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The Effect of Gender, Type of Statement, and Individual Differences on Perceptions of Individuals who Make and Confront Sexist Remarks

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from The College of William and Mary

by

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PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Abstract

Previous research has suggested that females tend not to confront sexist remarks, often because they fear being negatively evaluated when they do. Less research has explored the variables that moderate perceptions of women who confront sexist remarks, and the field has largely ignored perceptions of female perpetrators of sexist remarks. The current research was designed to examine perceptions of a confronter (Studies 1 and 2) and perpetrator (Studies 3 and 4) of a sexist remark. These studies examined whether factors such as participant gender, perpetrator gender, type of sexist comment, confrontation style, and individual gender role beliefs predicted perceptions of confronters and perpetrators of sexism. Participants responded to vignettes depicting a situation with a benevolent or hostile sexist remark (Studies 1 and 3), a female or male perpetrator (Studies 1, 3, and 4), and an assertive or polite confrontation (Study 2). Results indicated that a female confronter was evaluated more positively by female participants than male participants, and perceptions depended on individual gender role beliefs. Additionally, an assertive confronter was respected more than a polite confronter. Our findings also revealed that a female perpetrator was evaluated more positively than a male perpetrator, and this was mediated by the perceived offensiveness of the sexist remark. A hostile perpetrator was also evaluated more negatively than a benevolent perpetrator. Additionally, specific gender role beliefs predicted perceptions of a perpetrator. Participant gender differences emerged as males evaluated the perpetrator more positively than females, and this depended on gender role beliefs and the gender of the perpetrator. These findings expand on current understanding of strategies to combat sexism and obstacles that preclude initiating such prejudice-reduction strategies.

Keywords: perceptions of confronting, confronting sexism, gender differences, ambivalent sexism, gender role beliefs, perpetrator gender
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General Introduction

Despite recent gains in gender equality such as females holding 74 total Congressional seats after the 2012 elections, gender discrimination still exists in American society. For example, the United States Census Bureau found that women only earned 77 cents on a man’s dollar as of 2012; this female-to-male ratio has not significantly improved since 2007. Social psychological studies also demonstrate that women commonly experience instances of sexism in their everyday lives (Becker & Swim, 2011), occurring as often as once or twice a week (Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). These sexist instances can take many forms, including explicitly demeaning remarks and comments that reflect traditional gender role stereotyping (Swim et al., 2001). Experiencing sexist incidences can lead to anger, depression (Swim et al., 2001), and psychological distress (Fischer & Bolton Holz, 2010; Klonoff, Landrine, & Campbell, 2000; Szymanski & Stewart, 2010) in women. Therefore, it is important to study strategies to combat sexism and obstacles that stand in the way of initiating prejudice-reduction strategies.

Given the prevalence and the detrimental effects of sexist language, it is crucial to understand strategies that reduce incidences of sexist remarks. One such strategy is to directly confront the source of the sexist remark by telling him or her that the comment was offensive or prejudicial. The confrontation of prejudicial remarks has been found to be effective such that it causes the perpetrator of the biased remark to experience negative self-directed affect (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006). In particular, confronting leads to feelings of guilt in perpetrators (Fazio & Hilden, 2001), which leads to less biased future responses and less prejudicial attitudes (Czopp & Monteith, 2003). Confrontation may also have benefits for observers. For example, a study by Blanchard, Crandall, Brigham, and Vaughn (1994) found that
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experiencing a situation in which an individual expressed anti-prejudicial opinions led to decreased public prejudicial behavior and reduced private prejudice in bystanders. Additionally, confronting can lead to positive benefits such as confronters feeling more satisfied with their behavior compared to those who did not confront (Dickter, 2012).

Despite the benefits of confronting, many women do not confront instances of sexism. Previous research has indicated that women report engaging in confronting behavior in only 46% of their experiences of sexism in their daily lives (Ayres, Friedman, & Leaper, 2009). In the laboratory, when given the opportunity to respond to a sexist remark, only 16% of female participants directly confronted the remark (Swim & Hyers, 1999). Yet, in this situation, many women reported privately that they wanted to confront, and may have held back because of perceived costs of confronting (Swim & Hyers, 1999). People may be hesitant to confront discrimination for fear of social retaliation or negative responses from others (Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Kaiser & Miller, 2004; Swim & Hyers, 1999). In fact, women who confront a sexist remark do suffer from negative judgments from others. For example, they can be liked less than when they do not confront (Dodd, Giuliano, Boutell, & Moran, 2001), and are generally seen as complaining (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Shelton & Stewart, 2004).

Because of these costs of confronting, many women engage in self-silencing to fit the role of a good woman (Hurst & Beesley, 2013). In order to understand how to remove barriers that hold women back from confronting, we must first understand the factors that contribute to negative evaluations of female confronters.

While female confronters of sexist remarks are generally evaluated negatively (e.g., Czopp & Monteith, 2003), there are several moderating variables of these perceptions, including gender and individual differences in prejudice. Dodd et al. (2001) found that while female
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participants liked and respected a woman who confronted a sexist comment more than a woman who ignored a sexist remark, male participants disliked a woman who confronted more than a woman who ignored the remark. Because confronting brings attention to the prejudicial nature of a statement, and males endorse sexist beliefs to a greater extent than females (Glick & Fiske, 1996), males may judge women who confront more negatively.

Confronting a sexist remark could be perceived as a communal behavior, in that confronting on behalf of fellow women is acting in support of the well-being of the ingroup. Yet, while confronting to support other females might express a “communal” desire, the manifestation of that desire may be either agentic or communal. Specifically, if a woman confronts “nicely,” (i.e., politely) she is both supporting her gender and acting in accordance with gender roles. On the other hand, a woman who confronts agenticly, although still supporting her gender, may be viewed negatively for acting against gender roles. Although these gender stereotypes have been endorsed by both women and men (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989) and sexists and nonsexists (Glick & Fiske, 1996), males and individuals who endorse more sexist attitudes should be especially likely to evaluate a woman negatively for confronting prejudice, particularly when the confrontation is agentic. Individuals who hold strong sexist attitudes or who endorse traditional gender norms such as male power should feel threatened by an assertive female confronter. Females and those who do not endorse sexism, meanwhile, may notice the counter-stereotypical behavior of an assertive woman, but are more likely to perceive the confronting behavior as consistent with their own beliefs. Therefore, these individuals should not perceive female assertive behavior as threatening. Additionally, females may respond more positively than males to a female confronter because by confronting, she is expressing the communal desire to support the well-being of the entire gender.
Males who subscribe to hostile sexism, which characterizes women as complaining about discrimination (Glick & Fiske, 1996), may be particularly likely to respond negatively to a female who confronts a sexist comment. Because sexism is not associated with a general “antipathy” towards women (Allport, 1954) but contains both positive and negative elements (e.g., Eagly & Mladinic, 1993), sexism is thought to be characterized as a “deep ambivalence” (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 491). Sexism thus encapsulates both hostile (HS) and benevolent sexism (BS; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hostile sexism captures negative attitudes toward women such as the belief that women are manipulative and interpret benign events as being discriminatory. Benevolent sexism, however, portrays “subjectively positive” views of women (p. 491), including the belief that women are pure and should be protected by men. Hostile and benevolent sexism, together, characterize ambivalent sexism as measured by the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Because benevolent sexism does not fit the standard notions of prejudice, individuals can respond more positively to benevolent sexist beliefs. These benevolent beliefs (women should be cherished, protected) promote intimacy-seeking behaviors, as opposed to hostile sexist beliefs (women are manipulative, complaining), which promotes antagonism towards women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Yet, although hostile and benevolent sexism represent different constructs of sexist attitudes, both justify male structural power (Glick & Fiske, 1996); therefore, the combined ASI scale should reflect the overall belief in females as the weaker sex. Indeed, the ASI has been found to correlate with other common measures of sexism (i.e., Attitudes towards Women Scale, Old-Fashioned Sexism, Modern Sexism; Glick & Fiske, 1996), which suggests that the ASI can serve as an overall measure of sexist belief.

Research has not examined how individuals who confront expressions of hostile and benevolent sexism are viewed. Dodd et al. (2001) found that a female was respected more when
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she confronted a clearly sexist remark than when she did not confront it; when the female was presented with an ambiguous remark, however, participants respected her similarly whether she confronted or not. Therefore, the content of the sexist remark can affect perceptions of a female confronter. Because of the potentially positive associations with benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), a female who confronts a benevolent sexist remark may be viewed differently than a female who confronts a more obviously prejudicial, hostile remark. This is very important, given that women are sensitive to the potential for social costs of confronting (e.g., Swim & Hyers, 1999), which may force them to “pick their battles” and only confront comments that are blatantly offensive. If women resist confronting benevolent sexist remarks, these benevolent perpetrators learn that they are allowed to express sexist beliefs without repercussions. Unimpeded, individuals may continue to make sexist remarks, perpetuating a culture of tolerance for benevolent sexism. Thus, it is important to examine how participants perceive a female confronter when she confronts a less traditionally prejudicial, benevolent sexist remark as opposed to a hostile sexist remark.

In addition, research has not examined perceptions of perpetrators of sexist remarks. When research has explored perceptions of perpetrators, it has specifically explored the extent to which participants attribute prejudicial events as discriminatory (e.g., Baron, Burgess, & Kao, 1991; O’Brien, Kinias, & Major, 2008) rather than situations involving confrontation of sexist remarks. Furthermore, studies examining perceptions of confronters portray a uniformly male perpetrator of sexism, and do not examine how a female perpetrator is perceived. The stereotype-asymmetry hypothesis suggests that victims of discrimination are expected to be members of lower status groups relative to their perpetrators (Rodin, Price, Bryson, & Sanchez, 1990), which partially explains this oversight. That is, while sexist males are members of a higher status than
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their female victims, sexist females belong to the same group as their victims. Yet, it is the very fact that these perpetrators may not be “expected” to make a sexist comment that they are worth examining. It is likely that a female perpetrator of a sexist remark may be perceived differently than a male perpetrator because she violates this expected model, despite the fact that the sexist comment may have equally negative repercussions. Furthermore, it is important to understand how perpetrators are viewed, in that this can inform how sexist instances are perceived generally, as perceptions relating to the prejudicial remark can influence whether an individual confronts or not (e.g., Ashburn-Nardo, Morris, & Goodwin, 2008). Exploring perceptions of individuals who make and confront sexist remarks can indicate ways to address barriers that impede confrontation, and thus the reduction, of sexism in our society.

The current studies will examine the perceptions of both confronters (Studies 1 and 2) and perpetrators (Studies 3 and 4) of sexist comments. Several variables hypothesized to moderate these perceptions will be examined. Specifically, participant gender, perpetrator gender, the type of sexist remark, confrontation style, and beliefs about gender were expected to influence the perceptions of individuals who make and confront sexist remarks.

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine whether individual difference variables and contextual factors within the vignette (our manipulations of perpetrator gender and sexist remark) moderate the perceptions of females who confront sexist remarks. Past research on perceptions of female confronters of sexist remarks (e.g. Dodd et al., 2001) has examined some of these variables, namely the gender of the perceiver and the type of sexist remark made. While past research (Dodd et al., 2001) examined confrontation of either a clearly sexist or ambiguous remark, the present study sought to pursue a novel manipulation of the sexist remark based on
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hostile and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Because hostile sexism may resemble
more traditional sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), a remark containing hostile sexist attitudes
should portray women as manipulative or incompetent. A remark based on benevolent sexism,
on the other hand, should portray women as pure and needing of protection (Glick & Fiske,
1996). We were interested in exploring how perceptions of a confronter would be influenced by
whether she confronts a hostile or benevolent sexist remark. The somewhat ambiguous nature of
benevolent sexism, compared to the more traditionally offensive hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske,
1996) should lead to more ambiguous ratings of a female confronter of a benevolently sexist
remark. On the contrary, there may be differences in the perceptions of a confronter of a hostile
remark depending on personal identification with female causes.

Additionally, the present study sought to examine the gender of the sexist perpetrator as a
moderator, extending past research portraying a male perpetrator of sexism (e.g. Dodd et al.,
2001; Kaiser, Hagiwara, Malahy, & Wilkins, 2009). It was hypothesized that, because males are
assumed to have more sexist attitudes and benefit from the endorsement of sexist attitudes (in
that these attitudes are associated with male dominance; Glick & Fiske, 1996), confronting a
male should make gender conflict salient, as it brings to attention the conflicting motivations for
male and female power. A female perpetrator, who does not benefit from openly endorsing a
sexist attitude, may not make gender conflict salient. Because a female is evaluated more
positively when she confronts a clearly sexist remark as opposed to an ambiguous remark (Dodd
et al., 2001), it follows that a female confronting an “ambiguous” female perpetrator would be
viewed more negatively.

