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Men's ambivalence toward sexy versus traditional women

Melissa Yuki Wheeler

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MEN'S AMBIVALENCE TOWARD SEXY
VERSUS TRADITIONAL WOMEN

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Psychology:
Clinical/Counseling

by
Melissa Yuki Wheeler
June 2001
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Approved by:

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Date 6/1/01
ABSTRACT

This research examined ambivalent attitudes toward sexy and traditional women. Ambivalence has been defined as having strong yet conflicting feelings. Ambivalent feelings have been linked to cognitive dissonance which individuals seek to resolve by sub-categorization. Historically, women have been dichotomized as good or bad. Click and Fiske (1996) use the term ambivalent sexism to describe a relationship between hostility, benevolence and sexism. Their examination of traditional and non-traditional women supports the theory of the sub-categorization of women to resolve ambivalence. The current study proposed that ambivalence toward women may be salient in attitudes toward "sexy" women. Attitudes toward sexy and traditional women were examined using measures of sexual attraction, fear, social unacceptability, likeability, and incompetence. Surveys were completed by 137 male university students. Results indicated a positive correlation between sexual attraction and fear toward sexy, but not traditional women. Further, sexy women elicited stronger feelings of sexual attraction, fear, and social unacceptability than did traditional women. Traditional women were regarded as
more likeable and competent than sexy women. An examination of ambivalent sexual attraction and fear revealed that men were significantly more ambivalent toward sexy women than toward traditional women. Ambivalent sexism was examined in relation to ambivalent sexual attraction and fear. High ambivalently sexist men were significantly more ambivalent toward sexy women than were low ambivalently sexist men. Implications of the findings are discussed in respect to unresolved ambivalence as a contributing factor for violence against women.
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CHAPTER ONE
THE DICHOTOMY

Introduction

As patriarchal religions and societies have dominated the world, they play an integral part in how women are categorized and perceived. Throughout history, women have been defined in relation to others. Women are described as wives, mothers, girlfriends and sex objects such as whores. The attributes ascribed to women and the attitudes held towards women in part depend on the roles they are perceived to fill. Historically, representations of women seem to consist of two diametrically opposed characterizations, the virgin and the whore.

The origins of this dichotomous view of women are deeply embedded in religious history (Denmark, Rabinowitz, & Sechzer, 2000). Be it Eve or Pandora, stories of creation credit women with bringing evil and misery into existence (Denmark et al., 2000; Walker, 1983). Yet throughout history, women have also been idolized and worshiped as consistently as they have been vilified (Walker, 1983).
From a theoretical perspective, the origins of this dichotomy may represent a fear of one's own femininity. There is a body of literature that describes men and women as two halves of an unintegrated whole (Griffin, 1991). Griffin asserts that when an individual is unable to integrate certain aspects of self, they are projected onto others and reviled. From this perspective, women represent an aspect of men that is unintegrated, yet both desired and feared.

From a social perspective, dichotomous attitudes are evidenced in the research on stereotyping. Subordinate groups may be ascribed hostile stereotypes by the dominant group in order to justify the hierarchical relationship between them (as cited in Glick & Fiske, 1997). However, when attitudes toward an individual are not consistent with the stereotype, subtyping is utilized in order to maintain the stereotype (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Studies on racism and prejudice have revealed the tendency to create subcategories to explain benevolent feelings towards "decent" members of an otherwise disliked ethnic or social group. Categorizing individuals into subgroups maintains the stereotype while resolving conflicting feelings. In order to reconcile conflicting
feelings regarding women, they have been divided into
good and bad subcategories. Examinations of stereotypes
for women have identified five common subtypes including
housewives/mothers, sexy women, career women, athletes
and feminists (Deaux, Winton, Crowley, & Lewis, 1985).

Statement of the Problem

Glick and Fiske (1996) found that men who have
feelings of both hostility and benevolence towards women
are able to rationalize this inconsistency by
categorizing certain subtypes of women as good and others
as bad. These researchers use the term ambivalent sexism
to indicate a relationship between hostility, benevolence
and sexism. Ambivalently sexist individuals are believed
to experience cognitive dissonance as a result of feeling
both attraction to and fear of women. The dissonance is
resolved by splitting women into good and bad types
(Glick & Fiske, 1996). Good women, wives and mothers who
aspire to traditional roles and support the status quo,
evoke feelings of benevolence. Although benevolence
denotes positive feelings towards women, it is still
regarded as sexism in that women are viewed as the weaker
sex. On the other end of the spectrum are career women
and feminists, who elicit hostility from sexist individuals that feel threatened by them. Glick and Fiske’s (1996) study did not examine attitudes towards the category of sexy women, but they suggested that these women would elicit strong feelings of attraction and fear.

Purpose of the Current Study

Fear of the feminine and women’s sexuality has repeatedly been noted in research (e.g., O’Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986). Yet, society’s preoccupation with physically attractive women and sex is amply evidenced in the media and literature (Smith, Waldorf, & Trembath, 1990; Yoder, 1999). Sexual attraction and fear may coexist in an individual and subsequently result in behaviors that attempt to control women. Perhaps men’s sexual response and desire to be close to women results in fear and a perceived need to dominate women in an attempt to regain a sense of control. Research has found that sexual harassment is likely to be perpetrated by men who associate sexuality and social dominance (Pryor, Giedd, & Williams, 1995). Studies on domestic violence indicate that battery is
often an attempt to control and dominate women (Gondolf & Russell, 1986). Sexism as such may be a manifestation of an underlying ambivalence towards women’s sexuality and femininity. In this sense, ambivalent sexism is a coping mechanism whereby individuals attempt to resolve an internal conflict between attraction and fear through splitting.

The current study proposes that by examining conflicting feelings directed at sexy women in comparison to traditional women, the underlying ambivalent attitudes towards women may be better examined. It is hoped that by measuring the sexual attraction, fear, social unacceptability, likeability and perceived incompetence of sexy women, support will be found for the concept of ambivalence towards women. Because of sexual attraction, it is believed that women who are sexy will elicit strong and opposing feelings of sexual attraction versus fear and sexual attraction versus social unacceptability. Splitting may be evidenced by differences in attitudes towards women in each category as compared to one another. In general, men should regard traditional woman with less sexual attraction and fear, but with more social acceptability and likeability than sexy women.
Sexy women should be perceived similarly to traditional women in respect to competence (Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick, 1999). Further, it is proposed that certain types of men will be more likely than other types to classify women in dichotomous terms. Since ambivalent sexism engenders the subcatagorization of women into good and bad roles, it seems likely that men who are highly ambivalently sexist will experience greater ambivalence towards sexy women than would low ambivalently sexist men.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Etiology of the Dichotomy

The use of splitting to resolve conflicting feelings is amply evidenced. Historically, the dichotomization of women is especially salient in religion. Theoretical and social explanations for dichotomous characterizations of individuals are also pertinent.

