Supplementary Material to: Sexism as a Predictor of Political Attitudes and Voting Behaviour. A Systematic Review

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1 How is sexism measured?

1.1 Choice of concepts and items

This Supplementary Material discusses the variety of operationalization choices made in studies on sexism as a predictor of political attitudes and behaviour. A separate table (Gulczyński 2025) presents the list of countries, datasets, concepts, and items used in each paper included in the review.

The choice of concepts and items is crucial because different measures of sexism produce different results. For instance, Green and Shorrocks (2023) find a positive association between perception of discrimination against men and Brexit vote, but De Geus, Ralph-Morrow, and Shorrocks (2022) find no association between sexism and Brexit vote (after controlling for political attitudes). The section "What does sexism predict and why?" shows more empirical differences found between various types of sexism.

The first choice to be made concerns whether the measured attitudes should be close to or distant from politics. Consistently with the aims of their authors, modern (Swim et al. 1995) and neosexism (Tougas et al. 1995) scales measure attitudes that are more political, while benevolent and hostile sexism are not directly related to politics. Schaffner (2022) recommends to measure sexism as an attitude distinct from other political attitudes to avoid tautology, particularly when investigating the relationship between sexism and gendered policies. For this purpose, he presents a measure of "political distance" of the hostile and modern sexism items.

In turn, Anduiza and Rico (2024) purposely decide to include political aspects of sexism, such as perceptions of discrimination against women, in order not to focus on "stereotypes or values." They choose modern sexism because "it is able to capture the key elements of the far right's discourses on gender equality and transform these into an individual attitude." They argue that "it is precisely the connection of the individual attitude with the discourses of far-right parties that makes it an interesting predictor of vote choice for these parties as well as an attitude prone to short-term change." They admit that modern sexism can be influenced by party discourse and identity. For instance, Cassese and Barnes (2019) show that educational attainment negatively predicts modern sexism in 2016, but not in 2012, and suggest that the 2016 election raised salience of perceived discrimination among college-educated women. Thus, the decision to use measures that are close to or distant from politics should be conscious and well-justified.

Studies including more than one type of sexism are slightly more numerous (52) than studies focusing on only one specific type of sexism (45). To isolate the effects of sexism, some studies

control for related concepts, like perception of discrimination (e.g., Ananyeva and Tatarenko 2022; Cassese and Barnes 2019; Cizmar and Kalkan 2023). Others analyse gender traditionalism and sexism simultaneously (e.g., Long, Dawe, and Suhay 2022) or control for another type of sexism (e.g., Huang et al. 2016; McMahon and Kahn 2018; Russo, Rutto, and Mosso 2014).

However, some studies use the word "sexism" inconsistently. For instance, Shortell and Valdini (2023) alternate sexism with bias. McThomas and Tesler (2016) use gender traditionalism and modern sexism in their study, but gender attitudes is used in the title and sexism does not appear in the abstract. Hanley (2021) tries to find the measures of "sexist orientation" that best predict vote in the US presidential elections. Lytle et al. (2018) measure modern sexism, but write about "perceived sexism" as a synonym of "perceptions of discrimination," which leads to some confusion.

The recent studies on implicit (unconscious) sexism introduced further inconsistency in the naming of concepts. Earlier, Barnello, Bitecofer, and Kidd (2019) defined explicit sexism by a single survey item: "America is ready for a woman to serve as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces." They contrasted it with implicit or implied sexism measured by the difference between men's and women's choice of whether Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump is better in 5 skills needed to serve in that position. Importantly, some studies use the name 'implicit' or 'covert' for modern or benevolent sexism and 'explicit' or 'overt' for traditional or hostile sexism. To avoid confusion, this practice should be discontinued in the context of surveys.