The goal of this study was to characterize perceptions of a female’s confrontation of
hostile and benevolent sexist remarks as a function of contextual and individual difference
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variables. Several factors were examined as predictors of these perceptions. First, because males have been found to hold more sexist attitudes toward women than females (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and do not like a female confronter as much as females (Dodd et al., 2001), we predicted that male participants would evaluate the confronter more negatively than females. We also expected that individual levels of sexism would moderate perceptions of a female confronter, such that individuals who hold more sexist attitudes would evaluate a woman who confronts a sexist remark more negatively—specifically, because a female who assertively confronts violates the female norm of “niceness” while also threatening male dominance. Because both hostile and benevolent sexism may be consistent belief systems (Glick & Fiske, 1996), we decided to measure individual sexism levels by scores on the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Additionally, contextual manipulations such as the type of sexist comment and the gender of the perpetrator should differentially affect perceptions. Because a female making a sexist remark against another female might not resonate gender conflict as strongly as a male making a sexist remark, perceivers may evaluate a female who confronts a fellow female more negatively because they do not perceive her assertive confrontation as merited, given the nature of the situation. This finding might be further moderated by gender, such that men, who are already more inclined to evaluate a confronter more negatively than women (Dodd et al., 2001), may evaluate the confronter more negatively than if she confronts a male.

Method

Participants

Participants were 238 individuals in the United States who participated for a small monetary payment. Participants consisted of 122 women (51.3%) and 116 men (48.7%). Participants ranged from 18 years to 66 years of age ($M = 32.42, SD = 10.92$). Participants were
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recruited through Mechanical Turk (MTurk; https://www.mturk.com/mturk/), an Amazon recruitment program. MTurk was used because it has been found to provide participants in a timely and inexpensive manner of a more diverse sample than that of a normal college campus, as well as providing data shown to be as reliable as those obtained through traditional means (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). All procedures were approved by the college’s Protection of Human Subjects Committee, and digital informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the survey.

Materials and Procedure

Participants completed a Qualtrics survey linked through MTurk which contained all experimental materials. Participants read an informed consent on which they indicated agreement by clicking a button to continue to the rest of the survey. Participants were informed that they would be participating in a study on group dynamics.

After granting consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of four possible vignettes, in which the Comment Type (benevolent, hostile) and Perpetrator Gender (male, female) were manipulated and presented across the four conditions. Participants, therefore, read a vignette with either a male or female perpetrator making a benevolent or hostile remark. Each vignette presented a scenario between two people, in which one person makes a sexist remark and the other confronts the remark. The topic chosen for the vignette was the possibility of a female presidency for 2016. The first actor to speak in the vignette (Angela) ultimately confronts the sexist comment, while the second actor (Chris or Christine) is the sexist perpetrator.

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Chris/Christine: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah...I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.
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The comment that follows is the sexist remark. The type of sexist remark presented was experimentally manipulated, with two different sexist comments presented across the four vignettes. The content of the sexist comments was created to resemble the constructs of benevolent and hostile sexism presented in the ASI, such that a benevolent sexist comment would call on a woman’s need to be protected because of a fragile or pure nature, while a hostile comment would address women’s desire for power over men and tendency to complain about prejudice and discrimination (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Benevolent: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women may be too pure and fragile to handle that. Maybe they should be protected from a job with so much responsibility.

Hostile: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

The gender of the sexist perpetrator was also experimentally manipulated. The sexist comment was made by either a male (Chris) or female (Christine). The confronter (Angela) and confrontation itself was always the same, and based on previous research that used vignettes with confrontation (Dodd et al., 2001).

Angela: (obviously upset by Chris/Christine’s remark) Wow, Chris/Christine, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

Participants were then presented with questions about the conversation (filler items) and the actors in the vignette (dependent variables). These filler items were designed to promote the cover story (that the study was examining group dynamics), and included items such as “How successful were these individuals in their attempt to communicate?” and “How well did the people in this conversation express their thoughts?” Participants were then asked to rate how much they liked and respected the perpetrator (presented as Chris or Christine) and confronter (presented as Angela) on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Participants then rated
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Chris or Christine on several character traits, including the extent to which he or she was perceived as abrasive, and Angela on several character traits, including the extent to which she was perceived as complaining, measured on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely). Only abrasiveness for Chris or Christine and complaining for Angela were included in analysis.

After completing these questions, participants completed the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996; α = .83-.92) to measure levels of overall ambivalent sexism. The scale ranged from scores of 0 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly). The ASI was further divided into its subscales for Benevolent Sexism (BS; α = .73-.85) and Hostile Sexism (HS; α = .80-.92). Items included statements such as “Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores” on the BS subscale and “Women seek to gain power by getting control over men” on the HS subscale. A higher score on the BS signified more protective and stereotypical views toward women, while a higher score on the HS signified views toward women as manipulative and overly sensitive. A higher score on the ASI overall coincides with general endorsement of traditional gender norms.

After completing the scale, participants were asked to report their demographic information. Participants then were presented with a debriefing form which informed them of the true purpose of the study, and were presented with the code that would grant them credit through MTurk.

Results

Of the 238 participants, data from 17 participants were excluded because they failed to respond correctly to three questions randomly placed throughout the survey, which asked participants to select a specific option if they were paying attention. The analyses below were therefore conducted with 221 participants. Participants consisted of 110 women (49.8%) and 111 men (50.2%). Participants identified as White (n = 167), Asian (n = 19), Black (n = 16), Hispanic
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(n = 11), mixed race (n = 5), Pacific Islander (n = 1), and Native American (n = 1), with one participant abstaining. Participants ranged from 18 years to 66 years of age (M = 32.72, SD = 11.11).

**Perceptions of the Confronter**

To examine perceptions of the confronter in regards to several character traits, all dependent variables were subjected to the same analyses. First, variables were subjected to a 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) x 2 (Perpetrator Gender: male, female) x 2 (Comment Type: benevolent, hostile) between-subjects ANOVAs to examine main effects and interactions. Additionally, to explore the moderating effect of the sexism scale (ASI), these variables were subjected to regression analyses. Regression analyses were conducted by entering ASI and Participant Gender separately on the first step and the interaction term of mean-centered ASI and Participant Gender on the second step. Only significant results are reported below.

*Respect and Liking*

First, respect and liking for the confronter was subjected to the aforementioned ANOVA (see Table 1). The main effect for Participant Gender was significant, with females reporting higher levels of respect and liking for the confronter than males. The main effects for Perpetrator Gender and Comment Type were not significant (ps > .164).

When respect was subjected to the aforementioned regression, the overall model explained 7.4% of the variance for respect of the confronter, $F(3, 217) = 5.78, p = .001, R^2 = .074$. As displayed in Table 2, the main effect of Participant Gender was marginally significant, such that females respected the confronter more than males. ASI score significantly predicted respect of the confronter, such that greater ASI scores predicted lower levels of respect for the confronter. The ASI by Participant Gender interaction was marginally significant (see Figure 1).
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For female participants, as their ASI scores increased, their respect for the confronter decreased, simple slope = -0.39, t(217) = -3.36, p < .001. For males, ASI scores did not predict their respect for the confronter, simple slope = -0.07, t(217) = -0.46, p = .325. Examination of the subscales for ASI revealed that the pattern was upheld for BS, for which the interaction term was significant, β = 0.43, t(217) = 2.11, p = .036. For HS, however, the pattern did not hold, β = 0.23, t(217) = 1.13, p = .262.

The ASI by Participant Gender regression analysis demonstrated similar results for liking (see Table 2; Figure 1). The overall model explained 9.0% of the variance in liking of the confronter, F(3, 217) = 7.19, p < .001, R² = .090. As demonstrated in Table 2, the main effects were analogous in significance and prediction with liking as for respect. Similarly, for female participants, as ASI scores increased, liking of the confronter decreased, simple slope = -0.47, t(217) = -3.87, p < .001. For males, ASI scores did not predict liking of the confronter, simple slope = -0.08, t(217) = -0.55, p = .292. Examination of the subscales revealed a similar pattern for liking as for respect.

Complaining

The perceived extent to which the confronter was seen as complaining was next subjected to the ANOVA model (see Table 1). The main effect for Participant Gender was significant for complaining, with males rating the confronter as complaining more than females. No other main effects were significant. A marginally significant Participant Gender x Perpetrator Gender x Comment Type interaction was found, F(1, 212) = 3.59, p = .060, η² = .017 (see Table 3). Males perceived the confronter as complaining marginally more in response to a hostile remark made by a female perpetrator than a hostile remark by a male perpetrator. No other effects were significant.
For perceptions of the confronter as complaining, the interaction term between ASI and Participant Gender failed to reach significance ($p = .261$), even though the main effect for ASI was significant, $\beta = 0.58$, $t(216) = 3.02$, $p = .003$. The regression analysis was therefore conducted at the level of the subscale, BS (see Table 2; Figure 1). The overall model explained 10.2% of the variance in perceptions of the confronter as complaining, $F(3, 216) = 8.16$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .102$. The main effect of Participant Gender was marginally significant, such that males perceived the confronter as complaining marginally more than females. BS score predicted perceptions of the confronter as complaining, such that as BS scores increased, perceptions of the confronter as complaining increased. The BS by Participant Gender interaction was significant (see Figure 1). For female participants, as their BS scores increased, their perceptions of the confronter as complaining increased, simple slope $= 0.99$, $t(216) = 4.31$, $p < .001$. For males, however, BS did not predict perceptions of complaining, simple slope $= 0.23$, $t(216) = 0.86$, $p = .195$. A regression analysis was run to examine whether the relationship differed for the subscale HS, but the interaction was not significant ($p = .860$).

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine whether individual and contextual factors moderate the perceptions of a female who confronts a sexist remark. The findings of the current study support a priori hypotheses and suggest that the perceptions of women who confront sexist remarks (i.e., respect, liking, and perceptions of the confronter as complaining) are affected by the gender of the participant, individuals’ ambivalent sexism, and to a lesser extent, the gender of the perpetrator and type of sexist remark. More specifically, the results support previous findings that females are often liked less by men when they assertively confront a sexist remark (Dodd et al., 2001), such that male participants liked the female confronter less than female participants.
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Similarly, respect for the confronter was lower when the perceiver was a male rather than a female. Furthermore, this study revealed the novel finding that individuals’ ambivalent sexism for females, but not males, moderated their perceptions of the female confronter.

Female participants evaluated the confronter more positively than male participants, in that females viewed the confronter as more likeable, worthy of respect, and complaining less than males. This finding is consistent with previous work suggesting that female participants like and respect women who stand up for their gender in response to a sexist remark (Dodd et al., 2001). These findings may be driven by women being less accepting of sexism than men. That is, males are more likely than females to endorse sexist attitudes, especially those relating to hostile sexism, than females (Glick & Fiske, 1996); this finding was confirmed in the current sample, such that males ($M = 2.20, SD = 1.03$) were higher in hostile sexism than females ($M = 1.65, SD = 1.27$), $t(219) = -3.52, p = .001$. If males are more likely to support aspects of hostile sexism, specifically the belief that women seek to gain power over men (Glick & Fiske, 1996), they may respond differently to a female who confronts a sexist comment, specifically based on whether women’s confronting behavior is seen to be in line with gender norms. Confronting may be viewed either as an agentic behavior, because of associations with self-assertion and a desire for power (Bakan, 1966), or as a communal behavior, because confronting on behalf of fellow women is acting in support of the well-being of the entire gender. An assertive female confronter may be perceived as behaving communally by standing up for her gender, but doing so in a counter-stereotypical, agentic manner. Thus, when a female confronts assertively, males who hold sexist attitudes promoting male dominance might feel threatened by the confronter’s endorsement of female power, and thus evaluate a female confronter more negatively.
Therefore, our findings revealing gender differences in perceptions of the confronter are consistent with this past research. Moreover, the fact that neither perpetrator gender nor comment type were significant predictors on their own suggests that individual differences, such as gender of the participant and endorsement of female stereotypes, may be of more primary importance in predicting perceptions of a female confronter.

While neither the gender of the perpetrator nor type of sexist remark individually predicted evaluations of the confronter, the extent to which the confronter was perceived as complaining was predicted by an interaction between participant gender, perpetrator gender, and comment type. Perceived complaining was a particularly relevant, negative evaluation of confronting behavior, given past research indicating that making a claim about discrimination is a form of complaining (e.g. Crosby, 1993; Swim & Hyers, 1999). This finding revealed that male participants rated a confronter as complaining more in response to a hostile remark made by a female perpetrator as opposed to a hostile remark made by a male perpetrator. This finding is consistent with our prediction that a female making a hostile sexist remark against a female may result in more negative evaluations of the confronter because the assertive confrontation may not be seen as deserved. Because a female has seemingly less to gain from perpetrating sexist attitudes than a male, a sexist remark from a female perpetrator may be seen as more ambiguous. Given that a female is evaluated more positively when she confronts a clearly sexist remark as opposed to an ambiguous remark (Dodd et al., 2001), it follows that a female confronting an “ambiguous” female perpetrator would be viewed as complaining more. Presented with a comment made by a female perpetrator, males may not perceive this comment as sufficiently offensive to deserve such an assertive confrontation, and may perceive her as complaining more
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than when she confronted a male perpetrator. Future research should examine other factors that contribute to perceptions of a confronter as complaining.

