifically gendered patterns of support, with the exception of coercive support and avoidance; men used more coercive support and were more avoidant (compared to women), while people in general were more avoidant when paired with a man (vs. a woman). These patterns generally align with prior research indicating that men are more likely than women to withdraw from difficult interactions (e.g., Christensen & Heavey, 1990) and with the results of Fisher and colleagues (2021) where people generally preferred to seek support from women (vs. men). Role (instructor vs. completer) was consistently associated with expected support behaviours. For example, instructors (the higher dependence role) tended to use less support seeking behaviours in general (i.e., less informational support, coercive support, and manipulative support) and were more avoidant compared to completers (the lower dependence role)—consistent with research demonstrating how seeking support is considered more risky for people who are more dependent on others and avoidance is often perceived as safer (e.g., Murray et al., 2006).

Associations between hostile sexism and support seeking behaviour as moderated by contextual factors

Our primary analyses involved testing the associations between hostile sexism and observed support behaviours, and the extent to which they differed depending on partner gender, or role. To do so, we regressed each observed support behaviour on hostile sexism, partner gender (-1 = *woman*, 1 = *man*), role (-1 = *completer,* 1 = *instructor*), and all possible interaction terms. As hostile sexism is positively correlated with benevolent sexism (see

Table 3.2

Associations between contextual variables and support behaviours

Support Behaviour	Contextual Variable	*B*	95% CI Low	95% CI High	*t*	*p*
Informational Support	Participant Gender	.00	-.14	.14	0.05	.963
	Partner Gender	-.09	-.23	.05	-1.30	.195
	Role	**-.97**	**-1.10**	**-.84**	**-14.79**	**.001**
Coercive Support	Participant Gender	**.11**	**.02**	**.21**	**2.29**	**.022**
	Partner Gender	-.07	-.16	.03	-1.43	.155
	Role	**-.30**	**-.38**	**-.22**	**-7.25**	**.001**
Manipulative Support	Participant Gender	.04	-.05	.14	0.93	.355
	Partner Gender	.06	-.03	.15	1.32	.188
	Role	**-.16**	**-.24**	**-.08**	**-3.92**	**.001**
Supplicatory Support	Participant Gender	-.06	-.18	.05	-1.06	.290
	Partner Gender	-.03	-.15	.09	-0.51	.614
	Role	**.87**	**.76**	**.97**	**16.07**	**.001**
Withdrawal	Participant Gender	**.16**	**.05**	**.27**	**2.81**	**.005**
	Partner Gender	**.12**	**.01**	**.23**	**2.10**	**.036**
	Role	**.25**	**.15**	**.35**	**4.98**	**.001**

Note. $n = 238$ for all analyses. CI = confidence interval. Contextual variables in bold were statistically significant.

Table 3.1), we included benevolent sexism as a covariate in all analyses; however, given the complexity of the model, we estimated the effects for men and women separately.

Informational Support Behaviours. For men, there was a significant interaction between hostile sexism and partner gender on informational support behaviours ($B= -.26$, $t = -2.54$, 95% CI [-.46, -.06], $p = .012$). However, simple slopes analyses indicated that, against our prediction, men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism only used less informational support when they were paired with *men* (B = -.29, $t = -2.41$, 95% CI [-.42, -.07], $p = .018$) and not when paired with women (B = .23, $t = 1.40$, 95% CI [-.67, .12], $p = .165$). No other effects were significant for men (ts < 1.78, ps > .076). For women, there was no evidence of any significant associations between hostile sexism and informational support behaviours (ts < 1.55, ps > .122).

Coercive Support Behaviours. Men's endorsement of hostile sexism was only marginally associated with less coercive support behaviours ($B= -.14$, $t = -1.95$, 95% CI [-.29, .00], $p = .052$). No other effects were significant (ts < 1.07, ps > .286). For women, there was no evidence of any associations between hostile sexism on coercive support behaviours (ts < 1.31, ps > .192).

Manipulative Support Behaviours. There was no evidence that men's endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with manipulative support behaviours ($B= -.09$, $t = -1.33$, 95% CI [-.23, .04], $p = .183$). No other effects were significant for men (ts < -1.15, ps > .249) or for women (ts < -1.82, ps > .069). Overall, there was no evidence that endorsement of hostile sexism significantly predicted manipulative support behaviours for men or women.

Supplicatory Support Behaviours. Similar to manipulative support behaviours, there was no evidence that men's endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with supplicatory support behaviours ($B= .06$, $t = 0.64$, 95% CI [-.12, .23], $p = .525$). No other effects were significant for men (ts < -1.65, ps > .099) or for women (ts < 1.25, ps > .211). Overall, there

was no evidence that endorsement of hostile sexism significantly predicted supplicatory support behaviours for men or women.

Withdrawal. For men, there was a significant interaction between hostile sexism and partner gender on withdrawal ($B = .20$, $t = 2.39$, 95% CI [.04, .37], $p = .018$). However, simple slopes analyses indicated that again, against our prediction, men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism withdrew more but only when they were paired with *men* ($B = .37$, $t = 3.75$, 95% CI [.09, .68], $p < .001$) and not when paired with women ($B = -.04$, $t = -0.26$, 95% CI [-.35, .27], $p = .795$). No other effects were significant for men ($ts < -1.41$, $ps > .159$). For women, there was no evidence of any significant associations between hostile sexism withdrawal ($ts < 1.27$, $ps > .205$).

Associations between hostile sexism and expressive suppression as moderated by contextual factors

As a further test of whether men who endorse hostile sexism use avoidance-based behaviours to resist support, we tested the associations between hostile sexism and self-reported expressive suppression in each task, as well as the extent to which each association is moderated by partner gender and role. To do so, we regressed expressive suppression on hostile sexism, partner gender (-1 = *woman*, 1 = *man*), role (-1 = *completer,* 1 = *instructor*), and all possible interaction terms. Again, we included benevolent sexism as a covariate in all analyses and estimated the effects for men and women separately.

For men, there was a significant interaction between hostile sexism and partner gender on expressive suppression ($B = -.21$, $t = -2.12$, 95% CI [-.41, -.02], $p = .035$). However, again simple slope analyses indicated that, against our prediction, men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism used more expressive suppression but only when paired with men ($B = .17$, $t = 1.56$, 95% CI [.03, .32], $p = .019$) and not when paired with women ($B = -.18$, $t = -1.03$, 95% CI [-.38, .11], $p = .303$). No other effects were significant for men ($ts < 0.59$, $ps > .553$). For

women, there was no evidence of any significant associations between hostile sexism and expressive suppression (ts < 1.08, ps > .279).

Masculinity Adherence as a Control

In taking an interdependence perspective, we hypothesised that the risks about depending on others inherent to seeking support would be specifically concerning for men who endorse hostile sexism. However, it is possible that adherence to masculine norms, such as that men should be dominant and have power over women, accounts for the link between men's hostile sexism and support seeking. As displayed in Table 3.1, men's (and women's) hostile sexism was associated with greater scores on the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI; Mahalik et al., 2003). Therefore, we reran all the analyses controlling for participant's scores on the CMNI items. The interaction between men's hostile sexism and partner gender on informational support behaviours remained significant when controlling for masculinity adherence (B = -.31, t = -1.97, 95% CI [-.63, .00], p = .050), while the interaction between men's hostile sexism and partner gender on withdrawal dropped below significance (B = .24, t = 1.73, 95% CI [-.03, .50], p = .085)—likely due to reduced statistical power when including so many additional parameters. However, given no evidence emerged for associations between masculinity adherence and any of the observed support behaviours (ts < -1.42, ps > .157), it seems likely that the differences observed in support behaviours were unique to men's hostile sexism.

<div align="center">**Discussion**</div>

The current study investigated differences in people's support seeking behaviour during a dyadic communication task to test the extent to which men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism sought support from unfamiliar men versus unfamiliar women. Results revealed that men's (but not women's) endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with less informational support seeking (e.g., openly asking for support) and more withdrawal

from support interactions, but only when paired with other men (not women). In sum, the resistance to support from women that was anticipated to be linked with men's endorsement of hostile sexism was unexpectedly connected to behaviour toward other men. Further, there was no evidence that the level of task-based dependence (i.e., having the instructions vs. having the resources to complete the task) impacted how men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism sought support.

Analyses examining the link between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and expressive suppression—an emotion regulation strategy aimed at hiding emotional expressions from others—revealed a similar pattern of results: Men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism engaged in more expressive suppression when they were paired with other men (vs. women) but again, there was no evidence that this differed based on the level of task-based dependence. Overall, support seeking was disrupted when men who endorsed hostile sexism were paired with other men to complete a task, but predictions derived from ambivalent sexism that support-seeking would depend on their task dependence and gender pairings were unsupported.

The current study extends prior research by providing *in vivo*, behavioural evidence that men's endorsement of hostile sexism disrupts the support seeking process. Previous findings have revealed links between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and greater resistance to seek support but relied on self-report data and hypothetical situations (Fisher et al., 2021). The current findings demonstrate that resistance to support is also observable in actual interactions with men. In particular, men who endorsed hostile sexism engaged in less positive support-seeking and more withdrawal when paired with other men, thus tending to openly seek information and clarification less than others. These observed findings align with prior research on romantic relationships suggesting that men who endorse hostile sexism are less open and communicative during interactions with others, including that they withdraw

more from conflict discussions (Overall et al., 2011). Moreover, men who endorsed hostile sexism reported greater expressive suppression when paired with men, consistent with self-reported associations linking men's hostile sexism to lower levels of interpersonal warmth and fewer positive emotional expressions (Goh & Hall, 2015).

However, the current results did not identify the gendered patterns of effects we expected based on prior hostile sexism research examining situations of dependence. We expected that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism would be more resistant to seek support when more dependent on *women*. For example, men who endorse hostile sexism tend to prioritise self-reliance and have concerns about maintaining power and control in relationships with women (e.g., "Listening to his wife shames a man"; Chen et al., 2009)—concerns that likely make asking for help and deferring to a woman less desirable, particularly when in positions of greater dependence. Instead, the reversed pattern was observed for gender (i.e., men who endorsed hostile sexism were more resistant to seek support when paired with other men) and there was no evidence of an effect of task-based dependence on support seeking behaviour. Perhaps identifying interpersonal behaviours linked with women and dependence requires studying men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism in contexts of high *relational* dependence, and effects are less likely to emerge when studying generalised concerns about preferring independence. In support of this, research examining the effects of power on men's interpersonal aggression revealed that situational power (e.g., failing to influence partners in a disagreement) and relational power (e.g., feeling unable to influence partners in general) are distinct and produce unique effects (Overall et al., 2016). Specifically, men who were low in situational power were only more aggressive toward their female romantic partners if they were also low in relational power. Future research could use a similar methodological framework to examine the independent but

simultaneous effects of relational vs situational dependence on men's hostile sexism and support.