Furthermore, a few studies do not clarify to which concept of sexism they adhere. In such cases, they usually mix items from various scales measuring sexism, sometimes including also items from other gender-related scales or feelings toward women (e.g., Bauer 2023; Enders and Uscinski 2021; Filindra, Kaplan, and Buyuker 2021; Hanley 2021; Utych 2021). In the most transparent way, Bills and Hayes (2022) combine four items on hostile sexism, two items on modern sexism, and four items on traditional family norms to create a single "Sexist Beliefs/Traditional Family Norms Scale." In turn, Bai (2021) uses Separate Sphere Ideology Scale "as an alternative measure of sexism." Several studies connect hostile and benevolent sexism into one measure of ambivalent sexism (Bai 2021; Blair 2017; Jylhä, Rydgren, and Strimling 2022; Medenica and Fowler 2021).

The same set of questions is sometimes interpreted in various ways. For instance, Ditonto (2019) uses five items that she jointly interprets as modern sexism scale, while Knuckey (2019) divides the same items into modern and traditional sexism. Winter (2023) includes an item on recognition of current inequalities at work (modern sexism) into his measure of hostile sexism. The original hostile sexism scale item asking whether "women seek special favors under guise of

equality" was not in the original modern sexism scale, but has been often used as an indicator of modern sexism (e.g., Barnes and Cassese 2017; McThomas and Tesler 2016; Setzler and Yanus 2018).

Furthermore, questions used to measure sexism often overlap with other concepts. In extreme cases, authors measure sexism with a single item that corresponds at least equally well to another concept. For instance, Bracic, Israel-Trummel, and Shortle (2019) use single items to measure –as they call it– politically ("men are better suited emotionally for politics than women") and domestically ("a man should be in control of his wife") defined "measures of sexism." However, the former item is used as a "trait stereotype" by Sanbonmatsu (2003) and the latter is part of the Machismo Scale by Arciniega et al. (2008). In contrast, Hickel and Deckman (2022) interpret traditional and modern sexism "as reasonable proxy measures for traditional machismo." Lodders and Weldon (2019) interpret agreement with the statement "Men should have more right to job than women when jobs are scarce" (coming from the gender egalitarianism module in the World Value Survey; see, e.g., McDaniel 2008) as benevolent sexism, although it was not part of the original scale.

Simas and Bumgardner (2017) use a single question on the seriousness of discrimination as a sole indicator of modern sexism. This contrasts with the approach of McMahon and Kahn (2018) who clearly theorize on and measure protective paternalism as a specific part of benevolent sexism. Batista Pereira and Porto (2020) add items on gendered policy stereotypes and treat some of them as parts of both benevolent and hostile sexism (e.g., "Men are better at handling crime as politicians"). The opposite process also occurs where sexism measures are used to proxy for another concept, e.g., Cassino and Besen-Cassino (2020) use a part of the hostile sexism scale to proxy for masculinity threat. In contrast, Coffe et al. (2023) see hostile sexism as a mediator and moderator of the link between masculinity and support for radical right. This example also proves that the relationships between sexism and other similar concepts are only now being clarified.

In response to this variety of approaches, Schaffner (2022) proposes a scale of two ("Women seek to gain power by getting control over men," "Women exaggerate problems they have at work") or three (adding "Once a woman gets a man to commit, she puts him on a tight leash") items that best measure hostile sexism. Importantly, this is exactly the two-item scale that will be used in the European Social Survey (ESS). In the ANES survey, the first and the third of these items were used. However, different items were asked to measure hostile sexism in CCES.

The choice of items should be treated with greatest care. Yet, in sum, the choice and operationalization of concepts is often incoherent across studies. The same questions are

sometimes interpreted as measures of different types of sexism (or other gender-related concepts). In some cases, the concept of sexism is not clearly defined. However, there are good examples to follow. Scholars should clearly justify their focus on a specific type of sexism and relate their theory to the chosen concept and measures.