Historical Underpinnings

Researchers propose that the roots of misogyny and idealization of women goes back centuries (Denmark et al., 2000). The concept of this dichotomy can be seen in the extreme representations of the characterization of women as either virgins or whores. Much of the history of virginity can be traced back through patriarchal religions such as Christianity (Otten, 1998). Their belief is that through the sins of Eve (woman), death became inevitable for humankind and sexual intercourse was granted by God as a means for procreation (Otten, 1998). Thus sex is ever after tied to woman's original sin and, conversely, virginity became the mark of a virtuous woman.
The definition of virginity is usually considered to be an individual who has not engaged in sexual intercourse (The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1997); however, the archetype of the virginal woman expands this definition into a concept beyond physical virginity to what it means to be a good woman. Religious and societal concepts of what it means to be a good woman have transmuted from generation to generation. Innumerable studies have examined gender roles and attitudes towards women over the years (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). Yockey (1978) examined sex role perceptions, expectations and behaviors of women. She noted that appropriate roles for women are very ambiguous, but that traditional women are generally regarded as good women. Feminine qualities that are usually attributed to and expected of women are warmth, sensitivity and understanding (Yockey, 1978). Good women are typically regarded as deserving of protection and respect. They are desirable, but they are not thought of as desiring sex themselves. Good women are chaste. Sexy women, albeit seen as traditional in the sense that they meet the physical needs of men, have historically been regarded as bad (Bullough & Bullough, 1996).
The association of women and evil has also long been embedded in and perpetuated by religion (Otten, 1998). Whores or prostitutes represent the extreme form of the “bad” women. Prostitution has been used by patriarchal societies to protect and separate wives and mothers (“good women”) from those who meet the sexual needs of men (“bad women”) (Bullough & Bullough, 1996). Ambivalence towards “bad” women is often evidenced in societal tolerance of “the world’s oldest profession” despite the separation and condemnation of prostitutes. Even St. Augustine asserted that decent society would be endangered if prostitution were eliminated (as cited in Bullough & Bullough, 1996). Hence, sexy women may be regarded as likeable, albeit for different reasons than are traditional women.

Thus through an examination of religious history, the perpetuation of a dichotomous view of women is evidenced. On one hand there are good women who have been represented by The Virgin Mary and traditional women such as wives and mothers. On the other hand there are the bad women who have been represented by Eve, Pandora, Mary Magdalene, sexual women, and prostitutes. Yet, even in history the ambivalence towards the sexy woman is
apparent in both societal tolerance and descriptions that are generally given to these women such as desirable but also as sluts. Sexy women are viewed negatively in that they are women who like sex and are often labeled as promiscuous, incompetent, tramps and sluts (Denmark et al., 2000; Yoder, 1999). Although historically sexy women have been accorded little respect, how they are evaluated may depend on their receptiveness to the sexual advances of men (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997). More recently, career women, lesbians and feminists have come to be designated as another category of women who are viewed negatively in that they are not only nontraditional, but also do not meet the needs of men. Nontraditional women such as career women are characterized as demanding, ambitious, independent, intelligent and sexually domineering (Glick et al., 1997; Yoder, 1999).

Theoretical Underpinnings

Dualism in the form of good and evil, masculine and feminine, and conscious versus unconscious has long been represented through the annals of mythology, fiction and movies (Denmark et al., 2000; Greenfield, 1983). Tyrrell wrote, "Myths put in narrative form the unconscious
assumptions that constitute the spirit of a culture” (as cited in Woods & Harmon, 1994). One is inclined to ask in what way does this outward manifestation reflect inner struggle. Hypothetically speaking, this battle may be a manifestation of the inner battle to integrate the self. For example, the dualism within the individual is represented by the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene (Walker, 1983). Walker (1983) gives an in-depth history of the origins and the evolution of Mary. This history seems to indicate that the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene were different aspects of the same woman thereby indicating that this dichotomy represents two sides of an unintegrated whole.

In psychology, the unintegrated aspect of self has been described as one’s shadow (Woods & Harmon, 1994). Woods and Harmon examined Jung’s conceptualization of the shadow through the unusual evaluation of the Star Trek series. The risk of denying one’s shadow is explored in an episode where the Captain is accidentally split via the transporter into two selves – one representing his positive nature and the other his shadow. The disintegration of the human psyche is thought to result in dichotomous elements of good and evil. Good is
characterized as possessing qualities of compassion, love, and tenderness, while bad is characterized as having qualities of hostility, lust, and violence. The inability to integrate one's own shadow creates the propensity to project it onto others (Woods & Harmon, 1994).

The tendency to externalize unintegrated aspects of self is discussed in terms of "projective identification" (as cited in Dicks, 1967). One both desires integration and yet fears the exiled aspect of self. This ambivalence is then played out in love/hate relationships with the objects of the projective identification. Thus a man who is disturbed by his own feminine nature may protect his ego by repudiating feminine qualities in others even while desiring them. One possible manifestation of this intrapsychic conflict might be the propensity for some men to both repudiate and desire women who become in essence the embodiment of their own rejected feminine nature. Theorists have also proposed that internal conflicts result in a process of splitting whereby individuals conceptualize in terms of good or bad and then project this framework on to others and self (Scharff & Scharff, 1987). Splitting is utilized to
protect the good from the bad. By splitting women into categories of good and bad, it may be that individuals are attempting to remain connected to the desired aspect of self while rejecting the frightening aspect of self. However, to group women in this manner is overly simplistic and not always possible as some women will have traits that resist dichotomous categorization.

**Stereotyping of Subgroups**

People are categorized based on physical characteristics, traits, role behaviors and occupations (Deaux et al., 1985). When individuals do not fit into the expected roles, in order to preserve a stereotype, subdivisions are created (Maurer, Park, & Rothbart, 1995). Thus, by subtyping individuals as exceptions when they do not fit the stereotype, hostility towards a subjugated populace is maintained. Similarly, by placing women in subcategories, ambivalently sexist men may be able to reconcile their ambivalent attitudes (Glick et al., 1997).

Physical characteristics are a key factor in determining how a woman will be classified (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Yoder, 1999). Researchers believe that men typically rely on stereotypes such as appearance and
social roles to determine how to classify individual women (Glick et al., 1997). Women are generally categorized into five types: homemakers-wives and mothers, career women, lesbians, feminists, and sexy women (Deaux et al., 1985). Current research focuses primarily on traditional women, defined as homemakers, and nontraditional women such as career women and feminists. These studies have found that benevolent evaluations are made of women in traditional roles whereas hostile feelings are evidenced for women in nontraditional roles (Glick et al., 1997). However, these researchers pointed out that ambivalent feelings are not likely to be completely resolved by splitting women into good and bad categories. Many women may not fit neatly into one category or the other. Women who cannot be categorized easily may evoke strong feelings of ambivalence that remain unresolved (Glick et al., 1997). For example, researchers indicated that sexist men evaluated career women negatively but also relegated to them a measure of respect and admiration (Glick et al., 1997). Glick and Fiske (1996) advanced the idea that sexy women in particular may elicit fear in men who believe that women use their sexuality to manipulate them.
Ambivalent Sexism

The research that has addressed the dichotomy of good and bad women has focused on the phenomenology of the concept in relationship to sexism. Glick and Fiske (1996) have found support for what they term ambivalent sexism. Traditionally, sexism has been regarded as actions and attitudes of hostility towards women (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Glick and Fiske (1996) propose that feelings towards women are ambivalent and not entirely hostile. They believe that some men are simultaneously dependent on and afraid of women. This situation leads men to have conflicted feelings of benevolence and hostility towards women. These researchers assert that the ambivalent feelings create cognitive dissonance for the individual who finds himself both loving and hating women. In order to resolve the dissonance, the individual splits women into good and bad subtypes thus allowing him to love good women while hating bad women. Categorization then allows men to maintain benevolent feelings towards some women while continuing to feel hostile towards women perceived as “deserving it” (Glick et al., 1997). Benevolence is still regarded as sexism in that it is characterized by paternalistic attitudes towards women.
Women are conceptualized not as equals, but as weaker and as being in need of protection by men.