Importantly, the pattern of support seeking observed in men who endorsed hostile sexism was not better explained by adherence to masculine norms. Both hostile sexism and adherence to masculine norms involve traditional and often restrictive views about gender, and thus were strongly associated in the current study. Given the large body of literature outlining how greater adherence to masculine norms interrupts support-seeking (see Addis & Mahalik, 2003 for a review), it was important to distinguish whether any observed effects were unique to men's endorsement of hostile sexism or were associated with a more self-focused comparison to traditional gender norms. However, there was no evidence that masculinity adherence was associated with any behaviours that indicated resistance to support-seeking. The current findings are consistent with prior research suggesting that, despite the overlap in their content, masculinity and hostile sexism are distinct sets of beliefs that have unique links with men's behaviour. For example, Harrington and colleagues (2021) demonstrated that masculine gender role stress and endorsement of hostile sexism independently predicted men's aggressive responses to low relational power in romantic relationships. Together, hostile sexism and adherence to masculinity norms may capture different facets of gender attitudes that both explain behaviours in interpersonal contexts.

Implications for Hostile Sexism and Support Seeking

Our findings raise interesting questions about the role of dependence and gender in understanding the contexts in which men's endorsement of hostile sexism is harmful. Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) states that men's endorsement of hostile sexism involves concerns about women exploiting men's relational dependence and that the negativity associated with these concerns helps protect men's power and independence. Much of the prior research on men's hostile sexism has used heterosexual romantic couples thus

conflating interdependence and gender (e.g., Cross et al., 2017, 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013). However, research situated in non-romantic contexts, such as stranger dyad interactions or workplace settings, suggests that men's hostile sexism is associated with negativity toward women, even when there is little to no relationship dependence (e.g., Goh & Hall, 2015; Goh & Tignor, 2020; Masser & Abrams, 2004). Therefore, we expected that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism would be more resistant to seek support when they were situationally dependent on women (vs. men). As discussed earlier, our results did not reveal this expected pattern—instead men who endorsed hostile sexism were more resistant to seek support from other men. Interestingly, Fisher and colleagues (2021) found *no* evidence that support provider gender impacted when men who endorsed hostile sexism sought support from non-romantic close others (e.g., close friends or colleagues). Together with the findings from the current study, it appears that—at least in a non-romantic support seeking context—the concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have about *women* being manipulative and untrustworthy are less salient than concerns about dependence.

The current findings also signal a novel context in which men's endorsement of hostile sexism is costly for men's support—academic- or workplace-like settings where men are required to work together with others to achieve a task. Prior research on both hostile sexism and masculinity adherence has focused on men's support seeking for personal and emotional issues, like mental health concerns or a romantic breakup (e.g., Fisher et al., 2021; Addis & Mahalik, 2003). However, the current research shows that even in practical and task-based settings that more closely resemble workplace or academic teams, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism still display a resistance to seek support. This finding may have implications for men's career success and workplace performance. For example, research from organisational settings suggests that people who tend to resist seeking instrumental support due to concerns about dependence on others typically perform more poorly in

performance reviews than their colleagues who seek support when needed (Nadler et al., 2003). Thus, ironically, men's beliefs that women are less competent in leadership and managerial positions may impair their own workplace performance due to a resistance to seek support.

Observational research on support-seeking behaviours linked with hostile sexism also informs practical investigations aimed at improving men's access to mental health support. In their systematic review of the literature, Seidler et al. (2016) argue that initiatives intended to increase men's support seeking should start by understanding what men's support seeking looks like and what men's contextual preferences are when reaching out. By investigating a range of possible behaviours linked with seeking (or resisting) support in men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism, the current study aligns with this strategy for intervention design. Specifically, our results suggest that resistance to support for men who endorse hostile sexism manifests as being less direct and more emotionally suppressive but there was no evidence that hostile sexism was linked with more indirect support seeking behaviours, such as supplication. Thus, in a practical or clinical setting, support resistance may look like failing to disclose important information or downplaying the emotionality of their experiences. As such, potential interventions for facilitating men's support seeking that aim to encourage the use of practical and adaptive emotion regulation strategies, like cognitive reappraisal—where emotional experiences are reframed as less emotional (Gross & John, 2003)—may be beneficial. Indeed, evidence suggests that men experience healthier outcomes when they use more cognitive reappraisal and less expressive suppression (Flynn et al., 2010).

Strengths, Caveats, and Future Directions

The current study has several strengths. First, the use of dyadic and observational methods allowed for analysis of support interactions as they occurred, extending prior

research of men's hostile sexism and support seeking which has relied on self-report and hypothetical scenarios (Fisher et al., 2021). Further, the observed patterns of resistance to support shown by men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were replicated in their self-reported expressive suppression. This is an important development in the research as it explains how men who endorse hostile sexism can report feeling vulnerable and threatened on a questionnaire (Fisher et al., 2021) and still display behaviours that would suggest otherwise, such as resistance to support or withdrawal from conflict interactions (Overall et al., 2011). Perhaps the feelings of vulnerability and threat men who endorse hostile sexism feel in dependent contexts prompts the use of emotion regulation strategies, such as expressive suppression, to signal to others that they don't need support. Future research could use dyadic methods to investigate whether greater suppression of emotions and emotional expressions explains why men who endorse hostile sexism are given less support from others.

Despite the strengths, there are also some limitations to the current research. First, the study used a convenience sample of primarily first-year university students who tend to hold relatively egalitarian attitudes on average (e.g., Bryant, 2003). Thus, our findings primarily index variation in endorsement of hostile sexism at the lower range of the scale (i.e., men's "relatively high" endorsement of hostile sexism would indicate slight agreement with hostile sexism items). Thus, men's concerns about gendered exploitation may be relatively lower than samples from other domains (e.g., samples of middle-aged adults in workplaces) and therefore not generalise to those domains. In addition, the "cooperative game" was selected as an interdependent task that nonetheless involved asymmetric dependence. The power-related concerns linked with hostile sexism may be particularly prominent in contexts where power and dependence are more unequal or stratified, such as men following directions from their manager or men seeking support from a doctor or psychiatrist. For example, greater power differentials between help-seekers and providers (i.e., when help-seekers are lower-

status compared to providers) tend to prompt patterns of heightened resistance to seek support (e.g., Halabi & Nadler, 2017). Perhaps the dependency differential within the current study was not salient enough to trigger concerns about vulnerability and threat in men who endorse hostile sexism. Future research should examine the support behaviours men who endorse hostile sexism display in contexts where they are more explicitly dependent on a woman to achieve a task.

Our sample also meant that we specifically examined young adults' support seeking in a controlled, lab-based task. Research suggests that young adults tend to choose less proactive strategies to address issues and tend to be less effective than older adults in solving problems (see Blanchard-Fields, 2007 for a review). Thus, it is possible that older adults, who have more experience in negotiating interpersonal and instrumental problems, would use more direct support seeking strategies regardless of their endorsement of hostile sexism. Moreover, although this was an experimental context, we used correlational data to assess the links between men's hostile sexism and support behaviours. Given men's endorsement of hostile sexism is relatively stable (Glick et al., 1997; Hammond et al., 2018), we made the theoretical assumption that hostile sexism causally impacts men's support seeking behavior. However, without manipulation of men's endorsement of hostile sexism, we cannot conclude evidence about the directionality of the effects.

In sum, men's endorsement of hostile sexism is associated with feelings of vulnerability and potential threat when seeking support in contexts of higher relationship dependence (Fisher et al., 2021). However, it is unclear if these same concerns extend to contexts of high *situational* dependence and how they might impact the behaviours men who endorse hostile sexism use to seek (or resist) support. Results from the current study revealed that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism used less direct support seeking and were more withdrawn when asked to complete a task with an unknown man (vs. woman). Surprisingly,

there was no evidence that the level of task-based dependence (i.e., whether men had the instructions for the task vs. the resources to complete the task) influenced the support behaviours observed, suggesting that perhaps there is something particularly concerning about relationship dependence for men who endorse hostile sexism.

CHAPTER FOUR: HOW MEN WHO ENDORSE HOSTILE SEXISM RECEIVE SUPPORT

Men's endorsement of hostile sexism interrupts their perceptions of seeking support in contexts of higher relationship dependence (Fisher et al., 2021). Chapter Three tested whether endorsement of hostile sexism is also detrimental for men's support seeking in contexts where they are dependent on an unknown person (i.e., when *relationship* dependence is low) to complete a task (i.e., when *situational* dependence is higher). Surprisingly, in Chapter Three, no evidence indicated that situational dependence, in the absence of relationship dependence, was associated with the gender and dependence patterns we expected based on prior research on men's hostile sexism. Instead, the pattern of observed results suggested that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism sought less informational support and were more withdrawn and emotionally suppressive when paired with *men* (vs. women).

Chapter Three was the first to examine whether the concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have in close relationships were also salient when they were situationally dependent on others in a non-relationship context (i.e., when working with a stranger to complete a task). While the effects of interdependence should be strongest in intimate relationships where men's power is the most constrained, prior research assumed that these processes would still apply in contexts with lower affiliative motivations (e.g., Cross et al., 2019), such as the workplace, where men and women inevitably negotiate situational power/dependence. Altogether, the findings from Chapter Three indicate that there might be something uniquely threatening about *relationship-based* dependence for men who endorse hostile sexism, and we may only find the expected gender and dependence patterns when examining men's hostile sexism in relationships where men are most dependent on women—heterosexual romantic relationships.

Thus far, the chapters in this thesis have focused on the perceptions and behaviours of men who endorse hostile sexism when *seeking* support. This is often the first step of the support process; however, there are other important steps that can determine the effectiveness of a support interaction, such as whether the provider responds in a supportive way and how that support is received by the seeker (e.g., Feeney & Collins, 2014). Indeed, while we know men who endorse hostile sexism are less likely to seek support from close others (Fisher et al., 2021), it is possible they are given support regardless of their resistance to seek it out. In fact, one of the strongest determinants of positive support outcomes is not whether support is actually provided but how the receiver perceives the support (Uchino, 2009). Given that men who endorse hostile sexism tend to be less satisfied with the support they are given by their female romantic partner (Fisher et al., 2021), it is possible that even when they do seek or are given support, they are not perceiving the provider's response as supportive.

In Chapter Four, I return to using heterosexual romantic couples to investigate why men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism might not receive support from their partner. Utilising dyadic analyses over multiple time points, I examine whether the tendency for men who endorse hostile sexism to suppress their emotional expressions—revealed in Chapter Three—can explain why men are (a) given less enacted support by their romantic partner, and (b) perceive less support from their romantic partner. In using heterosexual romantic couples, Chapter Four does not contribute to the disentanglement of dependence and gender concerns in men's hostile sexism. Instead, this chapter aims to further our understanding of the ways in which men's endorsement of hostile sexism interferes with the support process— specifically, how men's sexist beliefs are associated with the support behaviour of their romantic partner.

Abstract

The concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have about depending on others in close relationships disrupt their perceptions and experiences of seeking support. The current research tests whether greater use of expressive suppression explains why men's hostile sexism interrupts the support men *receive* from female romantic partners (N= 117 couples). Results from multilevel, actor-partner interdependence (APIM) analyses indicate that men's (but not women's) own endorsement of hostile sexism is linked to 1) less enacted partner support and 2) less perceived partner support. However, unexpectedly, there was no evidence that expressive suppression mediated these links. Overall, these findings provide further evidence of the harms of men's endorsement of hostile sexism for men and reiterate that these costs are most evident in heterosexual romantic relationships where men are highly dependent on women.