As predicted, greater endorsement of sexist attitudes was associated with more negative evaluations of a female confronter. However, our findings also revealed that although men were higher in sexism than women in our study, women’s ambivalent sexism moderated the perceptions of the confronter, such that females high in sexism liked and respected the confronter less and perceived the confronter as complaining more than females low in sexism. Leaper and Arias (2011) found that women were more likely to positively evaluate confrontation of sexual harassment if they publicly identified as a feminist, and did not stereotype feminists. Because the formation of a feminist identity may result from seeking empowerment against sexist events (e.g., Jackson, Fleury, & Lewandowski, 1996), feminist identity should be inversely related to sexist attitudes against women. Thus, a woman who is low in sexist attitudes, as a function of her feminist identity, should evaluate a female who confronts sexism more positively than females who are high in sexist attitudes. Indeed, a female who is highly sexist against women would be more likely to agree with the perpetrator of the sexist remark, and respond more negatively to the confronter. While this past research supports the possibility that females’ sexist attitudes are critical to their perceptions of a female who confronts, it does not explain why males’ perceptions were not moderated by ambivalent sexism. It is important to note that males’ perceptions of the confronter were more negative and provided a more limited range of results than females’ perceptions, which might have resulted in fewer opportunities for variability. Future research should explore what might possibly moderate males’ perceptions. These findings do indicate, however, that the perceptions of female participants might depend greatly on their endorsement of sexist attitudes.
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Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to both confirm and extend the results of Study 1 by examining additional individual difference and contextual factors that influence the perceptions of females who confront sexist remarks. Because perceptions of the confronter in Study 1 were not largely predicted by the gender of the perpetrator or type of sexist remark, we decided to consistently present a male, hostile perpetrator. In the interest of extending our prior work, we decided to manipulate the style with which the female confronted the sexist remark. Past research (e.g., Swim & Hyers, 1999) has found that women may choose to directly retaliate by calling the sexist remark offensive, questioning the source in regards to the meaning of the remark, or responding with humor or sarcasm. Indeed, women in this previous study preferred confrontational styles that were more polite (Swim & Hyers, 1999). Confronting may be viewed as consistent with a “communal” female stereotype in that it expresses a desire for the well-being of the entire gender. Yet, a female who acts assertively might violate the feminine “communality” stereotype (Eagly & Steffen, 1984); thus, an assertive confrontation may be viewed as a violation of this “communal” norm because assertiveness is a typically male behavior. If a woman confronts politely, however, she is both supporting her gender and avoiding conflict. Therefore, a polite confronter should be perceived as acting more in concordance with the female gender norm of communality. We decided to manipulate the assertiveness of the remark to study perceptions of an assertive confronter as opposed to a more polite confronter.

In Study 1, we found that while ambivalent sexist attitudes predicted more negative perceptions of the confronter overall, this was moderated by gender, such that females responded more negatively as they expressed more sexist attitudes. However, while the ASI combined scale
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influenced respect and liking of the confronter, it is important to note that ASI in general did not predict perceptions of the confronter as complaining; perceptions of complaining were influenced by the BS subscale specifically. The HS scale did not influence perceptions of the confronter. While holding sexist attitudes in general should influence perceptions of a female who confronts a sexist comment, it may be that the sexist attitudes contained in the ASI might not specifically get at the normative gender roles that are threatened when a female confronts a sexist remark. By confronting assertively, a female may be perceived as violating female gender roles by adopting a male, agentic role. Additionally, in confronting a man, she might be perceived as threatening males’ dominance in society. Individuals who endorse more sexist attitudes should be more likely to evaluate a woman negatively for violating this norm because this norm runs contrary to general sexist attitudes; however, this effect should be more pronounced when individuals’ endorsement of specific gender roles are examined rather than more global ideas about gender relations. The endorsement that men should have power, for example, targets a more specific construct of sexist beliefs that should be related to perceptions of a woman who confronts, in that she is encroaching on male authority by asserting herself. In following this line of research, we decided to examine three specific endorsements: support for male power, support for female power, and support for male empathy. Given that a female confronting a male might be perceived as a threat to male dominance, support for male power was of particular interest. Additionally, we wanted to examine counter-stereotypical gender role endorsements for both sexes, namely that females should have power and that men should have empathy, traits that are associated typically with the other gender.
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The goal of this study was to characterize perceptions of a female confronter of a sexist remark as a function of contextual and individual difference variables. Based on the research reviewed above, several factors were examined as predictors of these perceptions. First, because females rated the confronter more favorably than males in Study 1, along with past research which found evidence for gender differences for perceptions of a female confronter (Dodd et al., 2001), we predicted that the same participant gender differences would emerge in the present study; specifically, female participants should evaluate the confronter more positively than males. We also expected that endorsement of specific gender roles would predict perceptions of a female confronter, such that individuals who supported the idea that men should have power would respond more negatively to a female confronter, while individuals who endorsed female power and male empathy would evaluate a female confronter more positively. Additionally, confrontation style should affect perceptions. In past research, a female who assertively confronted a clearly sexist remark was respected more than when she did not confront the remark (Dodd et al., 2001). Although this research examined a female who either did or did not confront, rather than a female who chose either an assertive or polite confrontation style, we predicted that an assertive confronter would be respected more than a polite confronter. However, in that the difference between assertively confronting and not confronting is a larger difference in observed behavior than assertively confronting and politely confronting, this difference in respect might not be as large of an effect as it was in the Dodd et al. (2001) study.

Method

Participants

Participants were 204 individuals in the United States who participated for a small monetary payment. Participants consisted of 114 women (55.9%) and 80 men (39.2%), with ten participants choosing to withhold their gender. Participants ranged from 18 years to 73 years of age.
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Age ($M = 36.85, SD = 14.03$). Participants were recruited through MTurk. All procedures were approved by the college’s Protection of Human Subjects Committee, and digital informed consent was obtained by each participant prior to the survey.

Materials and Procedure

As in the previous study, participants completed a Qualtrics survey linked through MTurk which contained all experimental materials. Participants read an informed consent for which they indicated agreement by clicking a button to continue to the rest of the survey. Participants were informed that they would be participating in a study on group dynamics.

After granting consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of two possible vignettes. To explore hypotheses regarding the confrontation, the confrontation style was experimentally manipulated. In one vignette, “Angela” made an assertive confrontation (the confrontation included for the previous study), while in the other vignette, she made a polite confrontation.

**Assertive Confrontation:** (obviously upset by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

**Polite Confrontation:** (obviously upset by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris...I don’t know if you should say things like that.

In order to ensure that these remarks were sufficiently distinct in levels of assertiveness, a pilot test was conducted prior to the study. Participants ($n = 108$) were told to “Imagine that you witness a conversation between two people, where one person makes a clearly prejudicial remark. The other person, clearly upset, says the following...” The participants were then presented with either the assertive or polite confrontation, with identifiers such as “Angela” and “Chris” removed in order to isolate the effect of the comment without gender influences.

Participants were then asked “How polite or assertive is this response?” on a 7-point Likert scale,
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with Very polite and Very assertive oriented at opposite ends of the scale, such that a higher numerical score was associated with a more assertive rating. The assertive confrontation ($M = 4.59, SD = 1.50$) was found to be significantly more assertive than the polite response ($M = 3.44, SD = 1.74$), $t(106) = 3.68, p < .001$.

In the experiment proper, following the vignette, participants were presented with questions about their perceptions of the conversation (filler items) and the confronter (dependent variables). Primary questions of concern included how much participants liked and respected the confronter, as well as ratings for the confronter as complaining.

Participants then completed the Semantic Differential of Sex Roles (SDSR; Hafner, 1984) to measure explicit endorsement of sex roles. The instructions of the scale were modified to suit the purposes of the experiment. Participants were asked, “To what extent do you believe that men should exhibit each of these traits?” and then asked to apply the same question to the traits as they apply to women. Participants were presented with 15 items that fell into three subcategories, two of which were relevant to this study: “Power” and “Empathy.” Items in the “Power” category included “Assertive,” “Strong personality,” “Forceful,” “Dominant,” “Aggressive,” and “Acts as a leader.” Items in the “Empathy” category included “Sympathetic,” “Understanding,” “Compassionate,” “Warm,” “Tender,” and “Gentle.” The scale ranged from scores of 1 (never) to 7 (always). All items in each subcategory were averaged. A higher score indicated greater endorsement of certain gender roles; for example, a higher score for the “Power” category for men would indicate greater endorsement that men should have power, while a higher score for the “Empathy” category for men indicated greater endorsement that men should have empathy. The “Power” and “Empathy” categories for men (renamed “Support for Male Power” and “Support for Male Empathy”; $\alpha = .83$ and .93, respectively) and the “Power”
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category for women (renamed “Support for Female Power”; α = .81) were the only elements of this scale included in subsequent analyses.

As in Study 1, after completing the scale, participants were asked to report their demographic information and were presented with a debriefing form.

Results

Of the 204 participants, data from 23 participants were excluded because they failed to respond correctly to the three questions embedded throughout the survey to check if they were paying attention. In addition, data from 9 participants were excluded because they failed to follow survey instructions (n = 1) or failed to complete the survey (n = 8). The analyses below were therefore conducted with 172 participants. Participants consisted of 106 women (61.6%) and 64 men (37.2%), with two participants choosing to withhold their gender. Participants identified as White (n = 144), Black (n = 9), Asian (n = 8), Latino (n = 4), mixed race (n = 4), Pacific Islander (n = 1), with two participants choosing to withhold their race. Participants ranged from 18 years to 73 years of age (M = 36.15, SD = 13.40).

Perceptions of the Confronter

To examine perceptions of the confronter in regards to several character traits, all character trait variables were subjected to the same analyses. First, variables were subjected to a 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) x 2 (Confrontation Type: assertive, polite) between-subjects ANOVA to examine main effects and interactions. Additionally, to test the hypothesis that greater endorsement of gender norms would predict evaluations of a confronter, regression analyses were conducted. First, to test the hypothesis that Support for Male Power would predict how participants responded to an assertive or polite confronter, regression analyses were conducted by entering Support for Male Power and Confrontation Type separately on the first
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step and the interaction term of mean-centered Support for Male Power and Confrontation Type on the second step. Secondly, to examine the strength of each variable in contributing to an overall model of predictor variables, Support for Male Power, Support for Female Power, and Participant Gender were entered as separate predictors of perceptions. Finally, to examine whether a counter-stereotypical gender role, Support for Male Empathy, would influence perceptions, regression analyses were conducted by entering Support for Male Empathy and Participant Gender separately on the first step and the interaction term of mean-centered Support for Male Empathy on the second step. Only significant results are reported below.

Respect

First, ratings of respect for the confronter were subjected to the ANOVA model (see Table 4). The main effect for Confrontation Type was marginally significant, with an assertive confronter respected marginally more than a polite confronter. The main effect for Participant Gender was not significant \( (p = .263) \), although it was in the predicted direction such that females \( (M = 5.10, \ SD = 1.55) \) expressed more respect for the confronter than males \( (M = 4.86, \ SD = 1.21) \).

When respect was subjected to the aforementioned regression analysis, the overall model explained 4.7% of the variance in respect, \( F(3, 167) = 2.72, \ p = .046, \ R^2 = .047 \) (see Table 5; Figure 2). The main effect for Support for Male Power was significant, while the main effect for Confrontation Type was marginally significant. The Support for Male Power by Confrontation Type interaction was significant. As participants increasingly endorsed that men should have power, an assertive confronter was respected marginally less, \( simple \ slope = -0.24, \ t(167) = -1.47, \ p = .071 \) while a polite confronter was respected more, \( simple \ slope = 0.24, \ t(167) = 1.66, \ p = .049 \).
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When respect was examined with the overall predictor model, the overall model explained 5.7% of the variance in respect for the confronter, $F(3, 165) = 3.32, p = .021, R^2 = .057$ (see Table 6). Support for Female Power predicted increased perceptions of the confronter as worthy of respect. The main effects for Participant Gender and Support for Male Power were not significant.

$Liking$

For liking of the confronter (see Table 4), the main effect for Participant Gender was significant, with females reporting more liking of the confronter than males. No other effects were significant.

When liking was subjected to the regression analysis, the overall model explained 3.0% of the variance in liking of the confronter, $F(3, 166) = 1.70, p = .170, R^2 = .030$ (see Table 5; Figure 2). The main effect for Support for Male Power was marginally significant, while the main effect for Confrontation Type failed to reach significance for liking. The Support for Male Power by Confrontation Type interaction was marginally significant. As participants increasingly endorsed that men should have power, an assertive confronter was liked less, $simple slope = -0.35, t(166) = -1.86, p = .032$. The liking of a polite confronter, on the other hand, was not predicted by the belief that men should have power, $simple slope = 0.09, t(166) = 0.57, p = .286$.