Glick and Fiske (1996) asserted the possibility that hostile and benevolent sexism are borne out of biological and social conditions that have prevailed throughout history. The facts that men are physically stronger and women bear children may have led to the predominance of patriarchal societies and a delineation of traditional sex roles. Glick and Fiske (1997) propose that power, gender differentiation, and sexuality are the core aspects of ambivalent sexism. Power differences between the sexes are justified by adopting paternalistic ideologies where the male assumes the role of the father who both controls (hostile) and protects (benevolent) the female. Gender differentiation is divided into competitive (hostile) and complementary (benevolent) aspects. Benevolent stereotypes enable men to bolster their dominant positions by characterizing women as less competent and therefore in need of protection and guidance. Nontraditional women challenge this inferior position of women and therefore elicit feelings of competition and hostility from sexist men (Fiske & Glick, 1995). In regards to sexuality, ambivalent sexism is
characterized by a vacillation between intimacy and hostility. Men both desire women and recognize the power that their attraction accords women. The benevolent aspect is manifested in a pull for intimacy which leads men to view women as sexual objects and potential romantic partners. Yet, fear of women’s ability to gain power through sexuality also drives men’s hostility.

Glick and Fiske’s (1996) measure of ambivalent sexism gives support to the theory that some men have ambivalent feelings towards women. Particularly, hostile and benevolent sexism are positively correlated for younger men. Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, and Zhu (1997) found that ambivalently sexist men feel benevolent toward traditional women who support the role for men as caretakers and providers. Conversely, ambivalently sexist men feel hostile toward women such as career women and feminists who do not support traditional roles. The amount of ambivalence felt towards women may depend on the type of woman as well as characteristics of the men. Men who are highly ambivalently sexist seem to hold particularly dichotomous images of women and would be expected to experience greater ambivalence toward sexy women than would low ambivalently sexist men. Further
analysis needs to examine ambivalent feelings towards sexy women and ambivalence towards women within categories.
CHAPTER THREE
THE CURRENT STUDY

Conceptualizing Ambivalence

Ambivalence has been conceptualized as the totality (positive and negative) of one's attitudes about an issue or subject (as cited in Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995). Lewin (as cited in Thompson et al., 1995) proposed that individuals experience tension when faced with difficult choices between opposing desires. Frequently psychological measures are bipolar in nature and ask participants to identify a single point between two extremes. Measures of ambivalence attempt to capture the degree to which individuals hold opposing feelings at the same time. In an examination of various measures, researchers recommend the Griffin formula for assessing ambivalence (Thompson et al., 1995). This concept of ambivalence takes into account both the magnitude and intensity of feeling (Thompson et al., 1995). For example, feelings toward a specific target would need to be both conflicting and strong in order to be considered highly ambivalent. In reviewing the literature for the current study, certain characteristics that are
attributed to women seem to lend themselves to the measurement of ambivalence: sexual attraction versus fear of women's sexuality, sexual attraction versus social unacceptability, and likeability versus incompetence.

Sexual Attraction

The importance of the physical attractiveness of women to men has been studied (e.g., Smith et al., 1990). In an evaluation of singles' ads, researchers found that physical attraction was the characteristic most often desired by men. When participants were asked to generate attributes for the category of sexy women, they were most frequently described in physical terms and as being attractive (Deaux et al., 1985). Conversely, none of the five most frequently cited attributes associated with traditional women were physical in nature. These women were conceptualized in terms of the activities in which they engaged such as cooking and cleaning and were labeled as motherly. Thus it would appear that men regard sexy woman in a very physical and sexualized manner whereas they regard traditional women as housewives, nurturers and caretakers.
Fear

According to Glick and Fiske (1996), men fear women's dyadic power as providers of sexual intimacy and procreation. Women have long been regarded as the "gatekeepers" of sexuality. In other words, women control when and if sexual interaction is going to occur. A man's initial feelings of sexual attraction towards a woman may elicit fear of the woman's power and consequently the need to dominate her. For example, Pryor, Giedd and Williams (1995) found that the need to dominate women is related to men's desire to engage in sexual behavior. In addition, links between sexuality and social dominance are correlated with increased sexual harassment (Pryor et al., 1995). Because "bad" women or sexy women may be perceived as being outside of men's ability to control, it is proposed that these women will elicit feelings of fear. Traditional women would not be expected to elicit fear in that these women are not as likely to be regarded in sexual terms and are usually viewed as submissive. In one study, traditional women were described by men as innocent, decent, passive, sweet and simple (Glick et al., 1997). In order to concretely define fear, one concept will be extrapolated from the research; that is
fear involves the inability to control or trust women. It is proposed that men will expect sexy women to use their sexuality to manipulate them. Further, as sexy women are also regarded as promiscuous, men would be likely to fear that this type of woman would be unfaithful. On the other hand, men would be expected to trust traditional women to be caring and faithful.

Social Unacceptability

Since sexy woman are regarded as "bad," men would be expected to be concerned with the social acceptability of this type of woman. Thus, even though men are sexually attracted to this type of woman, they may also fear evaluation by others were they to associate with sexy women. Conversely, traditional women, being perceived as decent and kind, would not be regarded as socially unacceptable. Men would feel comfortable to present traditional women socially whereas they would not feel comfortable presenting sexy women.

Likeability versus Incompetence

In a study of traditional women and career women, Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, and Glick (1999) found that traditional women are regarded as likeable (sincere, good-natured, warm, and tolerant), but incompetent as compared to
nontraditional women and that as competence increased, likeability decreased. For the purposes of their studies, these researchers grouped both sexy women and housewives into the category of traditional women versus career women as the nontraditional type of woman (Fiske et al., 1999; Glick & Fiske, 1996). Hence, ambivalence is proposed to be evidenced by the tendency to regard both sexy and traditional women as likeable, but not worthy of respect (i.e. incompetent).

It is important to note that although housewives are generally seen as likeable because they are warm, caring, and trustworthy, sexy women may or may not be regarded as likeable. Researchers point out that sexy women are generally liked for their roles as sexual providers, but that these women are not regarded as positively overall as traditional women such as housewives (Glick et al., 1997). This is because sexy women may elicit hostility if they are perceived as unavailable or as "teases." In other words, sexy women may be perceived as likeable but for different reasons and to a lesser degree than traditional women/housewives.
Summary and Hypotheses

The current study proposes that the propensity to split women into categories of good and bad is based on conflicting feelings of sexual attraction and fear of femininity and women's sexuality. Ambivalent sexism illustrates the coping mechanism of splitting women into good and bad categories in order to reduce cognitive dissonance. However, research has not examined within category ambivalence or the subcategory of sexy women in the context of ambivalent sexism. Further analysis may reveal ambivalence toward sexy women as this type of woman may elicit particularly strong feelings of sexual attraction and fear. Attitudes toward sexy women will be assessed and compared with attitudes toward traditional women. Finally, the effect of the participant characteristic of ambivalent sexism on attitudes toward sexy and traditional women will be taken into consideration. Each of these hypotheses will be discussed in turn.

Hypothesis #1: Sexy Women

The basis for this hypothesis is that men desire sexy women for sexual intimacy while fearing that these women will use their sexuality to manipulate them. Men
may fear being sexually manipulated, exploited, embarrassed or hurt by sexy women. At the same time, men are highly attracted to sexy women. Greater ambivalence is thought to be evidenced by feelings that are both strong and conflicting (Thompson et al., 1995). In other words, strong ambivalence is represented both by the magnitude and covariation of the opposing feelings of sexual attraction and fear toward sexy women. Because of this, we expect a relationship between these two feelings in that the more attraction a man feels toward a sexy woman, the more fear he will have. Additionally, due to mixed evaluations of sexy women in terms of attraction and social propriety, the higher the sexual attraction, the more men are expected to regard sexy women as socially unacceptable. Finally, the more likeable sexy women are, the more they will be perceived as incompetent.