Men's hostile sexism and support in heterosexual romantic relationships: An actor-partner interdependence perspective

Men who more strongly endorse hostile beliefs—such as believing that women are sexually and relationally manipulative—report discomfort with the support seeking process. Men who endorse hostile sexism are less satisfied with the support they receive from romantic partners and are less likely to seek support from non-romantic close others (Fisher et al., 2021). Moreover, instead of seeking support openly and directly during a pair-based task, men who endorse hostile sexism tend to withdraw from their interaction partner both behaviourally, and emotionally through the use of expressive suppression (see thesis Chapter Three). Even men's judgements about general supportiveness and care expressed by their partners are typically underperceived by men who endorse hostile sexism (Hammond & Overall, 2020), suggesting that while men who endorse hostile sexism are less likely to seek support in the first place, they are also less satisfied and appreciative of support they do receive. As a result, men who endorse hostile sexism are likely missing out on the benefits of engaging in support processes (e.g., Collins & Feeney, 2000) and, in fact, may be experiencing further costs associated with resisting support, such as poorer physical and emotional wellbeing (see Taylor et al., [2011] for a review) and lower relationship satisfaction (e.g., Overall et al., 2011).

But *why* do men who endorse hostile sexism resist support from others? One strand of theorising points to the negative judgments men who endorse hostile sexism make toward women who are seen to threaten men's power (e.g., Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004). From this perspective, men who endorse hostile sexism resist support because they believe women are untrustworthy and manipulative. However, another line of research argues that the consequences of men's hostile sexism can also be understood as the result of concerns about dependence (e.g., Cross et al., 2019; Fisher & Hammond, 2019; Hammond &

Overall, 2020). From this perspective, men who endorse hostile sexism resist support because depending on others in close relationships makes them vulnerable to potential exploitation. Moreover, preliminary evidence from observational research suggests that when men who endorse hostile sexism are given the opportunity to seek support, they tend to be less direct and more withdrawn—both physically and emotionally—albeit when paired with men and not women (Chapter Three). In the current research, we utilise dyadic data from romantic relationships to test whether men who endorse hostile sexism show a similar resistance to partner support through expressive suppression—an emotion regulation strategy aimed at concealing emotional expressions from others (Gross & John, 2003)—and whether this can explain why men who endorse hostile sexism tend to disengage from interpersonal support processes.

Men's Hostile Sexism and Discomfort with Support

Hostile sexism describes attitudes characterising women as intentionally, underhandedly, and undeservedly taking power from men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). As a result, people who endorse hostile sexism are more critical of career women (Glick et al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004) and female leaders (Gervais & Hillard, 2011; Ratliff et al., 2019; Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). The negative views of women in leadership roles are traditionally explained as the tendency to perceive women as having 'stolen' men's societal power while justifying men's power as fairly earned (Ruthig et al., 2017). However, according to ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), men's concerns about their own power versus women's power also arise in intimate domains. People who endorse hostile sexism view women as attempting to undermine men's power or intentionally manipulate men through sexual and emotional exploitation (Glick & Fiske, 1996). For men in heterosexual relationships, fears about women's manipulation are particularly salient because relationships inherently involve depending on others for love, intimacy, and support (e.g.,

Kelley et al., 2003; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003; Simpson et al., 2013). Thus, heterosexual men who hold insecurities about the (inter)dependencies of an ongoing relationship (i.e., higher attachment anxiety and avoidance) tend to endorse hostile sexism particularly strongly (Fisher & Hammond, 2019).

Social support is an interdependent process that occurs in all close relationships (e.g., Collins & Feeney, 2000; Cutrona et al., 2005; Fitzsimons et al., 2015). Relying on others for support is fundamental for a number of social and relational processes, such as the achievement of personal goals (Brunstein et al., 1996; Fitzsimons et al., 2015; Girme et al., 2013), the maintenance of mental and physical health (Taylor, 2011), and the development and continuation of satisfying relationships (e.g., Collins & Feeney, 2000; Don et al., 2013; Overall et al., 2010). In relationships, ongoing support contexts—such as pursuing a personally-important goal—requires support seekers to be dependent on support providers: Support providers can offer the assistance and comfort seekers need to cope with distress or challenges, or conversely, can interrupt goal pursuits by downplaying the importance of the goal or minimising the seeker's distress (Simpson et al., 1992). For this reason, the thought or action of seeking support can prompt feelings of vulnerability—particularly for people who have concerns about depending on others (Murray et al., 2006) or are more sensitive to potential rejection (Murray et al., 2000). Therefore, people often adopt strategies to attain needed support from partners while simultaneously mitigating the feelings of dependence associated with seeking and receiving support (Cavallo et al., 2009; Murray et al., 2006). To illustrate, some people seek support using more indirect strategies, such as by sulking or whining, while others avoid social support interactions all together, preferring to manage their distress on their own (Barbee et al., 1990).

The support-related strategies for men who endorse hostile sexism should be characterised by goals to mitigate any feelings of dependence and re-establish feelings of

power and control. This motivation toward self-protection over relationship enhancement, a strategy that parallels relationship-based constructs involving heightened fears of rejection and insecurity (Cavallo et al., 2013; Murray & Holmes, 2009), contributes to poorer relationship outcomes for both men who endorse hostile sexism and their intimate partners (Cross & Overall, 2019). For example, men who endorse hostile sexism tend to respond to potential challenges to their power by romantic partners—in the form of conflict discussions—by being more defensive and withdrawing from the interaction, contributing to poorer conflict resolution (Overall et al., 2011). Moreover, in response to heightened concerns about women exploiting men's relational dependence, men who endorse hostile sexism are more likely to lash out. For instance, men who endorse hostile sexism exhibit greater aggression toward female partners (e.g., Cross et al.., 2019; Forbes et al., 2004), and experience greater conflict about jealousy and power dynamics in their romantic relationships (Cross & Overall, 2019).

The consequences of supressing needs for support in dependency-heightened contexts such as in interpersonal support, should mean that men who endorse hostile sexism receive less support. Indeed, men who endorse hostile sexism tend to report a greater resistance to receiving support from their romantic partners or non-romantic close others (vs. acquaintances; Fisher et al., 2021). Mediation analyses from Fisher and colleagues (2021) also revealed that seeking support from close others is accompanied by heightened feelings of vulnerability and potential exploitation for men who endorse hostile sexism. This prior reseach has provided evidence for the support-related discomfort that is linked with hostile sexism, but no indication of the extent to which men who endorse hostile sexisms suppress their expression for support needs to their partners. In the current study, we extend this prior research by investigating the extent to which men who endorse hostile sexism enact expressive suppression, and in turn, impair support transaction. We also extend the prior

research on hostile sexism and support by specifically examining the support process dyadically—that is, gathering reports of both partners' experiences of support. Thus, the current research is the first test of whether being emotionally open and dependent on a romantic partner is a plausible mechanism that connects men's hostile sexism to resistance of partner support.

Expressive Suppression and Support

Emotional expressions are critical in providing information to social partners and eliciting predictable responses (e.g., Keltner & Gross, 1999). Specific to the current research, people tend to use expressions of emotions to signal to others that they need support (Gračanin et al., 2018; Hackenbracht & Tamir, 2010; Marsh et al., 2007). For example, if John is distressed about being made redundant at work, he could show his disappointment by crying. This would signal to his partner Mary that something is wrong and that John may require comforting. *Expressive suppression* describes the opposing process in which, instead of outwardly expressing his disappointment, John would attempt to hide his sadness from Mary (Richards & Gross, 1999). Research on the consequences of expressive suppression suggests it negatively impacts a variety of processes. For example, self-reported habitual expressive suppression interferes with interpersonal processes around relationship building and maintenance and therefore predicts reductions in relationship closeness and poorer relationship quality (Srivastava et al., 2009; Velotti et al., 2016). Moreover, the effort required to suppress emotions and emotional expressions depletes cognitive resources and is therefore associated with lower cognitive performance, impaired memory, and poorer self-control (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Muraven et al., 1998; Richards & Gross, 1999; 2000). Thus, holding back emotions and emotional expressions from others not only disrupts interpersonal communication of distress but also reduces people's own capacity to problem solve.

Greater expressive suppression is a plausible explanation for why men's endorsement of hostile sexism would be linked with poorer support experiences for two reasons. First, expression of emotions is a signal of openness and vulnerability. When people express their emotions they signal to others that they are approachable (Simpson et al., 1996), willing to build rapport (Tickle-Degnan & Rosenthal, 1990), and open to building and maintaining a supportive and caring relationship (Lin, 1986). Thus, expressing emotions signals to partners that they are committed and worthy of relational investment. Second, the suppression of emotional expressions is disruptive of partners' ability to strengthen the relationship and fulfil mutual goals because they are no longer provided with these relationship-building signals (Zaki et al., 2008). Indeed, the "weak link" model of suppression illustrates that the expressive suppression of only one partner in a couple is sufficient to undermine communication, cooperation, and connection (Sasaki et al., 2021). Therefore, if men who endorse hostile sexism are attempting to hide their emotional expressions from their partners when distressed, their partners may not be aware that they need support, or may not be willing to provide adequate support due to loss of connection and relational trust.

An individual's expressive suppression also disrupts their own ability to detect when support is given. Indeed, studies have shown that the effort required to suppress emotions and emotional expressions interferes with the ability of the suppressor to adequately attend to social information and social cues. Here, individuals who engage in expressive suppression fail to absorb the appropriate level of detail required to recognise support attempts and to effectively provide others with support, which contributes to poorer social interactions and more negative relations with others (Butler et al., 2003; Gross & John, 2003). Consequently, longitudinal research examining expressive suppression and adaptive social functioning finds that students who suppress more tend to perceive fewer social supports available to them (Srivastava et al., 2009). In this way, if men who endorse hostile sexism have a tendency to

supress their emotional expressions it is possible that this will not only disrupt the support they are given by their romantic partner but also impair their perceptions of the support they receive from their partner.

Current Study and Hypotheses

The current study conducted dyadic analyses to investigate the extent to which men's endorsement of hostile sexism is linked with lower receipt of support in their romantic relationships. We analysed a sample of 117 heterosexual couples who each completed monthly questionnaires on progress toward an important goal and the level of support in their relationships. We took an actor-partner interdependence perspective on the support process by focusing on two outcome variables: the partner's enacted support (i.e., the level of support the partner reported giving the actor) and people's received support (i.e., the level of support the actor perceived they were given by their partner). By using both enacted support and perceived support as outcomes, we were able to distinguish between two important aspects of support: how much support men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are given by their partners as well as the experiences of men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism in those contexts. Research suggests that the benefits of social support occur in contexts of higher enacted support (e.g., Cohen, 2004), as well as in contexts of higher felt support (e.g., Uchino, 2009) so it is important to examine both when understanding received support.