When liking was examined with the predictor model, the overall model explained 9.3% of the variance in liking for the confronter, $F(3, 164) = 5.62, p = .001, R^2 = .093$ (see Table 6). Support for Female Power predicted increased perceptions of the confronter as likeable. Support for Male Power predicted marginally decreased liking of the confronter. Additionally, the main effect for Participant Gender was marginally significant.
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Complaining

The perceived extent to which the confronter was seen as complaining was subjected to the ANOVA model (see Table 4). The main effect for Participant Gender was significant, with males rating the confronter as complaining more than females. Additionally, the interaction between Participant Gender and Confrontation Type was significant. For female participants, an assertive confronter was perceived as complaining more than a polite confronter. For male participants, perceptions of complaining did not depend on confrontation type.

When complaining was examined with the predictor model, the overall model explained 13.8% of the variance in perceptions of the confronter as complaining, $F(3, 159) = 8.50, p < .001, R^2 = .138$ (see Table 6). Participant Gender predicted perceptions of the confronter as complaining. Support for Male Power predicted increased perceptions of the confronter as complaining. Support for Female Power predicted decreased perceptions of the confronter as complaining.

A regression analysis was conducted by entering Support for Male Empathy and Participant Gender on the first step and the interaction term of mean-centered Support for Male Empathy and Participant Gender on the second step. The overall model explained 13.9% of the variance in perceptions of the confronter as complaining, $F(3, 159) = 8.53, p < .001, R^2 = .139$ (see Figure 3). The main effect for Support for Male Empathy was not significant ($p = .386$). The main effect for Participant Gender was significant, such that males thought the confronter was complaining more than females, $\beta = 0.27, t(159) = 3.57, p < .001$. The Support for Male Empathy by Participant Gender interaction was marginally significant, $\beta = -0.40, t(159) = -1.80, p = .073$. For male participants, as their belief that men should have empathy increased, their perceptions of the confronter complaining decreased, simple slope $= -0.98, t(159) = -2.90, p =$
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.002. For females, however, ratings of the confronter as complaining did not depend on their belief that men should have empathy, simple slope = -0.24, \( t(159) = -1.04, p = .151. \)

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine whether the style of confrontation affects the perceptions of a female confronting a male, hostile perpetrator. Additionally, individual factors such as endorsement of specific gender roles were examined as moderators of perceptions. The findings of the current study suggest that the perceptions of women who confront sexist remarks, specifically respect, liking, and perceptions of complaining, are affected by the gender of the participant, endorsement of gender roles, and the assertiveness of the confrontation. More specifically, the results replicate findings from Study 1 suggesting that females evaluate the confronter more positively than males, specifically in domains of liking and perceptions of the confronter as complaining. In the current study, respect for the confronter was also higher when the confrontation was assertive rather than polite. Additionally, our findings revealed that endorsement that men should have power and endorsement that women should have power predicted more negative and positive evaluations of the confronter, respectively. Furthermore, endorsement of a progressive gender norm for males, and not females, moderated their perceptions of the female confronter. These findings replicated many of the observed participant gender differences in Study 1, yet also extended this work by exploring additional factors that influence the perceptions of women who confront sexist remarks, namely the assertiveness of the confrontation and endorsement of gender roles.

While respect for the confronter was influenced by the assertiveness of the confrontation, liking and complaining were driven by gender differences, supporting previous research suggesting that respect and liking are different constructs (e.g., Dodd et al., 2001; Werther,
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2011). An assertive confronter was respected only marginally more than a polite confronter by participants across genders; furthermore, our other variables of interest (liking and complaining) were not significantly predicted by the assertiveness of the confrontation. While our pilot test suggested that the assertive confrontation was more assertive than the polite confrontation, we wanted to confirm that our manipulations for confrontation type were sufficiently distinct to provoke different perceptions, specifically perceptions related to respect. Past research (e.g., Werther, 2011) has indicated that highly respected individuals are associated with higher levels of competence, while more liked individuals are associated with higher levels of warmth. This is particularly relevant to our examination of a female confronter, in that females are often perceived as being nice but incompetent (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996). Thus, in order to bolster our finding in the study proper that confrontation type was significantly related to respect, we decided to examine the effect of the confrontation manipulation on variables related to competence, namely intelligence and strength of an argument. In this follow-up study, participants (n = 95) were presented with either the assertive or polite confrontation from Study 2. Participants were then asked “How strong of an argument do you think this is?” and “How intelligent is this response?” on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Analyses were subjected to a 2 (Confrontation Type: assertive, polite) x 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) ANOVA. An assertive confrontation (M = 5.00, SD = 1.69) was perceived as a stronger argument than a polite confrontation (M = 4.04, SD = 1.71), F(1, 89) = 8.16, p = .005, η² = 0.084. Similarly, an assertive confrontation (M = 5.54, SD = 1.30) was perceived as more intelligent than a polite confrontation (M = 4.89, SD = 1.22), F(1, 91) = 8.55, p = .004, η² = .086. There were no main effects for participant gender for either of these examined variables. These findings suggest that an assertive confronter, by making a stronger and more intelligent statement
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than a polite confronter, may be perceived as more competent, and therefore more worthy of respect than a polite confronter. These findings suggest that while liking of the confronter is still primarily determined by individual factors such as participant gender, as found in Studies 1 and 2, respect may be related to the perceived assertiveness of the confrontation.

As in Study 1, males perceived the confronter as complaining more than females; however, this variable was also predicted by an interaction between participant gender and confrontation type. Females evaluated an assertive confronter as complaining more than a polite confronter, while males’ ratings did not depend on the type of confrontation made. Previous research has indicated that when women choose to confront sexism, they prefer more polite confrontations (Swim & Hyers, 1999); therefore, women who rate an assertive confronter less positively than a polite confronter might simply be reflecting their own preferences for a polite confrontation. Furthermore, because females are frequently the target of these sexist remarks and ruminate about their potential responses (e.g., Swim & Hyers, 1999), females may attend more to the wording of a confrontational response. Females may react negatively to an assertive confrontation because they are aware of how assertive that confrontation is compared to other, less direct confrontational styles, such as surprised exclamations, humor, or “grumbling” (Swim & Hyers, 1999). It is possible that for males, any confrontation may be perceived as a threat to male power. Because males are not the target of these sexist remarks, they have less motivation to attend to confrontational styles, and may therefore respond similarly to any type of confrontation. It is important to note that this interaction was not found for perceptions of the confronter in regards to respect or liking. Therefore, future research should explore the nuances of female ratings in response to assertive confrontations.
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As support for male power increased, respect and liking for an assertive confronter decreased. As expected, greater endorsement of male power predicted more negative evaluations of the confronter overall. As suggested earlier, confronting assertively may be perceived as a greater threat to male power than a woman who acts less assertively. Indeed, an assertive confronter was perceived more negatively as support for male power increased, which suggests that an assertive confrontation is perceived as a greater threat to gender norms. While liking did not significantly vary for a polite confronter, as support for male power increased, a polite confronter was respected more. Because a polite response might be consistent with a female communality norm, a polite confrontation should not be perceived as an attempt to usurp male power. Thus, individuals who endorse male dominance over females should react less negatively to a polite, as opposed to an assertive, confronter. Although outside the concern of the current study, we did not include a condition in which the female did not confront at all. The existence of a baseline could clarify these findings. Future research should explore the possibility of differing reactions to a polite confrontation of a sexist remark.

Given that support for male power as predicted by different confrontation styles did not predict large amounts of variance for perceptions, our explanation of other influences such as support for female power create a broader picture of other gender norms that shaped perceptions. Indeed, support for female power predicted more positive evaluations of the confronter overall, suggesting that the female, by confronting, is behaving in a powerful way. Participant gender, on the other hand, remained a significant predictor only for perceptions of the confronter as complaining, suggesting that endorsement of gender norms might play a larger role in predicting overall perceptions of the confronter.
Additionally, as males’ support for male empathy increased, their perceptions of the confronter as complaining decreased, while this effect was not observed for females. Although men are expected to hold more sexist attitudes toward women than women are (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and have punished women for acting assertively (Dodd et al., 2001), there has been little research examining the perceptions of men who expressly defy sexist attitudes. Therefore, we do not know how much of the gender differences for perceptions of a confronter are driven by observed differences in sexism. Indeed, men may be more likely to hold the sexist belief that men should have authority over women and therefore punish an assertive female; yet, if a male endorses counter-stereotypical gender roles, he may not be motivated to react negatively to a female who confronts. Therefore, it is possible that males who endorse non-traditional gender roles, such as the belief that men should have empathy, may be more likely to respond positively to a woman who confronts. Just as the belief that women should have power, a gender norm violation for women, predicts more positive perceptions of the confronter, so may the belief that men should have empathy, a gender norm violation for men. Indeed, it is important to note that the mean score for support for male empathy was relatively high ($M = 5.59, SD = 1.09$), which suggests a possible ceiling effect. It may be more telling, therefore, to examine the participants who expressed low support for male empathy. If a man rejects this progressive gender norm, suggesting that men should not have empathy, he is more likely to agree with traditional gender roles and hold more sexist attitudes. These sexist attitudes would then lead to more negative evaluations of the confronter. This tendency did not exist for females, which may be a result of females’ lower ratings of the confronter as complaining in general, which allows for less variability in their perceptions. Given that past research has not examined moderating variables for males’ perceptions of confronters of sexism, future research should explore the extent to
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which progressive gender norm endorsement might make males respond similarly to females in
their evaluations of female confronters of sexism.

**Study 3**

The purpose of Study 3 was to explore variables that influence the perceptions of
perpetrators of sexist remarks. Interestingly, the gender of the perpetrator did not largely impact
perceptions of a female confronter of a sexist remark in Study 1. However, we expected the
manipulation of perpetrator gender to be a more significant predictor for perceptions of a
perpetrator. Because victims of discrimination are expected to be members of lower status
groups relative to their perpetrators (Rodin et al., 1990), attributions of discrimination may
depend on the person being discriminated against being from a lower status group (women) than
a perpetrator from a high status group (men; Inman & Baron, 1996; Rodin et al., 1990).

Presumably, attributing a discriminatory action to a perpetrator should impact how an individual
respects or likes that perpetrator. If a man discriminating against a woman is the most
“asymmetrical” for prejudice, then male perpetrators may be recognized more easily than female
perpetrators, who have the same status as their female victims. Thus, a female making a sexist
remark may be perceived differently than a male perpetrator. Specifically, we chose to examine
perceptions similar to those of the perceptions for the confronter, including respect, liking, and
perceived abrasiveness. In pursuing abrasiveness, we wanted to examine a trait relevant to a
negative reaction to a sexist remark. Because the perception of a confronter as complaining has
been found to depend on the identity of the individual who confronts (Czopp & Monteith, 2003),
perceptions of abrasiveness should be influenced by the identity of the perpetrator. Because
abrasiveness is more likely to be associated with stereotypically male aggressive behavior than
stereotypical female “niceness,” males who make disagreeable statements may be more readily
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identified as abrasive. This finding should only be enhanced by the male perpetrator belonging to a higher status group than his female target, as opposed to the similar status of a female perpetrator and victim.

What might be critical to the stereotype-asymmetry hypothesis is the content of the stereotypes presented in the context of the discrimination, such that an event is more likely to be attributed to discrimination if the victim is negatively stereotyped rather than positively stereotyped (O’Brien et al., 2008). Given the negative content of hostile sexist attitudes compared to the subjectively positive ideas expressed by benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), it is likely that a stereotype propelled by hostile sexism would be more likely to engender attributions of discrimination than a more ambiguous, benevolent stereotype. Therefore, although the present research examines perceptions of a perpetrator making a sexist comment, rather than an act of discrimination, the subjective positivity or negativity of the stereotypes proposed in the sexist remark should have a bearing on the perceptions of the perpetrator. Specifically, a hostile comment should provoke more negative perceptions of a perpetrator than a benevolent comment. Yet, this should depend on whether individual participants endorse such sexist beliefs. For example, individuals who score high on the hostile dimension of sexism would presumably not respond as negatively to a hostile perpetrator.

The goal of this study was to characterize perceptions of a perpetrator of sexist remarks. For the reasons provided above, namely the stereotype-asymmetry hypothesis, we predicted that manipulations such as gender of the perpetrator and type of sexist remark would strongly predict perceptions of the perpetrator. Specifically, we predicted that a female perpetrator would not be perceived as negatively as a male perpetrator because that female belongs to the same status group as the female victim. Additionally, we predicted that because the content of a hostile
remark is more “negative” in content than a benevolent remark, a hostile perpetrator would be evaluated more negatively than a benevolent perpetrator. However, this should depend on individual endorsement of sexist attitudes; individuals who hold stronger sexist beliefs should not evaluate a hostile perpetrator as negatively as those who do not endorse sexist attitudes. Additionally, we found in Study 1 that individual sexist beliefs predicted the perceptions of female participants in regards to a confronter, such that more sexist females evaluated a confronter more negatively than females low in sexism. Similarly, we expected more sexist females to evaluate a perpetrator more positively than females low in sexism. Furthermore, because males tend to hold more sexist beliefs than females (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and because males responded more negatively to a female who confronted a sexist remark, we predicted that males would evaluate a perpetrator more favorably than females, partly because the perpetrator in the current research (regardless of benevolent or hostile content) endorses ideas related to male dominance (Glick & Fiske, 1996), an idea that male participants should be more motivated to support.