Hypothesis #2: Sexy Women versus Traditional Women

Men are expected to have different feelings towards sexy and traditional women. Specifically, men are expected to be significantly more sexually attracted to sexy women than to traditional women. Men are expected to have significantly more fear of sexy women than of
traditional women. On the other hand, men are expected to regard traditional women as more socially acceptable than sexy women. Although men are expected to like both types of women for different reasons, men are expected to regard traditional women as more likeable than sexy women by comparison. Significant differences in ratings of competence between groups are not anticipated.

Men are expected to have stronger feelings of ambivalence on the dimension of sexual attraction and fear towards sexy women than towards traditional women. Men are also expected to have more ambivalence towards sexy women than traditional women in terms of sexual attraction and social unacceptability. Finally, based on the prediction that traditional women are more likeable than are sexy women, ambivalence towards traditional women is expected to be higher than for sexy women in regards to liking versus incompetence.

Hypothesis #3: Ambivalent Sexism

The participant variable of ambivalent sexism is also expected to affect outcomes in regards to ambivalence as measured by sexual attraction and fear. Findings are expected to be consistent with earlier comparisons in that sexy women are hypothesized to elicit
more ambivalence than traditional women regardless of the degree of ambivalent sexism. However, ambivalence toward sexy women is expected to be particularly pronounced for highly ambivalently sexist men. In other words, the ambivalent attitudes toward women evidenced by men in general would be even more strongly pronounced toward sexy women for men with high ambivalent sexism than for men with low ambivalent sexism.
CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Design and Statistical Analyses

For the first set of hypotheses, attitudes towards sexy women were assessed using a correlational analysis of sexual attraction versus fear, sexual attraction versus social unacceptability as well as likeability versus incompetence. The correlations for traditional women were also examined for comparative purposes. Paired samples t-tests and a single factor, two condition repeated-measures design were used to test the second set of hypotheses that sexy women are evaluated differently than are traditional women. The dependent variables were level of sexual attraction, fear, social unacceptability, likeability, and competence as well as the ambivalent scores calculated for sexual attraction and fear, sexual attraction and social unacceptability, and likeability and incompetence.

The third hypothesis was evaluated using a univariate two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for mixed designs. The interaction between the participant variable of ambivalent sexism and the type of woman was analyzed
for ambivalent sexual attraction and fear. The between subjects variable was the participant characteristic of ambivalent sexism - low and high. The within-subjects variable was the type of woman (sexy or traditional) as represented by two vignettes. The ambivalence score calculated above for sexual attraction versus fear was utilized as the dependent variable.

**Participants**

Of the 174 surveys collected, 37 surveys were disqualified due to missing data, not including missing demographics. The study consisted of surveys from 137 male students enrolled in undergraduate courses at the Coachella Valley Campus and the main campus of California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) as well as students at a community college and at the University of Redlands. Reported ages ranged from 18 to 63 years 

\( M = 24.87; \ SD = 8.40 \). Participants were 8.8% African-American, 11.8% Asian, 48.5% Caucasian, 25.7% Hispanic, and 5.1% other. Participant responses indicated that 85.3% were attending a 4-year university, 14.0% were attending a community college, and .8% were college graduates.
Stimulus Materials

Participants were exposed to two vignettes. One vignette attempted to capture the characteristics of prototypically traditional women and the other vignette, sexy women. A study identified the five traits that are most frequently associated with different types of women (Deaux et al., 1985). According to the research, the traditional woman was perceived as being one who cleans, cooks, takes care of children and is motherly and busy. The sexy woman was described in terms of physical attributes including a good figure, long hair, and a pretty face. In addition, sexy women were characterized as wearing nail polish and as being well dressed. These characteristics were built into the vignettes in order to elicit the participants’ attitudes towards each type of woman. Sandra represented the sexy woman while Paula represented the traditional woman; the vignettes were as follows:

Sandra has long, full, silky hair. She has large, sultry eyes and full lips. She has long legs and she frequently wears miniskirts and high heels. She wears low cut tops which are excellently fitted to
her shapely figure. Her fingernails are always manicured and polished. She is unmarried and enjoys dating a variety of men. She loves to go out dancing and meet new people.

Paula has long hair that she wears clipped in a barrette. She has large, warm eyes, a soft smile and a clear complexion. She is neat and enjoys cooking. She wears pretty, flowing dresses. She is involved in many community activities and enjoys spending time with children. She is unmarried, but she usually only goes out socially with groups of friends.

Measures

The following measures were utilized in the current study: A manipulation check, measures of sexual attraction, fear and social unacceptability (Appendix A), measures of likeability and incompetence (Appendix B), The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Appendix C) and a survey of background information (Appendix D).
The Manipulation Check

A manipulation check was built into the study to ascertain whether or not the stimulus materials adequately represent each category of women. Participants were asked to generate three descriptors (for each type of woman) that come to mind when reading the vignettes. The vignette of the sexy woman was expected to generate more adjectives relating to physical attraction and sexuality than the vignette of the traditional woman. The manipulation check was included directly after each vignette and read as follows, “List three words that you would use to describe women in this category.”

Sexual Attraction

Sexual attraction was assessed using seven items developed by the author. For this scale, participants were presented with statements and asked to rate how closely they reflected the women described in the vignettes. For example, participants were presented with the statement: “This type of woman is sexually attractive.” Another sample item is “This type of woman enjoys sex.” Participants rated how strongly they agreed with the statements on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).
Two items were reverse scored. Scores were summed and averaged, and the possible score range was from 1 to 6. The higher the score, the more the type of woman described in the vignette was viewed as sexually attractive. Initial analyses were conducted to examine the internal consistency of the sexual attraction scale generated for the current study. The alpha coefficient was $r = .79$ for traditional women and $r = .74$ for sexy women.

**Fear**

The items that comprised the fear scale were selected from the trust scale developed by Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1985). The items selected were modified to fit the current study. Statements in the trust scale that refer to "my partner" were restructured to refer to "this type of woman." A sample item is "In a relationship with this type of woman, I would need to keep alert or she might take advantage of me." The modified scale consisted of seven statements. Participants were asked to rate how strongly they agree with each statement in regards to the stimulus person described in each vignette. The items were rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6
(strongly agree). Three items were reverse scored. The scores were summed and averaged, and the possible score range was from 1 to 6. A high score indicated that the stimulus person elicited feelings of fear in the participant. A low score indicated that the stimulus person did not elicit feelings of fear. Analyses were conducted to examine the internal consistency of the fear scale. Alpha coefficients for the fear scale were $r = .69$ for traditional women and $r = .71$ for sexy women.

**Social Unacceptability**

This scale was developed by the author to assess participants' attitudes about the social unacceptability of the two types of women presented in the vignettes. Three of the items were from the Motivation Scale developed by Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1985). These items were modified to fit the current study by adding the words "this type of woman" to each of the statements. There were seven statements. A sample item is "If I had children, I would want this type of woman as their mother." Another statement reads "I would not feel comfortable taking this type of woman to church with me." Participants were asked to rate whether or not they agree with the statements on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1
(strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Two items were reverse scored. The scores were summed and averaged, and the total possible score range was from 1 to 6. A high score indicated that the participant regarded the type of woman described in the vignette as unacceptable socially. A low score indicated that the type of woman described in the vignette was considered socially acceptable. An examination of reliability in terms of internal consistency revealed that the alpha coefficient for the social unacceptability subscale was $r = .57$ for the traditional women and $r = .72$ for the sexy women.