Our first set of hypotheses concerned whether the expressive suppression linked with men's hostile sexism impacted the support their romantic partners *enacted*. Men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism tend to engage in strategies that reduce any feelings of dependence on women (e.g., Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013). One way they might do this is by suppressing their emotions and emotional expressions (Chapter Three; Overall et al., 2011). Given expressive suppression disrupts key inter-relational processes, such as communication and cooperation (e.g., Butler et al., 2003; Gross & John, 2003; Sasaki

et al., 2021), it is likely that partners of men who endorse hostile sexism will provide less enacted support. Based on this research, we hypothesised that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism would receive less enacted support from their romantic partners (Hypothesis 1a), and that this link would be statistically mediated by men's higher expressive suppression (Hypothesis 1b).

Our second set of hypotheses examined whether the expressive suppression linked with men's hostile sexism impacted the support they *perceived* to be given by their partner. Prior research shows that the cognitive effort required to suppress emotions and emotional expressions impedes the suppressors ability to recognise the support they are given (e.g., Butler et al., 2003; Gross & John, 2003), and disrupts the formation of trusting and satisfying relationships (Lin, 1986), leading to lower perceptions of available support (Srivastava et al., 2009). Accordingly, we hypothesized that men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism would perceive less support from their romantic partners (Hypothesis 2a), and that this link would be statistically mediated by men's higher expressive suppression (Hypothesis 2b).

Method

Participants

One-hundred and seventeen heterosexual couples involved in long-term, committed relationships ($M_{(duration)} = 32.95$ months, $SD = 70.94$ months) responded to advertisements placed around a New Zealand university. Participants were aged between 18 to 69 years ($M = 23.47$, $SD = 7.04$). Each person was reimbursed NZ$100 in grocery or petrol vouchers for completing (a) an initial lab-based session and (b) monthly questionaries across the subsequent 9 months. Some participants did not complete all monthly questionnaires because the relationship dissolved ($N = 10$ couples) or they did not respond ($N = 63$ participants). Attrition analyses concluded that participants were no more or less likely to drop out of the

study based on any their endorsement of hostile sexism, their expressive suppression, or their enacted or perceived support (ts < -.11, ps > .912). The study received ethical approval from the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee.

Procedure

Participants in this study were part of a larger study on goal completion in romantic relationships. In the initial lab-based session, participants completed a questionnaire asking about demographic information, as well as individual-difference and relationship-related measures. They also individually identified four ongoing goals: a personal growth goal, a relationship goal, a career/education goal, and a health goal. Following this session, participants were contacted at monthly intervals to complete an online questionnaire for the following 9 months. This questionnaire asked about the support they received from their partner, and how much they attempted to suppress their emotions around their partner, over the prior month.

Measures

Sexist Attitudes

Participants completed the 22-item Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) as part of the initial questionnaire. Eleven items indexed hostile sexism (e.g., "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash"; -3 = *strongly disagree, 3 = strongly agree*; α = .92). Eleven items indexed benevolent sexism (e.g., "Women should be cherished and protected by men"; α = .83).

Expressive Suppression

Each month, participants completed three items, adapted from the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003), indexing suppression of emotional expressions over the prior month. Items included: "I tried to control or suppress any negative emotions", "I tried to hide my thoughts and feelings from my partner", and "I expressed my true

emotions to my partner" – reverse coded (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Items were averaged so that higher scores indexed higher expressive suppression had good reliability ($\alpha = .71$).

Emotional Support Provision

Participants completed two items indexing the relational support they provided their partner in each of the monthly questionnaires. These items were: "I listened to and comforted my partner" and "I was affectionate and loving toward my partner" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree* ; $\alpha = .79$).

Perceived Partner Support Provision

Participants completed the same two items as the self-report support provision measure but with the actor/partner pronouns switched e.g., "My partner listened to and comforted me" and "My partner was affectionate and loving towards me" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*; $\alpha = .83$).

Results

Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics and correlations across the primary measures for men (below the diagonal) and women (above the diagonal). As expected, men's and women's hostile sexism was positively associated with emotion suppression. Also as expected, men's and women's hostile sexism was negatively associated with self-reported support provision, and perceived partner support provision. However, these correlations do not account for measurement dependencies within couples or across time. Therefore, to more appropriately test our predicted effects, we used multilevel actor-partner interdependence modeling (multilevel APIM). Using a multilevel model approach allowed us to identify the unique associations between men's endorsement of hostile sexism, emotion suppression, and the support they receive from their romantic partner while accounting for the dependence in

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Primary Measures

	Men	Women	Gender diff.					
	M (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*t*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Hostile Sexism	-0.10 (1.30)	-1.28 (1.32)	7.76**	—	.53**	.11**	-.10**	-.10**
2. Benevolent Sexism	-0.44 (1.07)	-1.05 (1.08)	17.80**	.46**	—	.10**	-.11**	-.09**
3. Expressive Suppression	3.21 (1.34)	2.97 (1.27)	3.85**	.22**	.14**	—	-.31**	-.41**
4. Support Provision	5.81 (1.23)	5.87 (1.45)	-0.58	-.27**	-.08*	-.42**	—	.71**
5. Perceived Partner Support	5.64 (1.35)	6.00 (1.22)	-6.27**	-.26**	-.05	-.48**	.76**	—

Note. Hostile sexism and benevolent sexism were assessed on scales with a midpoint of 0 (-3 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *strongly agree*); all other measures had a midpoint of 4 (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). Correlations above the diagonal are for women ($N = 117$); correlations below the diagonal are for men ($N = 117$). *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

the data over time (i.e., the responses across time within each dyad will be more similar relative to the responses of other dyads). As such, the dataset was structured so that time (Level 1) was nested within dyads (Level 2), and that variables from each partner in the dyad were differentiated by gender (e.g., each dyad had a measurement for men's hostile sexism and for women's hostile sexism). Intercepts were estimated as random effects (i.e., were allowed to vary across dyads). We conducted a separate model for each outcome measure: 1) ratings of support reportedly given, and 2) ratings of perceived partner support. All analyses were conducted using MPlus Version 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). We used maximum likelihood estimation (robust standard errors) in all analyses.

Men's Hostile Sexism, Expressive Suppression, and Enacted Support

First, we examined the extent to which men's hostile sexism predicted enacted support in the relationship (see Figure 4.1 for predicted model). Specifically, we expected men's hostile sexism would be associated with less enacted support from partners (Hypothesis 1a). We tested these predictions by regressing men's and women's hostile sexism on both men's and women's enacted support. As is typical in sexism research, we included benevolent sexism as a covariate in all analyses. Results, displayed in Table 4.2., revealed that as expected men's hostile sexism was negatively associated with enacted support from partners. Importantly, the results for women's hostile sexism and for men's benevolent sexism were not significant, indicating these effects were specific to *men's* endorsement of *hostile* sexism.

To test our hypothesis that expressive suppression mediated the link between men's hostile sexism and partner's enacted support, we included men's and women's emotion suppression in the model. Unexpectedly, there was no evidence for any links between men's hostile sexism and men's expressive suppression when accounting for the direct links with enacted support ($B = .19$, 95% CI [-.06, .43], $t = 1.50$, $p = .134$) The only effect that reached significance was between men's expressive suppression and men's enacted support, whereby

Table 4.2

The Effects of Men's and Women's Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism on Men's and Women's Enacted Partner Support

	Men's Enacted Partner Support				Women's Enacted Partner Support			
		95% CI				95% CI		
	B	Low	High	*t*	*B*	Low	High	*t*
Men's hostile sexism	**-.23**	**-.41**	**-.05**	**-2.48***	**-.23**	**-.44**	**-.03**	**-2.22***
Women's hostile sexism	-.14	-.36	.07	-1.30	.01	-.17	.19	0.13
Men's benevolent sexism	.04	-.22	.30	0.29	-.04	-.25	.18	-0.33
Women's benevolent sexism	.06	-.16	.28	0.55	.03	-.18	.24	0.28

Note. CI = confidence interval. Predicted effects are shown in bold. *$p < .05$.

Figure 4.1

Actor-partner interdependence model showing the effects of men's and women's hostile sexism on men's and women's enacted partner support
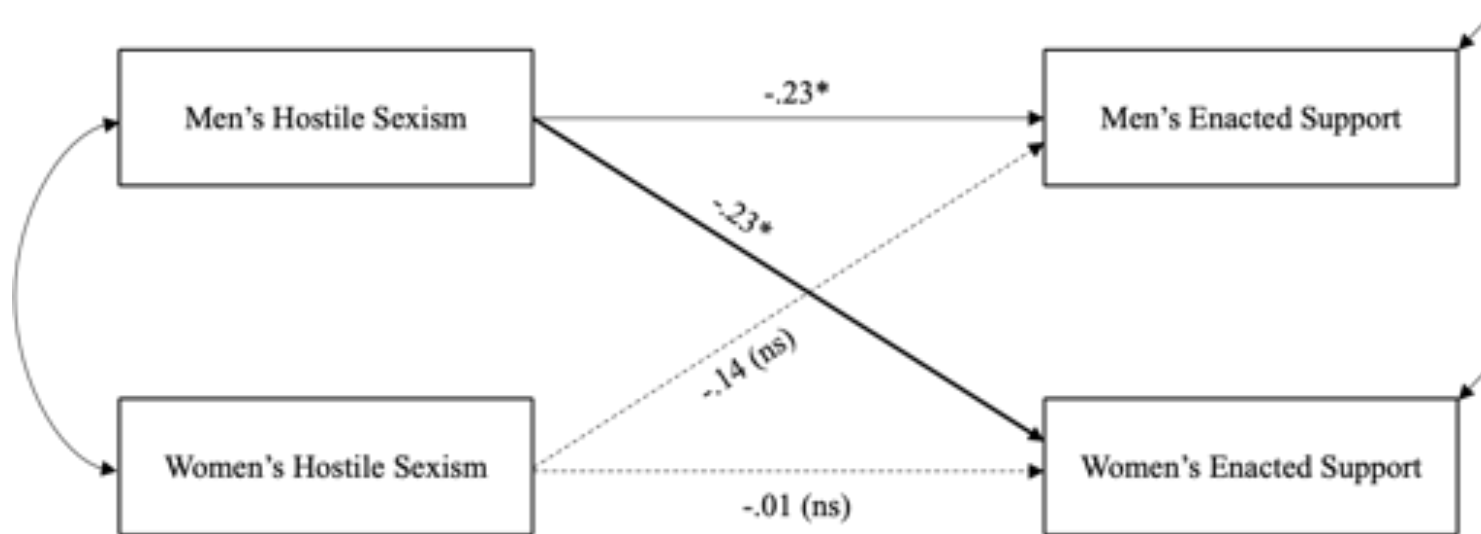
men who supressed their emotions more gave less support to their partner (B = -.42, 95% CI [-.72, -.11], t = -2.68, p = .007). In sum, results supported Hypothesis 1a by indicating that men who endorse hostile sexism are given less enacted support by their partner. However, the results did not support Hypothesis 1b as there was no evidence that men who endorse hostile sexism were given less partner support because they suppressed their emotions.