Method

Participants

Participants were 238 individuals in the United States who participated for a small monetary payment. Participants consisted of 122 women (51.3%) and 116 men (48.7%). Participants ranged from 18 years to 66 years of age ($M = 32.42, SD = 10.92$). Participants were recruited through MTurk. All procedures were approved by the college’s Protection of Human Subjects Committee, and digital informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the survey.
Materials and Procedure

Participants completed a Qualtrics survey linked through MTurk which contained all experimental materials. Participants read an informed consent for which they indicated agreement by clicking a button to continue to the rest of the survey. Participants were informed that they would be participating in a study on group dynamics.

After granting consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of four possible vignettes, in which the Comment Type (benevolent, hostile) and Perpetrator Gender (male, female) were manipulated and presented across the four conditions. The manipulations were the same as presented for Study 1, such that the gender of the sexist perpetrator was experimentally manipulated (Chris or Christine), a female confronter (Angela) always made an assertive confrontation, and the sexist comments resembled the constructs of benevolent and hostile sexism from the ASI.

Participants were then presented with questions about the conversation (filler items) and the perpetrator (dependent variables), the same items as for Study 1. Participants were asked to give their ratings for both actors in the vignette; for purposes of examining perceptions of the perpetrator, ratings of respect, liking, and abrasiveness were measured specifically. After completing these questions, participants completed the ASI to measure levels of ambivalent sexism. After completing the scale, participants were asked to report their demographic information and were presented with a debriefing form.

Results

Of the 238 participants, data from 17 participants were excluded because they failed to respond correctly to three questions randomly placed throughout the survey, which asked participants to select a specific option if they were paying attention. The analyses below were
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therefore conducted with 221 participants. Participants consisted of 110 women (49.8%) and 111 men (50.2%). Participants identified as White ($n = 167$), Asian ($n = 19$), Black ($n = 16$), Hispanic ($n = 11$), mixed race ($n = 5$), Pacific Islander ($n = 1$), and Native American ($n = 1$), with one participant abstaining. Participants ranged from 18 years to 66 years of age ($M = 32.72, SD = 11.11$).

**Perceptions of the Perpetrator**

To examine perceptions of the confronter in regards to several character traits, all dependent variables were subjected to the same analyses. First, variables were subjected to a 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) x 2 (Perpetrator Gender: male, female) x 2 (Comment Type: benevolent, hostile) between-subjects ANOVAs to examine main effects and interactions. Additionally, to explore the moderating effect of the sexism scale (ASI), these variables were subjected to regression analyses. Regression analyses were conducted by entering ASI and Participant Gender separately on the first step and the interaction term of mean-centered ASI and Participant Gender on the second step. Regression analyses were also conducted by entering ASI and Comment Type separately on the first step and the interaction term of mean-centered ASI and Participant Gender on the second step. Only significant results are reported below.

**Respect**

First, respect was subjected to the aforementioned ANOVA (see Table 7). The main effect for Perpetrator Gender was strongly significant, with female perpetrators rated as more worthy of respect than male perpetrators. Although the main effects for Participant Gender and Comment Type failed to reach significance ($ps > .236$), an interaction between Participant Gender and Comment Type was significant. For conditions with a benevolent remark, there was
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no significant difference between male and female participants. For conditions with a hostile remark, however, males respected the perpetrator more than females.

_Liking_

Liking of the perpetrator followed a similar pattern (see Table 7). The main effect for Perpetrator Gender was significant, with female perpetrators rated as more likeable than male perpetrators. The main effect for Participant Gender was also significant, with males liking the perpetrator more than females. While the main effect for Comment Type was not significant ($p = .987$), the interaction between Participant Gender and Comment Type was found to be significant. As with respect, for conditions with a benevolent remark, there was no significant difference found for participant gender. For conditions with a hostile remark, however, males rated the perpetrator as more likeable than females.

A regression analysis was conducted by entering ASI and Participant Gender on the first step and the interaction term of mean-centered ASI and Participant Gender on the second step. Yet, while the main effect for ASI was significant, $\beta = 0.70$, $t(217) = 3.79$, $p < .001$, the interaction was surprisingly not significant ($p = .122$). Therefore, the subscales of the ASI were explored to determine if the relationship existed at the level of the subscales. A regression analysis was conducted by entering BS and Participant Gender on the first step and the interaction term of mean-centered BS and Participant Gender on the second step. The overall model explained 14.0% of the variance in liking of the perpetrator, $F(3, 217) = 11.82$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .140$ (see Figure 4). The main effect of Participant Gender was significant, $\beta = 0.14$, $t(217) = 2.26$, $p = .025$. BS score also significantly predicted liking of the perpetrator, $\beta = 0.73$, $t(217) = 3.75$, $p < .001$. The BS x Participant Gender interaction was significant, $\beta = -0.46$, $t(217) = -2.36$, $p = .019$. For female participants, as their BS scores increased, their liking of the perpetrator
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increased, *simple slope* = 0.71, *t*(217) = 5.06, *p* < .001. For men, this pattern was not significant, *simple slope* = 0.21, *t*(217) = 1.26, *p* = .104. A regression analysis was run to examine whether the relationship differed for the subscale HS, but the interaction term was not significant, $\beta = -0.13$, *t*(217) = -0.72, *p* = .472.

*Abrasiveness*

Abrasiveness of the perpetrator was also subjected to the ANOVA (see Table 7). The main effect for Perpetrator Gender was significant, with the male perpetrators perceived as more abrasive than the female perpetrators. The main effect for Participant Gender was not significant (*p* = .132). The main effect for Comment Type was significant, with the hostile perpetrators perceived as more abrasive than the benevolent perpetrators. Additionally, a Participant Gender x Comment Type interaction was found to be significant. Female and male participants did not differ in their ratings of abrasiveness for benevolent perpetrators. Hostile perpetrators, however, were rated as more abrasive by female participants than male participants.

A regression analysis was conducted by entering ASI and Comment Type on the first step and the interaction term of mean-centered ASI and Comment Type on the second step. The overall model explained 4.3% of the variance in perceptions of abrasiveness of the perpetrator, $F(3, 217) = 3.27, *p* = .022, $R^2 = .043$ (see Figure 5). The main effect of Comment Type was significant, $\beta = 0.15, *t*(217) = 2.19, *p* = .030. ASI score marginally predicted perceptions of abrasiveness of the perpetrator, $\beta = 0.37, *t*(217) = 1.76, *p* = .080. The ASI x Comment Type interaction was significant, $\beta = -0.44, *t*(217) = -2.08, *p* = .039. In conditions with a hostile comment, as ASI scores increased, perceptions of the perpetrator as abrasive decreased, *simple slope* = -0.48, *t*(217) = -1.95, *p* = .026. In conditions with a benevolent comment, however, ASI was not a predictor of ratings of abrasiveness, *simple slope* = 0.25, *t*(217) = 1.00, *p* = .160.
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Through examination of the subscales, the pattern was upheld for BS and HS, for which the interaction terms were marginally significant, \( \beta = -0.42, t(217) = -1.94, p = .054, \beta = -0.36, t(217) = -1.75, p = .081 \), respectively.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine contextual and individual factors that influence the perceptions of a perpetrator of a sexist remark. The findings of the current study support a priori hypotheses and suggest that the perceptions of perpetrators of sexist remarks, specifically respect, liking, and abrasiveness, are affected primarily by the gender of the perpetrator, but also by gender of the participant, type of sexist comment, and individuals’ ambivalent sexism. Our findings revealed that a female perpetrator of sexism was evaluated more positively than a male perpetrator. Additionally, while a hostile perpetrator provoked different perceptions from men and women, and sexists and non-sexists, perceptions of a benevolent perpetrator were not moderated by individual differences or gender. Our findings suggest that perceptions of a perpetrator of sexism are primarily shaped by factors related to the perpetrator, such as gender identity and the sexist remark expressed. Our findings also revealed that ambivalent sexism moderated females’, but not males’, perceptions of a sexist perpetrator, similarly to how sexism moderated females’ perceptions of the confirmer in Study 1.

Female perpetrators of sexism were respected and liked more, and perceived as less abrasive, than male perpetrators. While previous research has not specifically examined perceptions of perpetrators of sexist remarks, research has provided some evidence for differing perceptions of discrimination based on the source of the discriminatory action. For instance, Baron et al. (1991) found that participants were more likely to perceive discriminatory actions against women as discrimination when the action came from an expected perpetrator (a man).
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rather than an unexpected perpetrator (a woman). While in this study (Baron et al., 1991), female
participants rated the perpetrator as more discriminatory than male participants, the overall effect
of rating discriminatory actions more severely when coming from a man rather than a woman
persisted across genders, which supports our current findings. Because discrimination is
expected between a high-status perpetrator and a low-status victim (Rodin et al., 1990), a female
making a sexist remark against a female does not reflect this status difference. It is interesting to
note that this gender perpetrator effect persisted despite the type of sexist comment; that is, even
when presented with a hostile remark, female perpetrators were still evaluated more positively
than a male, hostile perpetrator. Overall, these findings reveal that when females make sexist
comments of comparable offensiveness to males, they are not rated as negatively as males. Given
past research indicating that males are more likely to hold sexist attitudes against females than
females (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996) and are less likely to embrace feminism than females (Burn,
Aboud, & Moyles, 2000), males are most likely believed to be the typical perpetrators of anti-
female sexist remarks. It is possible that, despite the often hostile content of the sexist remark, a
female perpetrator would be perceived differently than a male perpetrator because people are not
accustomed to thinking of females as perpetrators of sexism against females. We explored this
possibility in our next study.

Participants high in ambivalent sexism perceived a hostile perpetrator as less abrasive
than participants low in sexism; however, a benevolent perpetrator was perceived as similarly
abrasive by high- and low-sexist individuals. Ambivalent sexism overall, hostile sexism, and
benevolent sexism all demonstrated this same effect. Indeed, because some individuals may use
benevolent sexism as a way to justify hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), individuals high in
ambivalent sexism may feel more closely aligned with hostile sexism than benevolent sexism. In
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In the current sample, overall ASI was correlated more strongly with HS, $r(221) = .90$, $p < .001$, than with BS, $r(221) = .85$, $p < .001$, which suggests that ASI may be more related to HS beliefs than BS. Therefore, it was expected that more ambivalently sexist individuals might respond more favorably to a hostile perpetrator, and perhaps have ambiguous attitudes toward a benevolent perpetrator. While hostile perpetrators were perceived as more abrasive than benevolent perpetrators overall, the perceptions of a hostile or benevolent perpetrator usually depended on individual difference variables. Specifically, we found that while benevolent perpetrators were perceived similarly by males and females, hostile perpetrators were evaluated more negatively by female participants than male participants. Males are more likely to agree with a hostile sexist remark, which may be why they are more likely to respond positively to a hostile perpetrator. A benevolent perpetrator, on the other hand, was evaluated similarly by both genders. Because of the “subjectively positive” content of benevolent sexist attitudes (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 491), females would not necessarily respond more negatively toward a benevolent perpetrator than males. Males in the current sample were more in agreement with benevolent attitudes, such that they scored higher than females on the Benevolent Sexism subscale; yet, these gender differences were larger for Hostile Sexism in the current sample, such that the difference in males’ ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.03$) and females’ ($M = 1.65$, $SD = 1.27$) HS scores, $t(219) = -3.52$, $p = .001$, was larger than the difference in males’ ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.92$) and females’ ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 1.06$) BS scores, $t(219) = -2.04$, $p = .042$. Given this past research, our lack of a gender difference in perceptions of a benevolent perpetrator is expected.

While male participants liked the perpetrator more than female participants overall, benevolent sexism was found to predict females’ but not males’ liking of the perpetrator. Because the males in the current sample expressed more agreement with benevolent sexist
attitudes than females, males would be expected to respond more favorably to a sexist perpetrator because of increased agreement with the sexist remark itself. However, when examining endorsement of benevolent sexism, females liked a perpetrator more as BS scores increased, while males’ liking did not depend on their levels of BS. Glick and Fiske (1996) have suggested that females’ endorsement of BS might not be “subjectively positive” in nature, as it might be with males; rather, females who endorse BS might do so as a justification of male societal control. Additionally, women who are less identified with their ingroup may evaluate ingroup members who confront sexism more negatively than highly identified women (Kaiser et al., 2009). Highly identified individuals, as opposed to weakly identified individuals, react positively to members of the group who help the group achieve a positive social identity (Kaiser et al., 2009). Because benevolent sexist attitudes suggest that women are the weaker sex, a woman who endorses BS would be less likely to be highly identified with her ingroup, given that the attitudes she endorses are antithetical to the group’s success. Therefore, women who hold benevolent sexist attitudes are more likely to be weakly identified with their ingroup. Because these weakly-identified women are more likely to negatively evaluate a female confronter of sexism, they also might be more likely to positively evaluate a perpetrator of sexism. Therefore, when women are benevolently sexist, they may be more likely to respond favorably to a perpetrator, as a way to indicate agreement with the proper, gender-based order in society.