**Likeability versus Incompetence**

Likeability and competence were assessed using two scales adapted from the study of stereotypes of warmth and competence developed by Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, and Glick (1999). Likeability was equated to warmth. The five traits associated with likeability were sincere, good-natured, warm, tolerant and likeable (Fiske et al., 1999). The alpha reported for the warmth items was .90 (Fiske et al., 1999). Questions were modified for the current study. A sample likeability item is "This type of woman is sincere." Participants rated each trait on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly
disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The scores were summed and averaged, and the possible score range was from 1 to 6. A high score on the likeability scale indicated that the type of woman described in the vignette was regarded as likeable. In the current study an examination of reliability for internal consistency revealed that the alpha coefficients for the likeability scale (traditional women, $r = .84$; sexy women, $r = .80$) were lower than has been reported by prior researchers.

The five traits associated with perceived competence were intelligent, confident, competitive, independent and competent (Fiske et al., 1999). The alpha reported for the competence items was .97 (Fiske et al., 1999). The questions from the scale were modified to fit the current study. For example, participants were presented with the statement: "This type of woman is competent." In order to obtain a measure of incompetence, the scores on the competence scale were inverted. A high score indicated that the type of individual described in the vignette was viewed as incompetent. Participants rated each trait on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The scores were summed and averaged, and the possible score range was from 1 to
6. Analysis revealed that higher reliability could be obtained for the competence scale by deleting the "competitive" item. This item was deleted from the scale for traditional women and sexy women, and the analyses were based on the remaining four items. After deleting the "competitive" item, the resulting alpha coefficients for internal consistency were based on the remaining four items and were as follows: traditional women, $r = .73$ and sexy women, $r = .72$.

The Ambivalence Scales

The Griffin formula $(P + N)/2 - |P - N|$, $P$ = positive and $N$ = negative (as cited in Thompson et al., 1995) was selected to obtain ambivalence scores for three conflicting attitudes: sexual attraction versus fear, sexual attraction versus social unacceptability, and liking versus incompetence for sexy and traditional women. These composite scores were designed in order to measure ambivalence in the analysis of between group comparisons and the effect of the participant variable of ambivalent sexism.
The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

Level of ambivalent sexism was assessed using the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) developed by Glick and Fiske (1996). This is a 22-item self-report measure that uses two subscales of hostile and benevolent attitudes to assess ambivalence towards women. The ASI provides individual measures of hostile and benevolent sexism as well as a measure of ambivalent sexism. Eleven of the items were designed to assess hostile sexism and eleven items were designed to assess benevolent sexism. Glick and Fiske (1996) reported that alpha reliability coefficients based on a total ASI score (average of all items) ranged from .83 to .92 across six samples. Alpha reliability coefficients for the hostile sexism subscale ranged from .80 to .92 across six samples. Alpha reliability coefficients for the benevolent sexism subscale ranged from .73 to .85 across six samples. The ASI demonstrated good discriminant and convergent validity when compared to other measures of discrimination and sexism.

For the current study, a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) was used. A sample item from the benevolent subscale of
the measure is, "Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess." A sample of an item from the hostile subscale of the measure is "Women seek to gain power by getting control over men." Six items were reverse scored. A hostile sexism score was obtained by averaging the 11 items of that subscale. A benevolent sexism score was obtained by averaging the 11 items of the benevolent subscale. An overall measure of ambivalent sexism was obtained by averaging the score of all items. The possible score range was from 1 to 6. A median split was utilized and participants who scored in the top 50% were classified as highly ambivalently sexist, and those who scored in the bottom 50% were classified as having low ambivalent sexism. Permission to use the ASI in the current study was granted by one of the authors (Appendix G). The ASI and detailed scoring instructions can be found in Appendix C.

**Background Information**

Participants also reported their age, level of education and ethnicity (Appendix D).
Procedures

Participants were obtained through standard classroom recruitment as well as through the peer advising office at CSUSB. Participants' informed consent was received prior to filling out the questionnaires (Appendix E). The participants were asked to complete the demographic questions at the beginning and the ASI at the end of the survey. The scales for sexual attraction, fear, and social unacceptability were combined and presented as one scale. The scales for likeability and incompetence were also combined and presented as a separate scale. Participants read the first vignette and answered the questions regarding sexual attraction, fear, social unacceptability, likeability and incompetence. Participants then read the second vignette and answered the same questions regarding sexual attraction, fear, social unacceptability, likeability and incompetence. The order of presentation of the vignettes was alternated. Of the 137 surveys, 65 were completed with the traditional woman vignette first and 72 were completed with the sexy woman vignette first. Participation was anonymous, and at the end of the study all participants were debriefed (Appendix F). Participants were informed that this study
was designed to examine attitudes toward women in general.
Results

The results from this study are composed of three sets of hypotheses. Prior to the analyses of the hypotheses, a manipulation check was conducted to verify the accuracy of the vignettes in representing prototypically sexy and traditional women.

The Manipulation Check

Of the 128 participants who responded to the manipulation check for traditional women, 11 participants (8.6%) listed sexual type descriptor words. In contrast, for sexy women 98 (73.7%) of the 133 participants who responded to the manipulation check listed sexual type descriptors. Words used to describe traditional women included nice, caring, innocent, trustworthy, and warm. Words used to describe sexy women included hot, easy, sexy, and slut. Although a few participants did indicate that traditional women were sexually attractive, the descriptors used were never derogatory while many of the descriptors in reference to sexy women were derogatory.
Hypothesis One

To measure the covariation of opposing feelings toward sexy and traditional women separately, correlation coefficients were calculated between sexual attraction, fear, and social unacceptability as well as between likeability and incompetence (Table 1). The first prediction that there would be a positive correlation between sexual attraction and fear was supported for sexy women, but not for traditional women. The higher the sexual attraction toward the sexy woman, the higher the fear as well. For traditional women, there was a significant negative correlation such that the higher the attraction, the lower the fear. The second prediction that sexual attraction would be positively correlated with social unacceptability was not supported for either category of women. Rather the opposite occurred, sexual attraction and social unacceptability were significantly negatively correlated for both categories of women. To obtain the incompetence scores, the competence scores were inverted. For both sexy and traditional women, likeability was significantly negatively correlated with incompetence. The negative correlation between
likeability and incompetence is counter to what was predicted.

Table 1.
Correlational Analyses for Sexual Attraction, Fear, Social Unacceptability, Likeability, and Incompetence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Sexy</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sattr and Fear</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sattr and Suaccept</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeability and Incomp</td>
<td>-.66***</td>
<td>-.67***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sattr = Sexual Attraction Scale; Suaccept = Social Unacceptability Scale; Incomp = Incompetence Scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Hypothesis Two

For the second hypothesis, traditional and sexy women were compared on each of the five measures of sexual attraction, fear, social unacceptability, likeability, and incompetence using paired samples $t$-tests. Means, standard deviations, and $t$-values are
presented in Table 2. The prediction that sexy women would be viewed as significantly more sexually attractive than traditional women was supported. As predicted, sexy women also elicited significantly more fear than did traditional women. That sexy women would be regarded as significantly less socially acceptable than traditional women was also supported. As predicted traditional women were viewed as significantly more likeable than were sexy women. Finally, a significant difference in competence ratings for each type of woman was not predicted; however, participants rated traditional women as significantly more competent than sexy women.