Hostile Sexism, Emotion Suppression, and Perceived Partner Support

Second, we examined the extent to which men's hostile sexism predicted perceived support from partners (see Figure 4.2 for predicted model). We expected men's hostile sexism would be associated with less perceived support from partners (Hypothesis 2a). We tested these predictions by regressing both men's and women's hostile sexism on men's and women's perceived support. Again, we included benevolent sexism as a covariate in all analyses. Results are displayed in Table 4.3. As expected, men's hostile sexism was negatively associated with the support they perceived from partners. Again, there was no evidence for effects of women's hostile sexism or men's benevolent sexism, indicating these effects were specific to *men's* endorsement of hostile sexism.

To test for mediation, we included men's and women's emotion suppression as a mediator of the link between men's and women's hostile sexism and perceived support. Again, unexpectedly, there was no evidence for any links between men's hostile sexism and men's expressive suppression (B = .18, 95% CI [-.10, .46], t = 1.29, p = .198) when accounting for the direct links with perceived support The only effect that reached significance was between men's expressive suppression and men's perceived support, whereby men who supressed their emotions more perceived less partner support (B = -.51, 95% CI [-.78, -.25], t = -3.82, p < .001). In sum, results supported Hypothesis 2a by indicating that men who endorse hostile sexism perceive less partner support. However, the

Table 4.3

The Effects of Men's and Women's Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism on Men's and Women's Enacted Partner Support

	Men's Enacted Partner Support				Women's Enacted Partner Support			
		95% CI				95% CI		
	B	Low	High	*t*	*B*	Low	High	*t*
Men's hostile sexism	**-.23**	**-.41**	**-.05**	**-2.48***	**-.23**	**-.44**	**-.03**	**-2.22***
Women's hostile sexism	-.14	-.36	.07	-1.30	.01	-.17	.19	0.13
Men's benevolent sexism	.04	-.22	.30	0.29	-.04	-.25	.18	-0.33
Women's benevolent sexism	.06	-.16	.28	0.55	.03	-.18	.24	0.28

Note. CI = confidence interval. Predicted effects are shown in bold. *$p < .05$.

Figure 4.2

Actor-partner interdependence model showing the effects of men's and women's hostile sexism on men's and women's perceived partner support
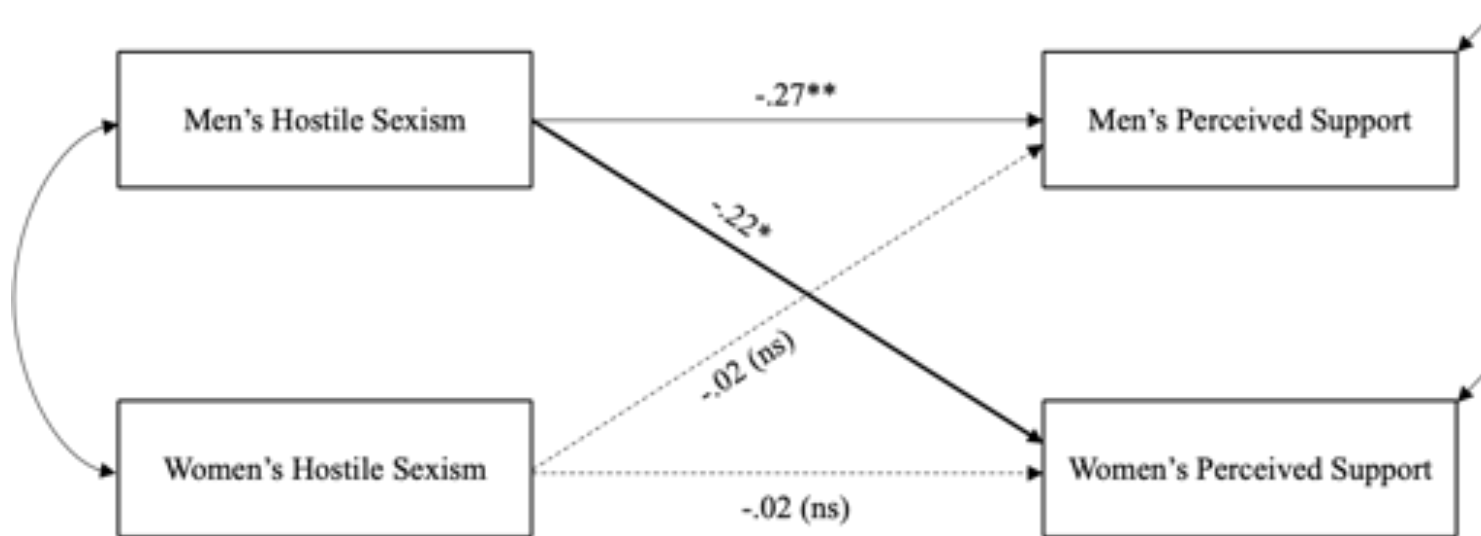
results did not support Hypothesis 2b as there was no evidence that men who endorse hostile sexism were given less partner support because they suppressed their emotions.

Discussion

Men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism receive less support from their female romantic partners. Using heterosexual romantic couples' reports of their support experiences over six months, the current study indicated that men's (but not women's) endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with (a) less *enacted* partner support, and (b) less *perceived* partner support. These results suggest that men who endorse hostile sexism are missing out on the potential benefits of both enacted and perceived partner support (e.g., Feeney & Collins, 2014; Girme et al., 2013; Reis et al., 2004) and provide further evidence of the personal costs of men's endorsement of hostile sexism. Unexpectedly, although men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were higher in expressive suppression (compared to men lower in hostile sexism) on average, there was no evidence expressive suppression accounted for the link between men's hostile sexism and lower received partner support. Thus, while men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism experienced lower support from their partners, the evidence did not identify a potential reason.

The link between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and more negative support experiences was novel for assessing experiences in real-world relationships, but nonetheless fits within a general pattern of relationship disruption. The links between men's hostile sexism and receiving less support from romantic partners (both enacted and perceived support) align with previous research around men's hostile sexism and discomfort with support seeking in romantic and non-romantic dependent contexts (e.g., Fisher et al., 2021), and more negative perceptions of romantic partners' dependence-oriented support (Hammond & Overall, 2020). Moreover, unlike in the Fisher and colleagues (2021) study, the effects

observed in the current research were specific to *men's* (but not women's) endorsement of hostile sexism, providing additional support that men's hostile sexism is underpinned by concerns about vulnerability in high dependence relationships. Together, these studies underscore a principle of ambivalent sexism theory that men's sexist attitudes toward women undermine their relationship needs (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and build on recent theory that the negativity of men's hostile sexism is particularly heightened in contexts of relational interdependence versus a generalised antagonism toward women in general (see Hammond et al., 2020 for a review).

Our results also suggested that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism used expressive suppression as a way of regulating their emotions; there was a direct link between men's hostile sexism and greater use of expressive suppression. This finding reflects those found in previous research where men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism suppressed their emotions more, both habitually and in contexts where they could seek support (Chapter Three). These findings support the idea that men who endorse hostile sexism attempt to avoid feelings of dependence by withdrawing from others, a pattern that is also observed in conflict discussions where men who endorse hostile sexism are more defensive and less open to female partners perspectives (Overall et al., 2011). Suppression directly targets the expression of emotions and is therefore a strategy that has interpersonal motivations (Gross & John, 2003); individuals who engage in expressive suppression are attempting to influence how they are perceived by others. For men who endorse hostile sexism, being seen by women as emotionally expressive leaves them vulnerable to potential exploitation; therefore, expressive suppression likely serves a self-protective function.

Unexpectedly, there was no evidence that expressive suppression statistically explained why men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism received less partner support. One interpretation of this pattern is that expressive suppression is not a mediator of support, but

rather a separate yet related cost of men's endorsement of hostile sexism. Here, the expressive suppression associated with men's hostile sexism may disrupt other relational processes, such as conflict resolution (Low et al., 2019; Sasaki et al., 2021; Thomson et al., 2018) and displays of intimacy (Peters & Jamieson, 2016). What then could be disrupting support? Much of the research on men's hostile sexism has highlighted how concerns about dependence prompt defensiveness in the form of criticism, coercion, or belittling partners (Cross et al., 2017; Overall et al., 2011). Although this type of negativity is usually associated with conflict discussions rather than support, research on attachment insecurity suggests that when distressed, people who orient themselves away from dependence such as those higher in attachment avoidance, use anger and hostility as a strategy to maintain independence (Kobak & Sceery, 1988; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2011). Perhaps men who endorse hostile sexism exhibit a similar defensiveness when distressed, a process that occurs *alongside* expressive suppression, but it is this aggressive defensiveness specifically that undermines the communication of their support needs to partners and clouds their own perceptions of partner's support attempts. Future research could utilise observational methods with romantic couples to examine whether men who endorse hostile sexism respond to emotional distress using statements such as "You aren't supporting me very well" (blame) or "Women are supposed to be caring" (manipulation), and whether this undermines received support.

Implications for Understanding Hostile Sexism

The current research provides further evidence of the personal harms of men's endorsement of hostile sexism. The disrupted support process was corroborated from both members in the couple—men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism perceived less support from their romantic partner, but also, their partner's reported enacting less support. The benefits of perceived partner support are diverse and well documented. People who perceive their partners to be more understanding, validating and caring support providers

experience enhanced relationship wellbeing (e.g., Gordon et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2004; Reis & Gable, 2015), greater physical and psychological wellbeing (e.g., Reis & Gable, 2015; Stanton et al., 2019), and an improved ability to thrive both through good and bad times (Feeney, 2004; Feeney & Collins, 2015). Indeed, perceived lack of support erodes relationship satisfaction (Overall et al., 2010; Reis et al., 2004) and interferes with goal strivings in those who need support (Feeney 2004). Moreover, in times of distress, enacted support can help partners feel more positive about achieving future goals and improve goal success over time (Girme et al., 2013). Thus, in perceiving and receiving less partner support, men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are likely missing out on opportunities to benefit from social support and may even experience harm through reduced relationship satisfaction and impaired goal success.

Our findings also have theoretical implications for how we understand the roles of gender and interdependence in men's hostile sexism. Much of the negativity associated with hostile sexism, such as lower relationship satisfaction and greater relational conflict, is uniquely linked with men's (but not women's) endorsement of these beliefs (e.g., Cross et al., 2019, Hammond & Overall, 2013). This is likely because men who endorse hostile sexism have concerns about depending on female partners for love, care, and affection, while women who endorse hostile sexism *prefer* depending on partners as this aligns with their beliefs that women should be subordinate to men (Glick & Fiske, 1996). However, recent research examining hostile sexism and support has not found evidence for this specific gendered pattern. Instead, men's and women's endorsement of hostile sexism were both linked with poorer support outcomes (Fisher et al., 2021; Chapter Three). The current research is distinguished by examining men's hostile sexism and support in a heterosexual romantic context, while the above research used non-romantic dyads (e.g., Fisher et al., 2021; Chapter Three). The fact that this gender distinction between men's and women's hostile sexism was

only found in the context where it is most expected (i.e., heterosexual romantic relationships) underscores the theoretical importance of disentangling dependence and gender. Future research should continue to pursue the examination of men's hostile sexism in non-romantic contexts to strengthen our understanding of the relative contributions of dependence and gender on the outcomes of men's hostile sexism.