**Study 4**

The primary purpose of Study 4 was to expand on the findings of Study 3 by further exploring the relationship between perpetrator gender and perceptions of the perpetrator. In Study 3, female perpetrators were evaluated more favorably overall than male perpetrators. We speculated that the reason that female perpetrators were evaluated less negatively than males
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might be because victims of discrimination are expected to be of a lower status than their perpetrators (Rodin et al., 1990); a female perpetrator and female confronter, being from the same group and therefore the same “status,” might not be recognized as discrimination. Although this past research involves attributions of events to discrimination rather than perceptions based on sexist remarks, we assume a similar effect for perceptions as with attributions to discrimination. Therefore, we expected that what is driving this perpetrator gender effect is the extent to which participants identify the sexist remark as prejudicial. If participants observe a female making a sexist remark against another female, there may be no activation of this typical victim-perpetrator model, and participants may therefore not perceive the event as prejudicial or threatening to the victim. However, a male making a sexist remark against a female fits with this “asymmetry,” with a higher status perpetrator acting against a lower status victim. Participants may therefore be responding more negatively to a male perpetrator because they readily identify this situation as a prejudicial one. Therefore, in exploring this line of thought, we examined whether a potential mediator—the perceived offensiveness of the sexist remark—would account for the relationship observed between perpetrator gender and perceptions of the perpetrator.

As with Study 2, we decided to examine specific gender role endorsements as possible predictors of perceptions. Specifically, we hypothesized that support for male power and support for female power should influence perceptions of a perpetrator. In predicting perceptions separately for a male perpetrator and a female perpetrator, we predicted that this mixed model would predict more of the perceptions for a male perpetrator, while perceptions of a female perpetrator would not be as determined by these individual endorsements, given the situational ambiguity of a female perpetrator. Yet, this is largely exploratory.
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The goal of this study was to characterize perceptions of a perpetrator of sexist remarks. We predicted that, as in Study 3, perceptions of a perpetrator would be largely influenced by the gender of the perpetrator. Yet, we also predicted that the perceived offensiveness of the sexist remark would mediate this effect, such that perceived offensiveness, and not perpetrator gender, should emerge as the true predictor of perceptions. Additionally, because males responded more positively to a perpetrator in Study 3 than females, we predicted that this finding would be replicated in the current study. Furthermore, we predicted that perceptions of a male perpetrator might be predicted more by specific endorsement of gender roles such as support for male power, compared to perceptions of a female perpetrator, because a female perpetrator may be perceived more ambiguously; yet, because this model is largely exploratory, we were primarily interested in which specific variables would become significant predictors.

Method

Participants

Participants were 203 individuals in the United States who participated for a small monetary payment. Participants consisted of 115 women (56.7%) and 85 men (41.9%), with three participants abstaining. Participants ranged from 18 years to 68 years of age ($M = 35.12, SD = 12.07$). Participants were recruited through MTurk. All procedures were approved by the college’s Protection of Human Subjects Committee, and digital informed consent was obtained by each participant prior to the survey.

Materials and Procedure

As in the previous studies, participants completed a Qualtrics survey linked through MTurk which contained all experimental materials. Participants read an informed consent for
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which they indicated agreement by clicking a button to continue to the rest of the survey.

Participants were informed that they would be participating in a study on group dynamics.

After granting consent, participants were randomly assigned to one of two possible vignettes, in which the Perpetrator Gender (male, female) was experimentally manipulated and presented across the two vignettes.

Participants were presented with the same questions as presented in Study 3. To test the hypothesis that perceptions of the sexist remark as offensive or prejudicial would mediate the liking of the perpetrator, two additional items were examined. Participants were asked to rate “How offensive would you rate Chris/Christine’s last comment in the conversation?” and “How prejudicial would you rate Chris/Christine’s last comment in the conversation?” on a scale from 1 (extremely unoffensive or extremely unprejudicial) to 7 (extremely offensive or extremely prejudicial). These variables were found to be highly reliable (α = .93), and so were combined to form a composite measure renamed “Perceived Offensiveness.” After completing these questions, participants completed the Semantic Differential of Sex Roles (SDSR; Hafner, 1984) to measure explicit endorsement of sex roles. “Support for Male Power” (α = .75) and “Support for Female Power” (α = .79) were the only elements of this scale included in analyses.

Participants were then asked to report their demographic information and were presented with a debriefing form.

Results

Of the 203 participants, data from 17 participants were excluded because they failed to respond correctly to the three questions embedded throughout the survey to check if they were paying attention. In addition, data from 4 participants were excluded because they failed to follow survey instructions (n = 1) or failed to complete the survey (n = 3). The analyses below
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were therefore conducted with 182 participants. Participants consisted of 106 women (58.2%) and 76 men (41.8%). Participants identified as White ($n = 145$), Latino ($n = 10$), Asian ($n = 9$), Black ($n = 9$), mixed race ($n = 6$), Middle Eastern ($n = 1$), and Mediterranean ($n = 1$), with one participant abstaining. Participants ranged from 18 years to 68 years of age ($M = 35.27$, $SD = 11.98$).

Perceptions of the Perpetrator

To examine perceptions of the perpetrator in regards to several character traits, all dependent variables were subjected to the same analyses. First, variables were subjected to a 2 (Participant Gender: male, female) x 2 (Perpetrator Gender: male, female) between-subjects ANOVA to examine main effects and interactions. In order to explore our hypothesis that perceived offensiveness of the prejudicial remark would mediate the extent to which perpetrator gender predicted perceptions of the perpetrator, a mediational analysis was conducted. Additionally, to test the hypothesis that participant gender and specific endorsement of gender norms would predict evaluations of a perpetrator of sexism, Participant Gender, Support for Male Power, and Support for Female Power were entered as separate predictors of perceptions and analyzed separately for conditions with a male and female perpetrator. Only significant results are reported below.

Respect

First, respect of the perpetrator was subjected to the ANOVA model (see Table 8). The main effect for Perpetrator Gender was significant, with a female perpetrator respected more than a male perpetrator. The main effect for Participant Gender was significant, such that male participants respected the perpetrator more than female participants. There was also a significant Perpetrator Gender x Participant Gender interaction, $F(1, 178) = 5.34$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2 = .029$, such
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that male participants did not differ in their ratings of a male or female perpetrator, but females respected a female perpetrator more than a male perpetrator (see Table 9).

When respect was examined with the specific predictor variables, the overall model explained 29.0% of the variance in respect for the male perpetrator, $F(3, 845) = 11.57, p < .001$, $R^2 = .290$ (see Table 10). The main effect of Participant Gender was significant. Support for Male Power predicted increased perceptions of the male perpetrator as worthy of respect. The main effect for Support for Female Power, however, was not significant. When examining respect of a female perpetrator, the overall model explained 13.8% of the variance in respect for the female perpetrator, $F(3, 89) = 4.77, p = .004$, $R^2 = .138$ (see Table 10). Support for Male Power predicted increased perceptions of the female perpetrator as worthy of respect. Support for Female Power predicted decreased respect of the female perpetrator. The main effect for Participant Gender was also significant.

**Liking**

Liking of the perpetrator was subjected to the same ANOVA (see Table 8). The main effect for Perpetrator Gender was significant, with a female perpetrator liked more than a male perpetrator. The main effect for Participant Gender was significant, such that male participants liked the perpetrator more than female participants. There was also a significant Perpetrator Gender x Participant Gender interaction, $F(1, 178) = 6.40, p = .012, \eta^2 = .035$, such that male participants did not differ in their ratings of a male or female perpetrator, but females liked a female perpetrator more than a male perpetrator (see Table 9).

In pursuing our meditational model, we needed to establish several relationships (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First, we needed to establish that perpetrator gender does predict liking of the perpetrator, $R^2 = .05, F(1, 180) = 9.48, p = .002$, as demonstrated in Figure 6. Additionally, there
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must be a relationship between perpetrator gender and perceived offensiveness, $R^2 = .05, F(1, 179) = 8.78, p = .003$. Additionally, perceived offensiveness must be significantly related to liking of the perpetrator, $R^2 = .40, F(1, 179) = 117.85, p < .001$. Finally, to test for mediation, a multiple-level regression analysis was conducted. Perpetrator gender and perceived offensiveness served as predictor variables while liking of the perpetrator served as the outcome variable. The overall model was significant, $R^2 = .41, F(2, 178) = 60.55, p < .001$. The relationship of perceived offensiveness with liking of the perpetrator remained significant even while controlling for perpetrator gender, $\beta = -0.61; t = -10.31, p < .001$. If the mediator is successful, the direct relationship should reduce to non-significance (Baron & Kenny, 1986); importantly, the relationship between perpetrator gender and liking of the perpetrator weakened, $\beta = 0.09, t = 1.54, p = .126$, compared to the direct relationship ($\beta = 0.22$). These results suggest partial mediation.

When liking for a male perpetrator was examined with the specific predictor variables, the overall model explained $22.8\%$ of the variance in liking for the male perpetrator, $F(3, 85) = 8.39, p < .001, R^2 = .228$ (see Table 10). The main effect of Participant Gender was significant. Support for Male Power predicted increased liking of the male perpetrator. The main effect for Support for Female Power was not significant. Examination of liking for a female perpetrator revealed that the overall model explained $14.7\%$ of the variance in liking for the female perpetrator, $F(3, 89) = 5.10, p = .003, R^2 = .147$. Support for Male Power predicted increased liking of the female perpetrator. Additionally, Support for Female Power predicted decreased liking of the female perpetrator. The main effect for Participant Gender was not significant.

Abrasiveness
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The reported abrasiveness of the perpetrator was subjected to the same ANOVA (see Table 8). The main effect for Perpetrator Gender was significant, with a male perpetrator perceived as more abrasive than a female perpetrator.

When abrasiveness of a male perpetrator was examined with the specific predictor variables, neither the overall model ($p = .496$) nor the main effects ($ps > .227$) approached significance. Examining the abrasiveness of a female perpetrator, the overall model explained 6.9% of the variance in abrasiveness of the female perpetrator, $F(3, 89) = 2.21, p = .093, R^2 = .069$ (see Table 10). Support for Female Power predicted increased perceptions of the female perpetrator as abrasive. The main effects for Participant Gender and Support for Male Power were not significant.

Discussion

In the current study, we expanded on Study 3 by examining contextual and individual factors that influence the perceptions of a perpetrator. Specifically, we focused on testing a potential mediator for liking of the perpetrator and also examined endorsement of specific gender roles. Our findings suggest that the perceptions of perpetrators of sexist remarks, specifically respect, liking, and abrasiveness, are driven by the gender of the perpetrator, but also by gender of the participant and gender role endorsement. The results replicate findings from Study 3 suggesting that female perpetrators are evaluated more positively than male perpetrators. As expected, our results provided the novel finding that the extent to which participants perceived the sexist remark as offensive mediated their liking of the perpetrator, such that the relationship between the gender of the perpetrator and liking of a perpetrator was explained by perceived offensiveness. As in Study 3, male participants evaluated the perpetrator more favorably than females. Additionally, our findings revealed that endorsement that men and women should have
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power predicted more positive and negative perceptions of a perpetrator, respectively. These findings replicated the effects for perpetrator gender found in Study 3, yet also extended Study 3 by exploring a proposed mediator for liking of the perpetrator, as well as examining additional factors that influence the perceptions of perpetrators, such as the endorsement of gender roles.

As in Study 3, female perpetrators were respected and liked more, and perceived as less abrasive, than male perpetrators. Yet, our findings revealed that liking of the perpetrator was mediated by the extent to which participants perceived the sexist remark as offensive and prejudicial. Indeed, previous research (e.g., Baron et al., 1991; Cunningham, Ferreira, & Fink, 2009; Inman & Baron, 1996; Krumm & Corning, 2008;) has indicated that female perpetrators are perceived as less offensive or discriminatory than male perpetrators. Therefore, when a female makes a sexist remark, it is not that she is evaluated more positively because of some quality of her being a female; rather, there is simply less reason to dislike her because what she said was not perceived as offensive. These findings further explain what drives the gender effect for liking of the perpetrator. It is important to note, however, that this model supported partial, and not complete, mediation. Furthermore, perceived offensiveness was not found to be a mediator of either respect or abrasiveness. Future research should explore the potential mediating effects of other perceptions of perpetrators of sexism.