For additional analyses of divergent attitudes toward sexy versus traditional women, the Griffin Formula (Thompson et al., 1995) was to be used to calculate three ambivalent scores for each category of women. However, initial correlational analyses did not reveal positive correlations for sexual attraction and social unacceptability or likeability and incompetence. The correlations did not meet the underlying assumptions as to the nature of ambivalence. Therefore, ambivalence scores were not calculated and further analyses were not conducted for these two sets of variables.
Table 2.
Means, Standard Deviations, and t-values for Sexy and Traditional Women on Measured Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Type of Woman</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>t-values (136)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexy</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satattr</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suaccept</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeability</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attr/Fear</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Satattr = Sexual Attraction Scale; Suaccept = Social Unacceptability Scale; Comp = Competence Scale; Attr/Fear = Ambivalent Sexual Attraction and Fear.
* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

An ambivalence score was calculated for sexual attraction and fear. The resulting score was then used to examine the prediction about attitudes toward sexy versus traditional women as stated under the second hypothesis.
For sexual attraction and fear, ambivalence was significantly greater toward sexy women than toward traditional women.

**Hypotheses Three**

Final comparisons between traditional and sexy women on ambivalent sexual attraction and fear were examined in relation to the participant variable of ambivalent sexism as measured using the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) developed by Glick and Fiske (1996). Prior to conducting further analyses, a correlational analysis was utilized to examine the two subscales of the ASI. The benevolent and hostile subscales were significantly positively correlated, $r(136) = .27$, $p < .01$. That is men who were higher on benevolent sexism were also higher on hostile sexism. A median split was utilized to designate low and high ambivalent sexism. Low ambivalent sexism was comprised of scores ranging from 2.09 to 3.86 which accounted for 66 (48.2%) of the total scores (N = 137). High ambivalent sexism was comprised of scores ranging from 3.91 to 6.00 which accounted for the remaining 71 scores (51.8%).

A mixed repeated measure ANOVA was performed with type of woman as the within-subjects variable and
dichotomized ASI (low and high) as the between-subjects variable. Consistent with the paired t-tests, a significant main effect for type of woman was found. Both low and high ambivalently sexist men had significantly greater ambivalent sexual attraction and fear toward sexy women as opposed to traditional women, \( F(1,135) = 254.29, p < .001 \) (Sexy Woman \( M = 3.41, SD = .98 \); Traditional Woman \( M = 1.48, SD = 1.11 \)). A significant main effect for ambivalently sexist men did not have significantly more ambivalence toward women than did low ambivalently sexist men, \( F(1,135) = .055, p > .05 \). The interaction between ambivalent sexism and ambivalent sexual attraction and fear was significant, \( F(1,135) = 7.24, p < .01 \). High ambivalently sexist men were significantly more ambivalent toward sexy women than were low ambivalently sexist men, \( t(135) = 2.14, p < .05 \), two tailed. Significant differences in attitudes of low and high ambivalently sexist men toward traditional women were not found, \( t(135) = 1.55, p > .05 \). Table 3 presents the interaction means and standard deviations.
Table 3.
Means and Standard Deviations for Interaction of Type of Woman and Ambivalent Sexism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASI</th>
<th>Type of Woman</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexy Woman</td>
<td>Traditional Woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low ASI</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High ASI</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ASI = Ambivalent sexism as measured by the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory.

A correlational analysis was also conducted for overall ambivalent sexism (not dichotomized) and ambivalent sexual attraction and fear. For traditional women, ambivalent sexism was negatively correlated with ambivalent sexual attraction and fear, $r$ (136) = -.19, $p < .05$. This means that greater ambivalent sexism was associated with less ambivalent sexual attraction and fear toward traditional women. For sexy women, ambivalent sexism was positively correlated with ambivalent sexual attraction and fear, $r$ (136) = .18, $p < .05$. In other
words, higher ambivalent sexism was associated with higher ambivalent sexual attraction and fear toward sexy women.

Additional Analyses

The benevolent and hostile subscales of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory were examined separately in relation to sexy and traditional women. When controlling for hostile sexism as suggested by Glick and Fiske (1995), benevolent sexism was significantly correlated with decreased social unacceptability, \( r(134) = -0.22, \) \( p < .05, \) and fear, \( r(134) = -0.31, \) \( p < .001, \) and increased competence, \( r(134) = 0.24, \) \( p < .05, \) and likeability, \( r(134) = 0.31, \) \( p < .001, \) for traditional women. Benevolent sexism was unrelated to responses toward the sexy woman. When controlling for benevolent sexism, hostile sexism was significantly correlated with increased fear, \( r(134) = 0.25, \) \( p < .05, \) and sexual attraction, \( r(134) = 0.30, \) \( p < .001, \) toward sexy women. Hostile sexism was not associated with ratings of the traditional woman.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The results of the research indicate significantly different attitudes toward sexy and traditional women. The findings are consistent with the literature indicating that women are sub-categorized into dichotomous, good and bad categories. Further, results support the theory that traditional women are regarded more positively than sexy women even though sexy women are rated as more sexually attractive than traditional women. Ambivalent sexual attraction and fear toward sexy women supports the theory that this type of woman elicits conflicted feelings which are not resolved through sub-categorization. However, the quantification of ambivalence is less clear for traditional women and for the additional measures of sexual attraction and social unacceptability and likeability and incompetence. The interaction between ambivalent sexual attraction and fear and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory indicates a relationship between the level of ambivalent sexism and the evaluation of sexy women.
Hypothesis One

The initial hypothesis was that ambivalence would be evidenced by opposing attitudes of sexual attraction and fear, sexual attraction and social unacceptability, and likeability and incompetence. The only significant positive correlation was between sexual attraction and fear for sexy women. This correlation indicates that as sexual attraction increases toward sexy women so does fear. This finding lends support to the theory that sexual attraction and fear represent unresolved ambivalence toward this category of women. Prior research indicated that attitudes toward sexy women would possibly elicit conflicted feelings which were not as easily resolved through splitting (Glick et al., 1997).

For traditional women, sexual attraction and fear were negatively correlated. In other words, as sexual attraction increased, fear decreased toward traditional women. When men attempt to resolve cognitive dissonance by splitting women into categories, traditional women are the recipients of benevolent sexism (Glick et al., 1997). Decreased ambivalence toward traditional women supports the theory of splitting and that the benevolent aspect of
the dichotomy is manifest in positive attitudes toward traditional women.

Sexual attraction and social unacceptability were significantly negatively correlated for both categories of women, meaning that the more attractive the women were perceived to be, the more socially acceptable they were perceived to be as well. This finding is contrary to the hypothesis that as sexual attraction increased, social unacceptability would increase. This unanticipated result may be attributed to the complex role of sexual attraction in our society. Although historically the sexy woman has been regarded as less reputable and less socially acceptable than the traditional woman, sexual attractiveness is also a desirable quality. Women have been described in relation to others and objectified in terms of the roles they fulfill as well as by physical appearance. Sexy women have been regarded as potential providers of sexual intimacy for men (Fiske & Glick, 1995). Although a sexy woman might be seen as disreputable, it may be that for the man there is a sense of achievement as increased sexual attraction has been linked to the desire to dominate women (Pryor et al., 1995). In being able to present a highly attractive
woman, a man may thereby affirm his self-worth by showing that he is able to possess her. This possibility is supported by evidence that positive evaluations of men increase when they are accompanied by physically attractive women (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976).