Strengths, Caveats, and Future Directions

One of the key strengths of the current research is the ecological validity of the data. We asked people to report how often they used expressive suppression and supported their partner each month across a nine month period. In doing so, we were able to capture these behaviors as they occurred in people's lives, rather than relying on experimental manipulation or hypothetical scenarios. Another strength of the current study is that, by taking an actor-partner interdependence model approach, we were able to model the effects of men's endorsement of hostile sexism on both their own and their partners' experiences of support within the relationship. Although prior research examining the links between men's hostile sexism and support experiences has used dyadic data (e.g., Chapter Three), the analytic method has not been dyadic. As such, the current research is the first to find that men's endorsement of hostile sexism is not only associated with their own perceptions of support but also their partners' self-reported support provision.

Despite the strengths of the current research, there are some caveats. We made the theoretical assumption that emotion suppression would be a mediator of the links between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and lower received support, rather than experiences of support mediating men's expressive suppression. Indeed, it is possible that the reverse mediation model would be statistically plausible: men who endorse hostile sexism receive relatively less support from their romantic partners, and in turn, they respond to a lack of support by suppressing their emotions when distressed. Some recent research supports this

sequence of events—people who perceive close others to be more responsive to their needs engage in more emotion expression (Ruan et al., 2020). Future research could test this sequence of effects, alongside the proposal outlined earlier that it is the negativity associated with men's hostile sexism that interferes with how they receive support. Specifically, experimental research could observe the behaviours heterosexual romantic couples use during support interactions. If men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism receive less support due to heightened negativity toward their partner, they might display more coercive or derogatory behaviours, such as belittling their partner's efforts to support them or blaming their partner for their distress, which prompts their partner to withdraw or resist giving support.

In addition, future studies should examine the generalisability of our findings across cultures. All three components of the current research—endorsement of sexist beliefs, expressive suppression, and support interactions differ across cultures. As highlighted in previous research, it is possible that in more collectivistic countries, such as Asian countries, cultural norms are more likely to guide people's perceptions of support than beliefs about gender (e.g., Taylor et al., 2004; 2007). Similarly, in contexts where emotional restraint is encouraged, there is no evidence that expressive suppression is associated with adverse social functioning—those costs tend to be found in Western samples (e.g., Soto et al., 2011). Therefore, the norms around the appropriateness of emotional expression are likely to have a stronger effect on habitual expressive suppression than beliefs about gender. Studies examining support interactions in romantic couples across different cultures would help establish the contribution of people's personal gender beliefs versus the normative beliefs about how and when emotions should be expressed.

Conclusion

Men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism tend to resist seeking support from close others due to concerns about feeling vulnerable and exploited (Fisher et al., 2021). The current research investigated whether greater suppression of emotions could explain why men who endorse hostile sexism receive less support. The findings revealed that men's endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with (a) less enacted partner support, and (b) less perceived partner support. However, although men's hostile sexism was associated with greater use of expressive suppression, there was no evidence that expressive suppression explained why they received less support. The current results align with prior research suggesting that men's endorsement of hostile sexism has costs for men's ability to be supported in contexts of high relationship dependence and underscores the theoretical relevance of heterosexual romantic relationships in understanding men's hostile sexism. Given expressive suppression did not explain the resistance to partner support associated with men's hostile sexism, future research should examine other possible mechanisms, such as heightened negativity toward women.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL DISCUSSION

Ambivalent sexism theory suggests that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism have specific fears about their relational dependence on *women* being exploited (Glick & Fiske, 1996). However, by using primarily heterosexual romantic samples, prior research addressing the role of interdependence in men's hostile sexism has conflated concerns about dependence with concerns about gender (e.g., Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2013). This thesis aimed to disentangle these two constructs by examining how men who endorse hostile sexism seek and receive support under different conditions of dependence and genders of social partners. In this final chapter, I first discuss the aims and findings of the studies presented in this thesis. I then review the theoretical contributions generated from investigating men's hostile sexism across different types of relationships and the practical contributions of understanding when men's endorsement of hostile sexism is costly for men. Finally, I discuss the implications and strengths of examining men's support seeking from a more interpersonal level, the limitations of this thesis and future directions for research on men's hostile sexism and support seeking.

How do Men who Endorse Hostile Sexism Seek and Experience Support?

Chapter Two investigated the perceptions of both receiving and seeking support linked with men's hostile sexism (see upper section of Table 5.1). Unsurprisingly, much of the research examining men's endorsement of hostile sexism has focused on the consequences for women, which include increased aggression and violence toward women (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Lynch & Renzetti, 2020) and female partners (e.g., Cross et al., 2017; Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall et al., 2011). However, given the negativity associated with men's hostile sexism, especially within social interactions (e.g., Goh & Hall, 2015; Goh & Tignor, 2020), there were unexplored costs of men's endorsement of hostile sexism for men themselves. The two studies in Chapter Two demonstrated that men who more strongly

Table 5.1

Summary of the different support contexts and study outcomes of each thesis chapter, alongside the type of dependence and gender contexts

used.

Thesis Chapter	Support Context	Study Outcome	Dependence Context	Gender Context
Chapter Two	*Study 1*: Retrospective support seeking	*Study 1*: Satisfaction with support	*Study 1*: Romantic dependence	*Study 1*: People in heterosexual romantic relationships
				Study 2: Hypothetically manipulated
	Study 2: Hypothetical support seeking	*Study 2*: Likelihood of seeking support	*Study 2*: Hypothetically manipulated *relational* dependence	
Chapter Three	Shared, task-based goal	Support seeking behaviour	Experimentally manipulated *situational* dependence	Experimentally manipulated
Chapter Four	Dyadic, goal-based support over time	Received partner support	Romantic dependence	Heterosexual romantic couples

endorsed hostile sexism tended to be less satisfied with the support they received from their romantic partner and were less likely to seek support from a non-romantic close other (i.e., a close friend or colleague). Together, these studies demonstrated that the costs of men's endorsement of hostile sexism for support are two-fold; men's hostile sexism impedes the likelihood of initiating support seeking interactions with close others, as well as impacting how they perceive the support they are given from romantic partners.

These findings strengthen the theorised underpinnings of men's endorsement of hostile sexism as being driven by relational insecurities about depending on others. Indeed, mediation analyses revealed two key fears associated with men who endorse hostile sexism's resistance to support: a fear of potential exploitation (e.g., "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash"; Glick & Fiske, 1996) and a fear of being vulnerable (e.g., "Listening to his wife shames a man"; Chen et al., 2009). However, in Study 2, interesting gender patterns were discovered where men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were no more or less concerned about exploitation or vulnerability when seeking support from a woman (vs. a man). This vignette-based study was the first test of whether the consequences of men's endorsement of hostile sexism differ based on the gender of their interaction partner. These findings did not align with our expectations based on ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and hinted that the role of gender in directing the behavior of men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism may be less specific than initially thought.

Chapter Three investigated the support seeking behaviours linked with men's endorsement of hostile sexism as they engaged in an activity with an unfamiliar person. This chapter built on Chapter Two by exploring whether the interdependence concerns associated with men's hostile sexism extend to contexts of *task-based* dependence. It also offered a second test of whether men who endorse hostile sexism behave differently based on the

gender of their interaction partner (see the middle section of Table 5.1), but in a real-life setting. The results from Chapter Three provided observational evidence that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are (a) less direct when seeking support, (b) more withdrawn from their interaction partner, and (c) more emotionally suppressive, but only when interacting with other *men.* Moreover, there was no evidence that any of the behaviors linked with hostile sexism were modified by task-based dependence. In summary, when examining differences in men's endorsement of hostile sexism in contexts that differ significantly from heterosexual romantic relationships (i.e., stranger pairings in a task-based setting), we did not identify any expected patterns of negativity directed toward women.

Although the results from Chapter Three deviated from our predictions, the dyadic focus on the naturalistic support behaviours linked with hostile sexism provided important information. Where Chapter Two relied on memories of past support seeking attempts or hypothetical support scenarios, this chapter demonstrated how hostile sexism shapes outcomes for men in actual interactions. First, the use of observational methods yielded evidence that men who endorse hostile sexism resist support primarily by withdrawing from interaction partners and using fewer direct support seeking strategies. Second, the results indicate that even when men who endorse hostile sexism are in a context where there is arguably no relational dependence (i.e., when completing a task with an unfamiliar person) their support seeking is still disrupted. While the level of task-based dependence did not contribute to this disruption, there was something about communicating and interacting with other men within this context that made seeking support uncomfortable for men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism. As in Chapter Two, this unexpected gender finding provides further evidence that examining men's hostile sexism outside of heterosexual romantic relationships can produce results that do not appear to follow typical patterns.

Chapter Four used the link identified in Chapter Three between men's hostile sexism and expressive suppression to examine *why* the support process is disrupted for men who endorse hostile sexism (see the lower section of Table 5.1). Using dyadic data from heterosexual romantic couples, this study tested whether men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism concealed their emotions and emotional expressions from their partners, thereby disrupting their ability to adequately receive support. The results suggested that men (but not women) who endorsed hostile sexism (a) received less enacted support from their partners, and (b) perceived less support from their partners. However, although men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism used more expressive suppression in general, there was no evidence this was associated with the support they received. These findings contribute to a growing literature indicating that the concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have with interdependence in close relationships disrupts how they seek *and* receive support.

The dyadic data and analyses utilised in Chapter Four are unique in that they examine the links between men's hostile sexism and the support men are actually given by romantic partners at specific instances across time. Prior chapters focused on how men's endorsement of hostile sexism disrupts their largely internal decision to seek (or resist) support, or their own evaluations of the support they are given. The results of Chapter Four extended these prior findings by demonstrating that men's endorsement of hostile sexism not only disrupts men's own judgements and behaviours during the support process but also disrupt the way men are given support by others in real life interactions. Indeed, while there was no evidence that expressive suppression mediated the link between men's hostile sexism and poorer support outcomes, the findings from Chapter Four suggest that men's hostile sexism contributes to lower communication (or miscommunication) of their support needs. These cross-partner effects underscore the importance of utilising an interpersonal perspective in understanding how men seek and receive support.

Men's Endorsement of Hostile Sexism is Costly for Everyone

A fundamental implication connecting the chapters of this thesis is that the perpetuation of gender inequality through endorsement of hostile sexism has costs for everyone. Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) states that people's endorsement of hostile sexism and benevolent sexism form a tandem system that functions to maintain gender inequality. The contribution of hostile sexism to gender inequality is theorised to be the aggressive punishment of women who are considered a threat to men's social power (e.g., feminists and career women), while the contribution of benevolent sexism is theorised to be praise and reward for women who adhere to traditional yet limiting gender roles (e.g., housewives; Glick & Fiske, 1996). By placing value on women's occupation of lower status roles and reprimanding women who challenge for higher status, endorsement of ambivalent sexism helps preserve the status-quo of inequality. Accordingly, a major focus of the literature has been the broader consequences of men's hostile sexism for *women*; men's endorsement of beliefs that women are manipulative and are actively attempting to undermine men's power legitimize aggressive and violent behaviour toward women, limiting their opportunities for career success and placing them at serious risk of physical and psychological harm (e.g., Glick et al., 2000; Glick et al., 1997; Lynch & Renzetti, 2020; Masser & Abrams, 2004).