Results also demonstrated that males evaluated the perpetrator more positively than females. Our findings also revealed that the variables of respect and liking were also predicted by an interaction between participant gender and perpetrator gender. Females respected and liked a female perpetrator more than a male perpetrator, while males responded similarly to both perpetrator genders. It may be that because males are more likely to agree with a hostile sexist remark (Glick & Fiske, 1996), they may attend more to the content of the statement and respond
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Further analyses revealed that endorsement of gender norms, combined at times with participant gender, predicted some of the variance in perceptions of a male and female perpetrator. A female perpetrator was perceived as marginally more abrasive as participants’ support for female power increased; no other variables predicted perceptions of perpetrator abrasiveness. Male participants respected and liked a male perpetrator more than female participants, as suggested earlier. Additionally, the more participants endorsed that men should have power, the more they liked and respected a male perpetrator. Perceptions of a female perpetrator were predicted differentially by support for male and female power, such that endorsement that men should have power resulted in more positive evaluations, and endorsement that women should have power resulted in more negative evaluations. Given that endorsement for male power advocates traditional gender roles that reflect specific items on the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and that the sexist comments included in the present research are modeled on the ASI, it makes sense that participants that have high support for male power would agree more with the sexist comment and therefore perceive a perpetrator, regardless of gender, more positively. Additionally, our findings revealed that participant gender remained a significant predictor for respect and liking of a male perpetrator, but not a female perpetrator; this is supported by the interactions found in the current study, suggesting that females responded more negatively to a perpetrator in general than males, but this difference was exacerbated with a male
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Perpetrator, for which females had even lower respect and liking. Our findings also revealed, however, that support for female power was only a predictor for decreased respect and liking and increased abrasiveness of a female perpetrator. Support for female power targets a nontraditional gender role, which in Study 2 predicted more positive evaluations of the confronter of the sexist remark. Given that the hostile sexist remark constructed for this study, regardless of the gender of the source, threatens the idea that women should have power, we would expect that support for female power would predict perceptions of both genders of perpetrators. It is important to note, however, that support for female power was typically a worse predictor than support for male power. Furthermore, for respect and liking, the resulting model for a female perpetrator was less clear and less strong than the model for a male perpetrator. This suggests that possibly other variables might be influencing perceptions of a female perpetrator. Given that we have argued that a female perpetrator is less saliently prejudicial because of her atypical status, it is understandable that other variables, such as perceived offensiveness, play a larger role in predicting perceptions of a female perpetrator than merely endorsement of gender roles. Future research should explore other potential predictors of perceptions of female perpetrators.

General Discussion

The purpose of the present research was to explore multiple contextual and individual difference variables that predict perceptions of individuals who make and confront sexist remarks. While confronting a prejudicial remark can be highly effective (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006), many women hold back from confronting sexist comments for fear of negative responses from others (Kaiser & Miller, 2001; Kaiser & Miller, 2004; Swim & Hyers, 1999). It is therefore critical to examine what factors influence perceptions of female confronters of sexist remarks to understand how confronting can be effective without
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provoking negative perceptions. The act of confronting may be especially beneficial in that it signals to observers of the sexist event that the situation is sufficiently dangerous, which may make such observers more likely to intervene (Latané & Darley, 1970) and change their internal prejudicial attitudes (Blanchard et al., 1994); therefore, confronting has implications for the behaviors and attitudes of both the target of the sexist remark as well as observers. Because perceptions relating to the prejudicial remark can influence whether an individual confronts or not (e.g. Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008), it is critical to examine perceptions of a perpetrator of a sexist remark. Exploring perceptions of individuals who make and confront sexist remarks can indicate ways to address barriers that impede confrontation, and thus the reduction, of sexism in our society.

In examining these factors, we found that beliefs about gender roles specifically predicted perceptions of both a confronter and a perpetrator of sexism. To our knowledge, the present work was the first to examine differences in perceptions of a male or female perpetrator of a sexist remark, and to explore what might affect those perceptions. We also explored how either a hostile or benevolent sexist remark would influence perceptions, which has not been explored in prior research. Additionally, the work on perceptions of a female confronter is consistent with past work suggesting overall gender differences in these perceptions (Dodd et al., 2001).

Perceptions of a female confronter were driven largely by individual factors, including gender and specific beliefs about gender. As suggested by past research (Dodd et al., 2001), females evaluated a female confronter more positively than males. However, our study extended this past research to show that individual differences moderated these perceptions. Females who were more in agreement with sexism responded more negatively to the confronter than females who were less sexist. Additionally, as males endorsed a progressive gender role, they evaluated
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the confronter more favorably. Surprisingly, contextual manipulations of the type of sexist remark and gender of the perpetrator had less impact on perceptions of the confronter. When the type of confrontation was manipulated, an assertive confronter was respected more than a polite confronter, although this partially depended on the gender of the perceiver. Also, holding beliefs like the idea that men should have power was associated with more negative evaluations of an assertive confronter, with either the opposite or no effect for a polite confronter. Besides the simple main effect of participant gender found in past research (Dodd et al., 2001), all of these findings expanded on previous research. Specifically, our findings suggest that because females and males evaluated the confronter according to their own beliefs about gender, strategies could be implemented that could work toward changing common notions about gender roles, and therefore improve perceptions of females who confront sexism. Additionally, while perceptions of an assertive confronter were also influenced by individual attitudes and gender, the fact that an assertive confronter was respected more than a polite confronter suggests that an assertive style of confrontation may garner more respect. Further research should be conducted on styles of confrontation to further explicate this finding.

Perceptions of the perpetrator were largely influenced by our novel manipulation of perpetrator gender, in that a female perpetrator was evaluated more positively than a male perpetrator, although this was partially mediated by the perceived offensiveness of the sexist remark. This finding is suggestive of related past work that discovered that female perpetrators of sexist discrimination are perceived as less discriminatory than males (Baron et al., 1991; Cunningham, Ferreira, & Fink, 2009; Inman & Baron, 1996; Krumm & Corning, 2008;). Additionally, males responded more favorably to a sexist perpetrator than females, especially when the perpetrator made a hostile remark; this depended, however, on individual beliefs about
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

gender roles. Hostile perpetrators were also perceived more negatively than benevolent perpetrators in general, although this also depended on individual gender role beliefs. Moreover, we discovered specific gender role beliefs that predicted evaluations of a male and female perpetrator. Given that perceptions of a perpetrator of a sexist remark, especially with the examination of a female perpetrator and variation of the sexist remark, has not been explored in prior research, these findings contribute to the current literature by suggesting that certain perpetrators (female, as well as benevolent) may not be evaluated as negatively. Indeed, these findings suggest that perceivers might be reflecting their own expectations for a male, explicitly hostile, perpetrator of sexism. If female perpetrators escape negative evaluation because their comments are not perceived as offensive, the females on the receiving end of that sexist remark may decide not to confront because they are insufficiently affected. The female perpetrator, having escaped a confrontational response, has not been discouraged from making such a comment in the future. In order to combat prejudice, research should expand its focus to include perpetrators from atypical sources to gain a greater understanding of perceptions of both perpetrators and confronters of sexism.

The present work chose to specifically examine the perceptions of an internet sample recruited through MTurk. This recruitment method allowed for a more diverse sample than typical work conducted on college campuses. Additionally, MTurk has been found to provide data that are as reliable as those obtained through traditional means (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). By eliminating participants who failed to correctly answer survey questions designed to check that participants were paying attention, we were able to account for potential error in an online survey design. However, it is still worthwhile to note the limitations of this design. In that perceptions were operationalized as responses to Likert-type scales, there was no
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way for participants to elaborate on their perceptions. Future research should consider including a free-response section, in which participants can further explain what led to their evaluations. Additionally, future research could explore how participants perceive sexist events in a laboratory setting through the use of confederates.

Although our pilot test demonstrated sufficient differences between the presented assertive or polite confrontation, it is important to note that an assertive confronter was respected only marginally more than a polite confronter. Indeed, past research on perceptions of non-target confronters found that while confronters were respected more than individuals who did not confront, confronters who were either assertive or unassertive were respected similarly (Dickter, Kittel, & Gyurovski, 2012). Additionally, Dodd et al. (2001) found that a woman who confronted was respected significantly more than a woman who did not confront. Therefore, a female who decides to either confront or not confront might yield greater differences in perceptions rather than a female who always confronts, albeit with differing styles. Although we were more interested in styles of confronting as opposed to whether a female did or did not confront, having a control in the form of a female who did not confront might have elucidated this relationship by demonstrating differences between not confronting and polite or assertive confronting styles. Specifically, it should be of interest for future research to examine what makes a confrontational statement “assertive” or “polite.” Future research on perceptions of confronters should explore further variations for confrontation style, and examine how this interacts with individual difference variables such as gender and gender role endorsement, given our findings that support for male power predicted less respect and liking for an assertive confronter, but not a polite confronter. Given that this manipulation for confrontation style is novel in this type of research, future research should rigorously examine responses to more
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varied confrontation styles in order to explore what type of confrontation can provoke the most positive perceiver evaluations while still effecting change.

Conclusions

The four studies included in the present work explored individual and contextual factors that influence perceptions of individuals who make and confront sexist remarks. In order to combat sexism, factors that impede effective confrontation, such as the fear of negative consequences of confronting (e.g., Swim & Hyers, 1999) and not identifying a prejudicial remark as sufficiently offensive for confrontation (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008) must be explored. If a woman fears that confronting will make her disliked, she may adaptively “pick her battles” by only confronting in situations that are obviously offensive. When a female target and observers are faced with a less saliently prejudicial situation (e.g., female perpetrator), therefore, they should be less likely to confront. Therefore, perceptions of both a confronter and perpetrator are critical to gaining a larger understanding of sexist instances; additionally, these perceptions improve our understanding of whether individuals can effectively confront without negative consequences for the confronter. Results indicated that, as in previous work (e.g., Dodd et al., 2001), a female confronter was evaluated more positively by females than males; however, the current studies expand on this previous work by demonstrating that females’ and males’ individual gender beliefs influenced their perceptions. In addition, the present research sought to examine the differences in perceptions between an assertive confronter and a polite confronter, a manipulation that has not been pursued in prior research. An assertive confronter was respected more than a polite confronter, which suggests than an assertive confronting style might elicit more respect in perceivers. However, given that Swim and Hyers (1999) found that females preferred to confront politely, future research should further explore the perceptions of different
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confrontation styles. Our findings also revealed differences in perceptions for a female versus a male perpetrator of a sexist remark, as well as differences based on the sexist remark expressed. The present work is the first known to explore perceptions of a male or female who makes a sexist remark; our results suggest that certain perpetrators of sexism may be less likely to provoke a negative reaction, which has implications for understanding when individuals will recognize and therefore confront a sexist remark. Our findings suggest that women’s hesitation in confronting for fear of retaliation (e.g., Swim & Hyers, 1999) is based on observed negative perceptions for confronting; yet, while the liking of a confronter in the current studies depended on the identity of the perceiver, an assertive confronter was respected more than a polite confronter. This suggests that while females cannot always be uniformly liked when they choose to confront sexist remarks, they can be respected if they choose to confront more assertively. Research on perceptions of confronters and perpetrators alike should consider the role of combined individual and contextual factors in predicting how observers will react to individuals who perpetrate and those who choose to defy sexist attitudes.
References


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of inexpensive, yet high-quality, data? Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6, 3-5. doi: 10.1177/1745691610393980


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Hurst, R. J., & Beesley, D. (2013). Perceived sexism, self-silencing, and psychological distress in
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analysis with implications for coping with sexism. *Sex Roles, 64*, 475-490. doi: 10.1007/s11199-011-9936-1


Table 1. Perceptions of the Confronter as predicted by the ANOVA model (Study 1)

Table 2. Perceptions of the Confronter as predicted by interactions between Participant Gender and Self-Reported Sexism (ASI) (Study 1)

Figure 1. Perceptions of the Confronter as a function of Participant Gender and Self-Reported Sexism (Study 1)

Table 3. Perceptions of the Confronter as Complaining as predicted by a three-way (Participant Gender, Perpetrator Gender, Comment Type) interaction (Study 1)

Table 4. Perceptions of the Confronter as predicted by the ANOVA model (Study 2)

Table 5. Perceptions of the Confronter as predicted by interactions between Support for Male Power and Confrontation Type (Study 2)

Figure 2. Perceptions of the Confronter as a function of Confrontation Type and Support for Male Power (Study 2)

Table 6. Perceptions of the Confronter as a function of several predictor variables (Study 2)

Figure 3. Perceptions of Confronter as Complaining as a function of Participant Gender and Support for Male Empathy (Study 2)

Table 7. Perceptions of the Perpetrator as predicted by the ANOVA model (Study 3)

Figure 4. Liking of the Perpetrator as a function of Participant Gender and Self-Reported Sexism (BS) (Study 3)

Figure 5. Perceived Abrasiveness of the Perpetrator as a function of Comment Type and Self-Reported Sexism (ASI) (Study 3)

Table 8. Perceptions of the Perpetrator as predicted by the ANOVA model (Study 4)

Table 9. Respect and liking of the Perpetrator as predicted by an interaction between Perpetrator Gender and Participant Gender (Study 4)

Table 10. Perceptions of a Male and Female Perpetrator as a function of several predictor variables (Study 4)

Figure 6. Perceived Offensiveness as a mediator of the Liking of the Perpetrator (Study 4)
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Table 1.