Likeability and incompetence were also negatively correlated in that the more likeable traditional and sexy women were regarded to be, the more competent they were also perceived as being. Again this finding is opposite than was predicted. Prior research had found that greater competence of certain categories of individuals was associated with lower ratings of warmth and visa versa (Fiske et al., 1999). It may be that the correlation found in prior research does not come into play here because attitudes toward sexy and traditional women are similar on these dimensions whereas comparisons to other individuals might reveal that neither type of women would be regarded as highly competent. Glick and Fiske (1997) hypothesized that non-traditional women such as career women elicit hostility because they threaten the dominant position of men in society. For non-traditional women, competence was associated with lack of warmth. If traditional and sexy women are perceived as being not
particularly competent by comparison to non-traditional women, then perhaps neither type of woman is thought of as threatening in the same way that a non-traditional woman would be. In addition, both traditional and sexy women are perceived as warm or likeable in that they provide complementary, not competitive, roles to men. To further investigate likeability versus incompetence, future studies would benefit by examining sexy and traditional women in comparison to non-traditional women such as career women.

Hypothesis Two

Ambivalence may be resolved by the sub-categorization of some women into dichotomous, good and bad, categories (Glick et al., 1997). Benevolent feelings are directed toward good women while hostility is directed toward bad women thereby resolving cognitive dissonance (Glick et al., 1997). Traditional women are regarded benevolently while non-traditional women are regarded with hostility. In keeping with these findings, the current study indicated that attitudes toward traditional women tended to be less ambivalent and to be significantly more positive than the attitudes toward sexy women.
The second hypothesis compared sexy and traditional women on each of the five measures individually as well as on a composite measure of ambivalent sexual attraction and fear. Individually, on all five measures attitudes toward sexy and traditional women were significantly different. As predicted, sexy women were regarded as significantly more sexually attractive and with significantly more fear than traditional women. By comparison, sexy women were also regarded as less socially acceptable, less likeable and less competent than traditional women. The differences in ratings of competency had not been predicted. Except for sexual attraction, these measures indicate more positive attitudes toward the traditional women than toward sexy women overall. These findings are consistent with historical portraits of sexy women as reviled but tolerated because they provided a needed service to society (as cited in Bullough & Bullough, 1996). Though attitudes toward sexy women are more negative, except for sexual attraction, than toward traditional women, correlations conducted under the first hypothesis had not supported ambivalence between sexual attraction and social unacceptability. One possibility is that attitudes
towards the expression of sexuality by women are changing and becoming more accepting overall even while evaluations continue to be different for separate categories of women.

Further comparisons were made by calculating an ambivalence score for sexual attraction and fear using the Griffin formula (Thompson et al., 1995). Ambivalence toward sexy women was significantly higher than toward traditional women. Ambivalence has been conceptualized as having feelings that are both strong and opposing. Given this definition, except for attraction and fear, further ambivalence scores were not calculated for the remaining variables of sexual attraction and social unacceptability and likeability and incompetence. Greater ambivalence toward sexy women as opposed to traditional women for sexual attraction and fear supports the theory that sexy women elicit feelings that are conflicting and unresolved through splitting.

**Hypothesis Three**

The third hypothesis examined the interaction between ambivalent sexual attraction and fear and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). Both high and low ambivalently sexist men were significantly more
ambivalent toward sexy than toward traditional women. However, highly ambivalently sexist men were not significantly more ambivalent toward women in general than low ambivalently sexist men. As women’s roles change, there is the possibility that for less sexist, more modern men, ambivalence toward the stereotypically traditional women is increased as she may be regarded as old fashioned and perhaps be less appealing.

High ambivalently sexist men did have significantly more ambivalence toward sexy woman, but not toward traditional women, than did low ambivalently sexist men. This finding would suggest that men who adhere to more traditional ideology for appropriate gender roles as represented by ambivalent sexism have greater sexual attraction and fear toward sexy women than do less traditional men. This finding is consistent with the literature both historically and theoretically. Engaging in ambivalent sexism helps maintain the status quo of male dominance by allowing the preservation of subordinate roles for women through splitting women into good and bad categories. Yet historically, sexy women have been regarded as women who are alluring yet dangerous thus perhaps enhancing feelings of ambivalence.
toward this category of women for men in general and even more so for men who are ambivalently sexist. From a theoretical perspective, high ambivalently sexist men who subscribe to traditional ideology would perhaps be more likely to have disowned and projected the feminine aspect of themselves thus creating higher ambivalence toward sexy women who have come to represent the desired yet rejected aspect of self.

Additional correlational analyses revealed that ambivalent sexism overall was associated with less ambivalent sexual attraction and fear of traditional women and higher ambivalent sexual attraction and fear of sexy women. These findings lend support to the theory that sexy women elicit ambivalent feelings which are not as easily resolved through splitting.

Further, when examining the hostile and benevolent subscales of the ASI separately, comparisons of sexy and traditional women revealed significant differences. For sexy women, but not traditional women, increased sexual attraction and fear were significantly related to increased hostile sexism. For traditional women, and not sexy women, increased social acceptability, competence, and likeability as well as decreased fear were associated
with greater benevolent sexism. These correlations highlight the more positive overall feelings toward traditional women and the unresolved ambivalent sexual attraction and fear toward sexy women. In addition, the relationship between increased hostility and unresolved ambivalent sexual attraction and fear may be significant in understanding battery in the context of intimate relationships.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study is that the measures of sexual attraction, fear, and social unacceptability were modified and developed to define the concept of the proposed dichotomy. Initial analysis indicated moderate internal consistency suggesting that the construct could be more accurately represented with further development.

Another limitation is the conceptualization of ambivalence in terms of sexual attraction and social unacceptability as well as likeability and incompetence. Perhaps a better measure might be to more clearly delineate between the participants' attitudes toward women and their own internal experience in regards to their association with different types of women. In other words, a man might regard a sexy woman with less respect
than a traditional woman and therefore view her as less socially acceptable by comparison, but as a man he may gain a measure of respect by being seen with her and therefore rate her as socially acceptable.

Utility and Future Research

History and mythology clearly demonstrate a long-standing fear of femininity and of women (e.g., O'Neil et al., 1986). The extremes engaged in to attempt to control women's sexuality bespeak a deep-seated fear (Mernissi, 1982). Yet, attraction to women is amply evidenced. Although categorization of women into good and bad subtypes may help to resolve immediate cognitive dissonance, this strategy does not ultimately address the underlying dualism of attraction and fear. If this dichotomy in fact represents fear of women's sexuality and femininity, it is possible that individuals will seek to gain control over their feelings. Thus, it is possible that when ambivalent feelings are activated and cannot be resolved, the risk for violence may increase. Violence is often regarded as a form of control in the literature that examines battery (Gondolf & Russell, 1983). The presumption is made that intimate involvement entails
attraction. Violence within this context seems contradictory and yet is all too common. The contradiction may be representative of unresolved ambivalent feelings. Violence directed towards “good” women may be perpetrated in an attempt to keep them in their place. In this instance, the fear may be of losing control over the woman, whereas violence towards a “bad” woman may be in direct response to a man’s attraction and awareness that he has less control over this type of woman - hence, the jealous and paranoid behaviors that are frequently present in batterers. Further examination of the relationship between sexual attraction and fear may be particularly relevant to interventions for domestic violence.