This thesis contributes more evidence that the perceptions of threat and the relational insecurities associated with men's endorsement of hostile sexism have costs for men. Traditionally, research has conceptualised men's hostile sexism as a desire for dominance over women (e.g., Sibley & Wilson, 2007), suggesting that men only stand to gain from the maintenance of gender inequality. However, this conceptualisation fails to consider the contexts in which men do not feel more dominant over women and in fact feel more vulnerable to exploitation, such as in relationships characterised by high dependence (e.g.,

Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2020). In doing so, past research often overlooked the areas in which men's endorsement of hostile sexism, and by extension the perpetuation of gender inequality, may be harmful to men. These harms are a principle of ambivalent sexism theory—hostile sexism generates substantial costs for men's ability to meet emotional and relational goals, thus necessitating endorsement of benevolent sexism (see Glick & Fiske, 1996). By adopting an interdependence perspective of men's hostile sexism, this thesis demonstrates that across romantic and non-romantic close relationships, the fears associated with vulnerability and potential exploitation by others, prevent men who endorse hostile sexism from seeking and receiving support when distressed, illustrating evidence for the theoretical principle that—specifically in more interdependent contexts—men's endorsement of hostile sexism is harmful to women *and* men.

That is not to say that the costs of men's endorsement of hostile sexism for men are equal to that for women or that men don't benefit in any way from their endorsement of these beliefs; attitudes that help maintain the status-quo will always benefit the group holding higher societal power (i.e., men). In particular, any disruptions to heterosexual men's capacity to seek and receive support are simultaneously disruptions to their *partners'* capacity to feel connected via giving relational support (see Cutrona et al., 2005; Feeney & Collins, 2015). More generally, it is not the position of this thesis to minimise the consequences of men's hostile sexism for women or side with groups looking to minimise people's responsibility for gender inequality. Instead, the goal of understanding the costs of men's hostile sexism for men is to identify underutilised strategies to mobilise men to push for gender equality. To illustrate, in the last 50 years, women have made substantial progress entering traditionally male-dominated industries (e.g., law, dentistry, electrical engineering), yet the proportion of men in traditionally female-dominated roles (e.g., nurse, social worker, early childhood teacher) has remained relatively stagnant (Croft et al., 2015). Increasing

opportunities for women in STEM careers without simultaneously addressing the disadvantages for men in care-oriented disciplines likely results in a disproportionate number of people in STEM and shortages in healthcare and education (Croft et al., 2015). Thus, investigating the costs of sexism for men is an investigation of the barriers to gender equality and a potential future lever for disrupting systems that perpetuate gender inequality.

Understanding the consequences of men's endorsement of hostile sexism for men offers opportunities to galvanise men's participation in gender equality movements. Currently, research aimed at mobilising men's action on gender inequality is focused on establishing a common cause that can light a fire under both men and women, such as initiatives that advocate for more egalitarian parental leave, including laws that benefit both mothers and fathers (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2013). Using their political solidarity model of social change, Subašić and colleagues (2008) found that encouraging a shared-identity between men and women and reframing gender equality as a "we" issue can encourage men to challenge the status quo alongside women (Subašić et al., 2018). Incorporation of our findings—that men's endorsement of beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality harm men too—could strengthen the persuasiveness of the message by highlighting the advantages that men (and women) will gain. A gain-focused argument is one way to emphasise the illegitimacy of a system—a form of messaging which typically holds more sway for privileged groups (Becker et al., 2013) and circumvents "zero-sum" ideologies which foster men's resistance to gender-fair policies (e.g., Kuchynka et al., 2018). In this way, the results of this thesis contribute to future efforts for redressing systemic gender inequalities by identifying a potential pathway focused on enhancing men's wellbeing.

Contexts where Men's Hostile Sexism is Costly

Disentangling the roles of dependence and gender when investigating men's endorsement of hostile sexism has implications for extending ambivalent sexism theory.

Across the multiple studies included in this thesis, men's endorsement of hostile sexism was consistently associated with poorer support outcomes within heterosexual romantic relationships (Chapter Two: Study 1; Chapter Four) and non-romantic close relationships (Chapter Two: Study 2). Indeed, when manipulations of lower relational dependence were used (i.e., support seeking from acquaintances), men who endorsed hostile sexism were *more* likely than men lower in hostile sexism to seek support (Chapter Two: Study 2). These findings underscore an important tenet of ambivalent sexism theory—that men's endorsement of hostile sexism is driven by concerns about interdependence within close relationships (Glick & Fiske, 1996). While previous studies have established this principle within romantic relationships (see Hammond & Overall, 2020 for a review), our findings extend this research by demonstrating that even in *non-romantic* close relationships being dependent on others for support constrains power in ways that leave men who endorse hostile sexism feeling vulnerable and open to exploitation.

However, this thesis did not provide theoretical support for an interpretation of hostile sexism as antipathy toward women in the absence of relational interdependence. The conflation of interdependence and gender in the hostile sexism literature through the use of heterosexual romantic couples has resulted in assumptions that men who endorse hostile sexism have concerns about depending on women specifically. However, the results in this thesis related to gender were mixed. In studies that did not use heterosexual romantic couples, there was either no evidence for the role of interaction partner gender (Chapter Two: Study 2) or evidence for an unexpected effect where men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were more resistant to seek support from men (vs. women; Chapter Three). Nevertheless, interpretation of these findings should proceed with caution. I want to emphasise that gender *is* fundamental to understanding hostile sexism. The lack of any effects of "other person" gender are instead indicative that psychological theories have not

yet specified which components of own- and other-gender are most relevant when examining

gender attitudes. To illustrate, research has suggested that gender-related scripts for cross-sex

friendships are less defined that in heterosexual romantic relationships (Marshall, 2010;

O'Meara, 1989). For example, heterosexual men describe friendships with women as a

"puzzle" where the rules must be negotiated, while romantic relationships typically have

clearer boundaries for what is considered appropriate (Marshall, 2010). Even in the research

comparing scripts across types of close relationships, it is unclear whether differences emerge

because of gender, differences in the type of dependency, or if those friendships are

becoming romantic (e.g., most romantic relationships begin as friendships; Stinson et al.,

2022). Prior research that identifies differences in how men who more strongly endorse

hostile sexism derogate women use specific sub-type descriptions of women (e.g., Glick et

al., 1997; Sibley & Wilson, 2004), and thus avoid many complexities associated with

attempting to isolate the role of gender that occur in real life. Thus, while we cannot draw any

definitive conclusions from this thesis about the contribution of gender to men's hostile

sexism, the results across the studies highlight many gaps in how gender is currently

understood in sexism research.

This thesis does strongly support the theoretical argument that heterosexual romantic

relationships are likely to be the context in which men who endorse hostile sexism feel the

most threatened and vulnerable (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Hammond & Overall, 2020). Indeed,

the studies in this thesis that included heterosexual romantic couples reported the most

consistent effects of gender (Chapter Two, Study 1 and Chapter Four). When interdependent

contexts are conceptualised as contexts of mutual constraints on power (Kelley & Thibaut,

1978), these results make sense; heterosexual men's dependency on partners for intimacy,

love and support affords women some degree of relational power. Results from previous

research suggest men who endorse hostile sexism are highly sensitive to the power dynamics

within intimate relationships with women and tend to underestimate the power they have in these contexts (Cross et al., 2019; Hammond & Overall, 2020). This perceived lack of power then drives men who endorse hostile sexism to behave in ways that aim to restore their sense of power. Accordingly, the concerns associated with men's hostile sexism should be most influential and the outcomes most obvious in contexts where men's power is the most constrained—situational contexts of needing support that occur in intimate relationships.

Focusing on aspects of men's power conceptualised as dependence and commitment is different to conceptualisations of power as situational influence or interpersonal dominance. Take the relationship of Ben and Sam. Ben might have low *relational* power if he is more dependent on Sam than Sam is dependent on him. However, in situations when Ben has influence over decision-making within their relationship, Ben might be considered to have high *situational* power (Overall et al., 2016). Similar types of power are referenced in men's hostile sexism. Indeed, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) assesses a form of dependence-related power using items like, "Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash", whereas items like, "Women seek to gain power by getting control over men" assess a more dominance-related power. As such, I expected that for men who endorse hostile sexism, contexts of situational dependence (e.g., depending on another person to complete a task; Chapter Three) would constrain power in a similar way to contexts of relational dependence. However, this was not what we observed in this thesis; there was no evidence that men who endorsed hostile sexism sought support differently depending on the level of situational dependence.

However, we do not have evidence *against* the hypothesis that power-related roles will change the behaviours and emotions of men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism. Indeed, several studies have shown links between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and negative evaluations of female leaders and managerial candidates in workplace settings,

presumably where women are thought to pose the strongest threat to men's dominance-related power (e.g., Masser & Abrams, 2004). Additionally, research from the masculinity area demonstrates that men who feel their gender status is threatened in the workplace and who believe status is a zero-sum game where any gain for women is a loss for men, are less likely to support gender-fair policies (Kuchynka et al., 2018). Together, these findings suggest that perceptions of low situational power as a result of a status threat in the workplace are likely to affect the behaviour of men who endorse hostile sexism. Thus, perhaps a mixed-gender interaction (such as in Chapter Three) would illustrate effects of hostile sexism when adopting a different power design in which the task involved a large stratification in the power of roles to be threatening for men who endorse hostile sexism, versus my aim to build asymmetric but nonetheless interdependent roles. Future research could extend Chapter Three by defining the roles within the task as "boss and employee" and emphasise the structural power dynamics within the dyad, such as framing the task as evaluating the employee's *performance* rather than "team communication". If men who endorsed hostile sexism were more negative toward women in a power-stratified task, the results would indicate that situational dependence *does* play a role in men's hostile sexism but only at higher levels of dependence (rather than when dependence is mutual).

Implications for Men's Help-Seeking and Romantic Relationships

Investigating men's hostile sexism within support seeking contexts offers an alternative explanation for a generalised pattern of gender effects in which men tend to seek less support than women. Traditionally, research examining men's support seeking has been set within a masculinity framework, where men are theorised as less likely to seek help due to intragroup gender concerns involving supressing emotions and not talking about their concerns (see Addis & Mahalik, 2003 for a review). The strength of this "bottle it up" perspective of men's support seeking is that it very intuitively explains why men tend to seek less support

compared to women; men are socialised to be stoic and not display any signs of emotional weakness, while women are encouraged to express how they feel more freely (e.g., Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Mahalik et al., 2003). However, by focusing primarily on intragroup reasons why men might not seek support, masculinity explanations may overlook the societal context of how attitudes about men are situated relative to attitudes about women. In their widely-cited paper on men's support seeking, Addis and Mahalik (2003) argue that masculinity explanations are *not* well-equipped to explain why men seek support in some settings but not others, while a more recent critique suggests that a focus on trait-like characteristics detracts from the interpersonal and socio-structural contexts in which help-seeking occurs (Chandler, 2021). Thus, integrating hostile sexism theory with relationship science methods situates the thesis in a more interdependent and dyadically-focused framework, and thus furthers our understanding of how contexts of relationship dependency impact men's support seeking.