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Figure 1.

Note. Sexism scores (ASI and BS) are mean-centered. * indicates $p < .05$. 
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Table 3.

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*Note. * indicates $p < .05$*
### Table 4.

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<td>Participant Gender x</td>
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*Note.* * indicates $p < .05
### Table 5.

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Figure 2.

Note. Support for Male Power is mean-centered. * indicates $p < .05$
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Table 6.

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Figure 3.

Note. Support for Male Empathy is mean-centered. * indicates \( p < .05 \)
## PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Table 7.

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<td>Hostile perpetrator, males: 5.50 (2.57)*</td>
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*Note.* * indicates $p < .05
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Figure 4.

Note. Sexism scores (BS) are mean-centered. * indicates $p < .05$
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Figure 5.

Note. Sexism scores (ASI) are mean-centered. * indicates $p < .05$
## Table 8.

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*Note.* * indicates $p < .05
Table 10.

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PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Figure 6.

Note. * indicates p < .05
Informed Consent

The researchers who are conducting this study, “Perceptions of Group Dynamic Effectiveness,” are investigating perceptions of group dynamics. You will read a short script depicting a typical conversation between two people. After you read the script, you will be asked a series of questions regarding your perceptions of the individuals in the conversation and the conversation as a whole. Then you will complete several questionnaires.

Please read the paragraph below. By pressing the continue button below, you are granting your consent regarding the terms of this study.

The general nature of this study has been explained to me. I understand that I will be reading a scenario, and then answer a series of questions. My participation in this study should not take longer than 30 minutes. I know that my responses will be completely anonymous and my data will be stored in a secure location. I know that I may refuse to answer any question asked and that I may discontinue participation at any time. I also understand that any monetary compensation for participation will not be affected by my responses or by my exercising any of my rights. I am aware that I may report dissatisfaction with any aspect of this experiment to the Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at consent@wm.edu. I understand that if I have any questions regarding this experiment, I should contact Dr. Cheryl Dickter at cldickter@wm.edu. I am aware that I must be at least 18 years of age to participate. By beginning this study, I am signifying my voluntary participation in this project.
Debriefing forms

**Studies 1 and 3:**

The purpose of this study was to examine different variables that affected the perceptions of women who confront sexist remarks. You were given the short script of a conversation that changed depending on the condition for which you were randomly assigned. The nature of the sexist comment varied from an explicitly hostile remark to a less blatant, seemingly benign remark. The sex of the Perpetrator also changed, such that you read either a male or female making the sexist claim. We are interested in seeing what influences these perceptions of confronters.

Please remember that your identity cannot be attached to your data in any way, and that we are interested in group averages rather than individual responses. If you have any questions or if you are interested in knowing the results of this study, you can contact Dr. Cheryl Dickter at cldickter@wm.edu.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

To get credit for this study, you must enter the following code into MTurk: PWCS1

**Studies 2 and 4:**

The purpose of this study was to examine different variables that affected the perceptions of women who confront sexist remarks as well as the perceptions of perpetrators of sexist remarks. You were given the short script of a conversation that changed depending on the condition for which you were randomly assigned. The nature of the confrontation varied from an explicitly assertive remark to a more polite remark. The sex of the Perpetrator also changed, such that you read either a male or female making the sexist claim. We are interested in seeing what influences these perceptions of confronters and perpetrators.

Please remember that your identity cannot be attached to your data in any way, and that we are interested in group averages rather than individual responses. If you have any questions or if you are interested in knowing the results of this study, you can contact Dr. Cheryl Dickter at cldickter@wm.edu.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

To get credit for this study, you must enter the following code into MTurk: PWCS2

**Post-test:**

The purpose of this study was to examine different variables that affected the perceptions of women who confront sexist remarks. You were given a randomly assigned response to a sexist
comment that varied by level of assertiveness. We are interested in seeing how the type of response shapes perceptions of confronters.

Please remember that your identity cannot be attached to your data in any way, and that we are interested in group averages rather than individual responses. If you have any questions or if you are interested in knowing the results of this study, you can contact Dr. Cheryl Dickter at cldickter@wm.edu.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

To get credit for this study, you must enter the following code into MTurk: PWCSPS
Vignettes:

Studies 1 and 3:

**Male Perpetrator, Benevolent**

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Chris: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah…I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

Chris: It could happen, sure but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women may be too pure and fragile to handle that. Maybe they should be protected from a job with so much responsibility.

Angela: (obviously upset by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

**Male Perpetrator, Hostile**

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Chris: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah…I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

Chris: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

Angela: (obviously upset by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

**Female Perpetrator, Benevolent**

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Christine: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah…I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

Christine: It could happen, sure but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women may be too pure and fragile to handle that. Maybe they should be protected from a job with so much responsibility.
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Angela: (obviously upset by Christine’s remark) Wow, Christine, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

Female Perpetrator, Hostile

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Christine: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah...I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

Christine: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

Angela: (obviously upset by Christine’s remark) Wow, Christine, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

Study 2:

Assertive Confrontation

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Chris: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah...I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

Chris: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

Angela: (obviously upset by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

Polite Confrontation

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Chris: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah...I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Chris: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

Angela: (obviously startled by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris...I don’t know if you should say things like that.

Study 4:

**Male Perpetrator**

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Chris: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah...I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

Chris: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

Angela: (obviously upset by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

**Female Perpetrator**

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Christine: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah...I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

Christine: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

Angela: (obviously upset by Christine’s remark) Wow, Christine, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.
Questionnaires:

Studies 1 and 3:

*Question set A* (Condition: Male, Benevolent Perpetrator).

Please read the following conversation and answer the questions below.

**Angela:** You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

**Chris:** Really? You think so?

**Angela:** Yeah…I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

**Chris:** It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women may be too pure and fragile to handle that. Maybe they should be protected from a job with so much responsibility.

**Angela:** (obviously upset by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

How successful were these individuals in their attempt to communicate?

Extremely Unsuccessful

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Extremely Successful

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

How typical was this of a conversation between 2 people?

Extremely Atypical

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Extremely Typical

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

How well did the people in this conversation express their thoughts?

Extremely Poorly

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Extremely Well

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Now you will answer questions about each person in the conversation.

How much do you like Chris?
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

How much do you like Angela?

Not at All

Very Much

How much do you respect Chris?

Not at All

Very Much

How much do you respect Angela?

Not at All

Very Much

Please rate each of the people in the conversation on the following traits. Provide ratings of how strongly you think each characteristic applies to each person, based on the conversation you read.

Chris

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PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Angela

Question set B (Presented to all participants):

Please answer the following questions about yourself by indicating the extent of your agreement using the following scale:

**Disagree Strongly  Disagree Somewhat  Disagree Slightly  Agree Slightly  Agree Slightly**

No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.

Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for “equality.”
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

In a disaster, women ought not necessarily to be rescued before men.

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Slightly Agree Slightly Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly

Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Slightly Agree Slightly Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly

Women are too easily offended.

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Slightly Agree Slightly Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly

People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Slightly Agree Slightly Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly

Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Slightly Agree Slightly Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly

Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Slightly Agree Slightly Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly

Women should be cherished and protected by men.

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Slightly Agree Slightly Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly

Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.

Disagree Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Slightly Agree Slightly Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.

Disagree  Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Agree  Agree
Strongly  Somewhat  Slightly  Slightly  Somewhat  Strongly

Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.

Disagree  Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Agree  Agree
Strongly  Somewhat  Slightly  Slightly  Somewhat  Strongly

Men are complete without women.

Disagree  Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Agree  Agree
Strongly  Somewhat  Slightly  Slightly  Somewhat  Strongly

Women exaggerate problems they have at work.

Disagree  Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Agree  Agree
Strongly  Somewhat  Slightly  Slightly  Somewhat  Strongly

Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.

Disagree  Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Agree  Agree
Strongly  Somewhat  Slightly  Slightly  Somewhat  Strongly

When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.

Disagree  Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Agree  Agree
Strongly  Somewhat  Slightly  Slightly  Somewhat  Strongly

A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.

Disagree  Disagree  Disagree  Agree  Agree  Agree
Strongly  Somewhat  Slightly  Slightly  Somewhat  Strongly
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.

Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.

Men should be willing to sacrifice their own wellbeing in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.

Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.

Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

*Question set C* (Presented to all participants):

Please indicate your gender.

Please indicate your race.

Please indicate your age.
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Study 2:

*Question set A (Condition: Male, Polite Confrontation).*

Please read the following conversation and answer the questions below.

**Angela:** You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

**Chris:** Really? You think so?

**Angela:** Yeah…I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

**Chris:** It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

**Angela:** (obviously startled by Chris’s remark) Wow, Chris…I don’t know if you should say things like that.

How successful were these individuals in their attempt to communicate?

Extremely Successful

Extremely Unsuccessful

How typical was this of a conversation between 2 people?

Extremely Typical

Extremely Atypical

How well did the people in this conversation express their thoughts?

Extremely Well

Extremely Poorly

Now you will answer questions about each person in the conversation.

How much do you like Chris?

Not at All

Very Much
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

How much do you like Angela?

Not at All      Very Much

How much do you respect Chris?

Not at All      Very Much

How much do you respect Angela?

Not at All      Very Much

Please rate each of the people in the conversation on the following traits. Provide ratings of how strongly you think each characteristic applies to each person, based on the conversation you read.

Chris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
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Question set B (Presented to all participants):

Please answer the following questions by indicating the extent of your agreement using the following scale:

To what extent do you believe that men *should* exhibit each of these traits?

Please answer the following questions using the following scale:

Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Half the time  Often  Nearly always  Always

Assertive

Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Half the time  Often  Nearly always  Always

Sympathetic

Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Half the time  Often  Nearly always  Always
### PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<th>Sometimes</th>
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PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Warm

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Acts as a leader

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To what extent do you believe that women should exhibit each of these traits?

Please answer the following questions using the following scale:

**Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Half the time  Often  Nearly always  Always**

Assertive

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Sympathetic

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# PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

## Self-reliant

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*Question set C (Presented to all participants):*

Please indicate your gender.

Please indicate your race.

Please indicate your age.
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Study 4:

Question set A (Condition: Female perpetrator):

Please read the following conversation and answer the questions below.

Angela: You know, I think 2016 could be the year for the first female president.

Christine: Really? You think so?

Angela: Yeah…I mean, I think we’ve made enough progress that it could happen.

Christine: It could happen, sure, but I don’t know if it’s best. That kind of work involves lots of criticism and women tend to be manipulative and might blame it all on discrimination. Maybe they shouldn’t be able to take on a job with those responsibilities.

Angela: (obviously upset by Christine’s remark) Wow, Christine, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that.

How successful were these individuals in their attempt to communicate?

How typical was this of a conversation between 2 people?

How well did the people in this conversation express their thoughts?

Now you will answer questions about each person in the conversation.

How much do you like Christine?

Not at All Very Much
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

How much do you like Angela?

Not at All  Very Much

How much do you respect Christine?

Not at All  Very Much

How much do you respect Angela?

Not at All  Very Much

How offensive would you rate Christine’s last comment in the conversation?

Extremely  Extremely
Unoffensive  Offensive

How prejudicial would you rate Christine’s last comment in the conversation?

Extremely  Extremely
Unoffensive  Offensive

How offensive would you rate Angela’s last comment in the conversation?

Extremely  Extremely
Unoffensive  Offensive

How prejudicial would you rate Angela’s last comment in the conversation?

Extremely  Extremely
Unoffensive  Offensive

Please rate each of the people in the conversation on the following traits. Provide ratings of how strongly you think each characteristic applies to each person, based on the conversation you read.
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Christine

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Knowledgeable</td>
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Angela

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<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
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PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Question set B (Presented to all participants):

Please answer the following questions by indicating the extent of your agreement using the following scale:

To what extent do you believe that men should exhibit each of these traits?

Please answer the following questions using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
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<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Half the time</th>
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### Perceptions of Confronters and Perpetrators of Sexism

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PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

To what extent do you believe that women *should* exhibit each of these traits?

Please answer the following questions using the following scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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Question set C (Presented to all participants):

Please indicate your gender.

Please indicate your race.

Please indicate your age.
PERCEPTIONS OF CONFRONTERS AND PERPETRATORS OF SEXISM

Pilot study:

*Question set* (Condition: assertive confrontation):

Imagine that you witness a conversation between two people, where one person makes a clearly prejudicial remark. The other person, clearly upset, says the following:

"Wow, Person A, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that."

How polite or assertive is this response?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Polite</th>
<th>Very Assertive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
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Post-test:

*Question set A* (Condition: polite confrontation):

Imagine that you witness a conversation between a man and woman, where the man makes a clearly sexist remark. The woman, clearly upset, says the following:

"Wow, Chris, that’s really sexist. You can’t just make these assumptions about all women like that."

How intelligent is this response?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
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How strong of an argument do you think this is?

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<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
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*Question set B* (Presented to all participants):

Please indicate your gender.