The long-standing symbolization of women as desirable but dangerous may be understood as a function of the power of the feminine and female sexuality. Conflicting feelings appear to be a key component in the dichotomization of women. Attitudes toward sexy women highlight ambivalence toward women in regards to sexuality and fear. Sexy women may therefore enable further examination of the construct and implications for the dichotomization of women.
Although dichotomization may resolve some cognitive dissonance toward certain categories of women, this tactic is not advocated as a solution for the underlying problem. As roles for women continue to blur and change, many women may resist simple dichotomization thereby eliciting greater irresolvable ambivalence. Understanding the ambivalence that prevents the integration of divergent characterizations of how women should be may enhance the effectiveness of clinical interventions for individuals struggling with this dichotomy. Steps toward integration may be facilitated by further research to better understand the relationship between sexual attraction and fear toward women. Integration may be achieved by addressing the need to degrade women’s sexuality in some way in order to ally one’s fear of the power of sexuality or one’s own feminine nature. Allowing women to be multifaceted by accepting the many aspects of what is means to be a woman would be empowering and enriching for both women and men.
APPENDIX A

THE SEXUAL ATTRACTION, FEAR,
AND SOCIAL UNACCEPTABILITY

SCALES
The Sexual Attraction, Fear, and Social Unacceptability Scales

Next, read each of the following statements and decide how closely the statement fits with the type of woman described in the vignette. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Please respond by circling the number that best represents how you feel according to the following 6-point scale. Please Note: Although you may or may not be in a relationship, answer as if you are single. Remember: This survey is anonymous.

1 = disagree strongly 2 = disagree somewhat 3 = disagree slightly
4 = agree slightly 5 = agree somewhat 6 = agree strongly

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1. I would not be interested in marrying this type of woman. 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. This type of woman would be well liked by my friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. People would think highly of me if I began dating this type of woman. 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. This type of woman does not turn me on. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. In a relationship with this type of woman, I would need to keep alert or she might take advantage of me. 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. This type of woman is sexually attractive. 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. I would want to have sex with this type of woman. 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. This type of woman is likely to be sexually experienced. 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. I would not feel comfortable taking this type of woman to church with me. 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Sex with this type of woman would not be fun. 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Sex with this type of woman would be exciting. 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. I might sometimes avoid this type of woman because she could be unpredictable. 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. I would feel comfortable telling this type of woman anything about myself, even those things of which I am ashamed. 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. This type of woman has qualities that one would not want in a long-term partnership.

15. This type of woman is not likely to be faithful to me if there was no chance of being caught.

16. This type of woman is someone that my parents would not approve of.

17. If I had children, I would want this type of woman as their mother.

18. I would be hesitant to engage in activities with this type of woman where I would be vulnerable.

19. This type of woman enjoys sex.

20. If this type of woman made excuses which sounded rather unlikely, I would feel confident that she is telling the truth.

21. I could not rely on this type of woman to react in positive ways when I expose my weaknesses to her.

Note. Sexual attraction scale items are as follows: 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 19. Reverse score items 4 and 10. Fear scale items are as follows: 5, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20, and 21. Reverse score items 13 and 20. Social unacceptability scale items are as follows: 1, 2, 3, 9, 14, 16, and 17. Reverse score items 2, 3, and 17.
APPENDIX B

THE LIKEABILITY AND
INCOMPETENCE
SCALES
The Likeability and Incompetence Scales

For the following statements, please indicate how characteristic they would be for the type of woman represented by Sandra (or Paula depending on the vignette utilized). (Adapted from the scale by Fiske et al., 1999)

1 = disagree strongly 2 = disagree somewhat 3 = disagree slightly
4 = agree slightly 5 = agree somewhat 6 = agree strongly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. This type of woman is competitive.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. This type of woman is good-natured.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. This type of woman is intelligent.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. This type of woman is confident.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. This type of woman is warm.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. This type of woman is competent.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. This type of woman is likeable.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. This type of woman is sincere.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. This type of woman is independent.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. This type of woman is tolerant.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Likeability scale items are as follows: 23, 26, 28, 29, and 31. Competence scale items are as follows: 22, 24, 25, 27, and 30. Item number 22 (competitive) was discarded in the current study. Competence scores were inverted to achieve a measure of incompetence.
APPENDIX C

THE AMBIVALENT SEXISM INVENTORY
The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

The ASI: Copyrighted 1995 by Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske. Use of this scale requires permission of one of the authors.

Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree  2 = somewhat disagree  3 = slightly disagree
4 = slightly agree     5 = somewhat agree     6 = strongly agree

| Strongly | Strongly |
| Disagree | Agree    |

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

2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality."

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

4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as sexist.

5. Women are too easily offended.

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

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

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

9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.

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

11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.
12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.  
13. Men are complete without women.  
14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.  
15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.  
16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.  
17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.  
18. There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances  
19. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.  
20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.  
21. Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.  
22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

Note. Scoring Instructions as provided by Glick and Fiske (1995) are as follows: The ASI may be used as an overall measure of sexism, with hostile and benevolent components equally weighted, by simply averaging the score for all items after reversing the items listed below. The two ASI subscales (Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism) may also be calculated separately. For correlational research, purer measures of HS and BS can be obtained by using partial correlations (so that the effects of the correlation between the scales are removed). Reverse the following items (1 = 6, 2 = 5, 3 = 4, 4 = 3, 5 = 2, 6 = 1): 3, 6, 7, 13, 18, and 21. Hostile Sexism Score = average of the following items: 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 21. Benevolent Sexism Score = average of the following items: 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, and 22.

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APPENDIX D

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Background Information

Sex: Male ___ Female ___ Note: This survey is to be filled out by MEN ONLY. If you are female please do not complete this survey.

Age: ______

Ethnicity:
___ African-American ___ Caucasian/White
___ American Indian ___ Hispanic/Latino
___ Asian ___ Other (please specify)

Education:
___ attending a 4-year college
___ attending a community college
APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT
Attitudes Towards Women Survey
MEN ONLY
Participant Informed Consent

This study is being conducted by Melissa Y. Wheeler under the supervision of Dr. Gloria Cowan, Professor of Psychology, California State University, San Bernardino. The purpose of this study is to investigate different attitudes toward specific categories of women. Participation will involve evaluating two hypothetical women and completing a measure of perceptions about male/female relationships as well as general demographic questions. This survey will require approximately 30 minutes and is worth two units of extra credit.

Please read the following points before indicating that you are willing to participate:

1. The study has been explained to me and I understand the explanation that has been given and what my participation will involve.

2. My participation in this research is voluntary and I am free to choose not to answer any questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. (However, it is hoped that you will choose to answer all items, as questionnaires that are only partially completed will not be helpful to this study.)

3. My responses will remain anonymous and results will be reported in group form only.

4. At my request, I can receive additional explanations of this study after my participation is completed.

This study has been approved by the CSUSB Psychology Department Human Subjects Review Board. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. If you should have any questions regarding this study or your participation in it, you may contact Dr. Cowan at (909) 880-5575.

To maintain anonymity, do not write your name on any page.

Please check in the space provided below to acknowledge that you are at least 18 years old and have freely given your consent to participate in this study. Further, by marking the space below, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand the foregoing statements as to the purpose of this study and your role as a volunteer participant.

Please check here: ___________ Date: ___________

Please return survey to the Peer Advising Center for extra credit.
APPENDIX F

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT
Debriefing Statement

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. The purpose of this study is to assess men's attitudes about different types of women. Further, we hope to understand if some men are inclined to view certain types of women differently than do other men. By understanding conflicting attitudes toward women, we may be able to better understand the dynamics of male-female relationships.

If completing this questionnaire has caused you any distress, you may contact the California State University, San Bernardino Counseling Center at (909) 880-5241 if you are a Cal-State student. If you have questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in it, you may also contact Dr. Cowan at (909) 880-5575.

At the completion of the study, you may obtain the group results from Dr. Cowan. Please note that this study will not be completed until 2001. If you would like more information about the study prior to its completion, you may contact Dr. Cowan at any time.

You May Remove and Keep This Page.

Thank you for your participation.
APPENDIX G

PERMISSION TO USE THE

AMBIVALENT SEXISM

INVENTORY
Melissa,

Absolutely, feel free to use the ASI in your research. I'd be interested in hearing about your findings.

'Good luck!

Peter

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