Moreover, the identification of men's endorsement of hostile sexism as a barrier for men seeking and receiving support provides evidence that, at least for some men, interventions using a relational-lens may be more effective than those which simply encourage men to 'speak up'. Driven by traditional masculinity-based explanations for men's lower support seeking, numerous campaigns around the world advocate for men to "open up" and "start talking" (e.g., #menstarttalking; Men's Health Trust New Zealand [2018]). However, qualitative research on men's reasons why they do *not* seek support for serious emotional distress identified key context-related factors, such as the power structures in men's relationships, as a contributing to their resistance (Chandler, 2021). Indeed, the results of this thesis demonstrate a similar pattern where the support seeking decisions of men who endorse hostile were linked with feelings of vulnerability and potential threat in interdependent contexts. Together, these findings suggest that, for some men, it isn't as simple as encouraging them to talk more; in fact, this may inadvertently reinforce the already

pervasive stereotype that men tend to 'bottle up' their emotions (Chandler, 2021). Instead, interventions targeting relational insecurities within interdependent contexts—perhaps by increasing feelings of autonomy (e.g., Don & Hammond , 2017; Girme et al., 2019), enhancing self-efficacy (Epton & Harris, 2008), or fostering a sense of belonging (Cook et al., 2012)—may be more effective for men who endorse hostile sexism.

The results of this thesis also have implications for close relationships, particularly intimate relationships. A secure and supportive romantic relationship provides the ideal environment for each partner to thrive (Collins & Feeney, 2004), while a more insecure and uncaring relationship is prone to both short-term and longer term difficulties (e.g., Collins & Feeny, 2004; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). For example, couples who are more supportive of each other during discussions of personal difficulties tend to have better relationship outcomes two years later, while couples who are less supportive and more confrontational tend to be more dysfunctional down the line (Cobb et al., 2001; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998). Indeed, recurrent exposure to poor support exchanges over time leads to couples feeling misunderstood, unhappy and unsupported (Sullivan & Davlia, 2010). Moreover, couples who experience poorer satisfaction and commitment within their relationships are less likely to provide positive and effective support to their partner (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003), which compounds their dissatisfaction and increases the chance of relationship dissolution (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Wieselquist et al., 1999). Thus, the links between men's endorsement of hostile sexism and poorer support interactions with romantic partners may also compromise men's mental health and wellbeing through poorer relationship functioning and increased risk of relationship loss.

The findings from this thesis also raise the question: If men who endorse hostile sexism are less likely to turn to romantic partners, close friends, and potentially even male work colleagues or academic peers for support, where are they turning? A large literature

demonstrates that people in general are most likely to turn to romantic partners or close friends for support when they are distressed (Nadler, 1997). Even masculinity research suggests that wives are men's primary source of support for emotional distress (e.g., Wang et al., 2003.). However, for men who endorse hostile sexism, the inherent dependency within close relationships—especially romantic relationships—is off-putting and is associated with resistance to seek support. The concern is then that men who endorse hostile sexism are pursuing more maladaptive avenues for coping, which then exacerbate their distress. Indeed, men who use more negative emotion regulation strategies, like expressive suppression, tend to be more likely to use engage in range of self-destructive behaviours, such as using alcohol or drugs, or engaging in risky sexual activity, to avoid negative affect (see Weiss et al., 2015 for a review). Future research should examine the methods men who endorse hostile sexism *do* use to cope with distress. While it is possible they use adaptive strategies outside the realm of social support, such as physical exercise, some evidence suggests they use more maladaptive strategies that place them at greater risk of mental health issues, such as abusing alcohol and drugs (e.g., Cross & Overall, 2019; Lisco et al., 2012)

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

One key strength of the current thesis is the use of robust and interpersonally-oriented methods and analyses. Traditionally, research has taken a more individualistic approach to examining the costs of men's hostile sexism, such as demonstrating that men's endorsement of hostile sexism impacts their own negative evaluations of women (e.g., Sibley & Becker, 2012; Sibley & Wilson, 2007). Chapter Two of this thesis followed the traditional approach—men's endorsement of hostile sexism was associated with their own perceptions and experiences when imagining or recalling support experiences. However, the utilisation of dyadic and observational methods in Chapter Three revealed a similar resistance to seek support by men who endorse hostile sexism using a more conservative test that accounted for

in-the-moment variation in another person's behaviour. This development in methods across the thesis culminated in the utilisation of interdependence models in Chapter Four. Here, results indicated that men's endorsement of hostile sexism was not only associated with their perceptions of partner support but also with their *partner's* reports of support given (i.e., there were significant actor and partner effects). Actor-partner interdependence analyses are one of the most conservative associative tests because they account for variation in all variables across both dyad members (Cook & Kenny, 2005). For instance, by accounting for the same variables in *partners*, analyses rule out the possibility that support difference emerge because men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism receive less support due to their *partner's* endorsement of hostile sexism or (lack of) expression of emotions. Thus, the consistency in the overall findings of this thesis—that men who endorse hostile sexism resist support—across conservative methods and data analytic techniques is further evidence for the robustness of these links.

Despite the strengths, there are some limitations and caveats to the findings of this thesis that prompt interesting future directions for research. One important area that this thesis did not explore was the role of culture. Beyond people's personal cultural identification (which is discussed as a limitation of this research in several prior chapters), societal-level characteristics of culture are also likely to shape people's gender attitudes and interpersonal behaviours. The data comprising this thesis come from participants living in New Zealand or North America where the societal and cultural norms around sexism and social support tend to follow Western values that prioritise individual beliefs, autonomy and generally comprise relatively more egalitarian views on gender (Brandt, 2011). However, this may not be the same for other areas of the world, for example Asian or other collectivist societies, where cultural and social norms may play a stronger role in determining beliefs about gender and support seeking (e.g., Taylor et al., 2004, 2007). In this way, future research could

incorporate country-level data alongside individual-level data to model men's personal endorsement of hostile sexism and support seeking compared to the average levels within their country (see Jansen et al., 2016 for an example). Research that focused on individual- and structural-level components of gender simultaneously would best address Chandler's (2021) critique that encouraging men to simply "talk more" risks reinforcing the sexist stereotypes of men being emotionally incompetent that suppress men's access to support in the first place. In only examining individual-level endorsement of hostile sexism, the current research is limited to the perspective on how men themselves are resistant to seeking and accepting support. However, we acknowledge that people exist in socio-political systems and thus their beliefs are dependent upon societal attitudes and inequalities structures, and their support-seeking is dependent on the availability and inclusiveness of support services. A future model that seeks to integrate the many reasons that men seek and accept support should consider their own sexist attitudes alongside the predominant cultural norms as well as the socio-structural opportunities to receive support.

In attempting to disentangle concerns about dependence and gender in men's hostile sexism, this thesis used different contexts of non-romantic dependence (i.e., hypothetical friendships and task-based dependence) so that gender could be manipulated. This is by no means a perfect approach; different types of dependence (i.e., romantic vs. friendship vs. situational) may be more or less threatening for men who endorse hostile sexism. Indeed, romantic relationships are the contexts where heterosexual men have the least power and should therefore be the most threatening (e.g., Cross et al., 2019). I considered another method for disentangling dependence-based concerns from the gender of actors and partners—comparing the impact of hostile sexism on support processes across romantic couples with different gender pairings (e.g., heterosexual couples vs. gay men couples vs. lesbian women couples). In an ideal world, the variation in romantic dependence would be

consistent across couples and thus any specific effects of gender could be elucidated. However, there are several reasons to not pursue this method. First, invariance testing has revealed that the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) is invalid for making comparisons between heterosexual and non-heterosexual populations (Cross et al., 2021). Second, research on intersectionality demonstrates the fundamental problems with assuming that the only difference between heterosexual men and gay men is the gender of their romantic partner (e.g., Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008)—gay men likely experience gender, support, and romantic dependence in unique ways compared to heterosexual men. For example, gay men are most likely to turn to close friends for support rather than partners (Kurdek, 1988), while the opposite is true for heterosexual men (Nadler, 1997). Perhaps the way forward then, is for future research to take the approach of the current thesis and continue to examine the effects of gender and dependence across non-romantic contexts using a variety of same-sex and cross-sex dyads so that general trends and patterns can start to emerge.

Relatedly, while this thesis examined the links between men's hostile sexism and support across a range of dependence-relevant contexts, the findings may not generalise to contexts where dependence and power are more stratified, such as in boss-subordinate relationships or doctor-patient relationships. The relational settings utilised in the current thesis aimed to assess interdependence—where each person is relatively dependent on the other for certain needs (i.e., intimate relationships; friendships; task-based dependence in cooperative games). Other types of relationships are more unequal in their distribution of power—where the more powerful person makes the decisions and the less powerful person passively obliges. It is possible that, given men who endorse hostile sexism tend to underestimate the power they have and are sensitive to power-dynamics within relationships (e.g., Cross et al., 2019), seeking support in contexts with high power stratification will likely

be even more challenging than mutually dependent contexts. Indeed, masculinity research suggests that men who more strongly adhere to masculine norms prefer more collaborative healthcare arrangements (Wang et al., 2013). Although people typically seek social support from intimate partners and friends before other sources (Nadler, 1997), understanding how and when men who endorse hostile sexism seek support from professionals, such as doctors or mental health practitioners, is important for addressing the health disparities between men and women. Thus, it will be crucial for future research to extend the current thesis to healthcare contexts to see if similar patterns emerge that could be maintaining men's physical and mental distress.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis was to begin to disentangle the concerns men who endorse hostile sexism have about dependence from the concerns they have about gender using a context in which both dependence and gender are salient—social support. In using predominantly heterosexual romantic couples, prior research had conflated dependence and gender making it unclear whether the negativity associated with men's hostile sexism was due to fears about depending on *women*, or fears about depending on others more generally. Based on ambivalent sexism theory, we expected that men's hostile sexism would be associated with poorer support outcomes when men were more dependent on women. However, as shown in this thesis, when examining men's hostile sexism outside of heterosexual relationship contexts, the expected patterns are not consistent: Men who more strongly endorsed hostile sexism were more resistant to seek support from non-romantic close others regardless of gender (Chapter Two) and tended to use more avoidance-based behaviours during support interactions with *men* regarless of the level of situational dependence (Chapter Three). Nevertheless, when analysing support interactions between men and women in romantic relationships, the expected dependence and gender patterns returned

(Chapter Four)—suggesting perhaps that there is something particularly threatening for men who endorse hostile sexism about *romantic* relationships with *women.*

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