1.2 Scale construction

The analysed studies use between 1 (e.g., Lodders and Weldon 2019; Nelson 2021; Simas and Bumgardner 2017) and 22 items (Blair 2017) to measure one type of sexism. Most studies construct the indices of interest by averaging (or summing up) answers of all selected items (some of which may be reversed). However, Verge and Tormos (2023) opt for a factor score (i.e., average of scores weighted by factor loadings). Some studies convert the scales to a binary variable (Lodders and Weldon 2019) or 3-point scale by merging positive and negative answers into one category (Filindra and Fagan 2022) or separating scores by standard deviations (Longdon and Banducci 2023). Schlehofer et al. (2011) adds the absolute value of the difference between answer and midpoint to measure extremity separately from sexism. Shortell and Valdini (2023) use 4 items in 4 separate regressions (2 for hostile and 2 for benevolent sexism) instead of calculating a composite index. Almost all studies are cross-sectional with each respondent surveyed only once. Anduiza and Rico (2024) are the only ones who focus on the change in sexism as a predictor ("backlash attitudinal change").

The most common type of rating scale is the 5-point Likert scale, used in ANES, among others. However, many studies use a 7-point scale (e.g., Ananyeva and Tatarenko 2022; Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton 2020; Godbole et al. 2022; Hayes and Lawless 2022; Huang et al. 2016; Spencer 2021) or, rarely, a 3-point scale (e.g., Batista Pereira and Porto 2020). Although 5-point scales are the most common choice, which is optimal in many circumstances (Revilla, Saris, and Krosnick 2014), for some topics, a larger scale may work better (Asensio Manjon and Revilla 2022). The impact of scale range has not yet been investigated in the context of sexism.

Many scholars choose a 4-point scale (e.g., Baker, McClelland, and Jozkowski 2022; Beauregard, Holman, and Sheppard 2022; Schaffner 2022; Utych 2021; Verge and Tormos 2023) or a 6-point scale (e.g., Cassidy and Krendl 2019; Long, Dawe, and Suhay 2022; Miura, McElwain, and Kaneko 2023; Osborne and Davies 2009, 2012; Rye and Meaney 2010; Schaffner 2022; Tate 2014). In such a case, respondents cannot remain neutral and are forced to agree or disagree with a statement. The choice between an even or an odd number of responses (i.e., with a neutral or middle alternative) is not trivial. It should depend on the type of question and survey

method (Wang and Krosnick 2020).

Importantly, Holman (2023) tests whether inclusion of a neutral option changes the levels of sexism and how sexism predicts other attitudes. Her survey asked whether men or women are more emotionally suited for political office, more assertive, more compassionate, better at handling foreign affairs and education. For instance, when given no middle option ("no difference"), 63% respondents said that men are better at handling foreign affairs, but when the middle option was given, only 27% said so. In all cases, significantly less respondents selected men, when the middle option was available. She does not find evidence for a consistent social desirability bias (i.e., sexists hiding their true beliefs), but still shows that "a middle option can dramatically shift the answers on the question."

There is also a lot of variety in terms of item wording. The original scales, as well as some studies use reverse coding of some items (i.e, agreement with a statement implies less sexism). Schaffner (2022) shows that reversed coded items have lower factor loadings and "may create more measurement problems than they solve" (see, e.g., Winter 2023). Archer and Clifford (2022) propose to replace agreement-disagreement scales with item-specific questions. For instance, we can ask "How often do women seek to gain power by getting control over men?" instead of asking for the degree of agreement with the statement "Women seek to gain power by getting control over men". They find that this solution "reduces problems with truncation and tends to improve discriminant and predictive validity." Importantly, this type of questions is already inconsistently applied. For instance, the 2012 version of ANES includes the question "When employers make decisions about hiring and promotion, how often do they discriminate against women?" instead of the original "Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination." (see, e.g., Filindra, Kaplan, and Buyuker 2021). Minor changes in the wording of specific questions are common. For instance, one of the variants of the original hostile sexism item "Women seek special favors under guise of equality" (Glick and Fiske 1996) may sound "For most women, equality means seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men" (Longdon and Banducci 2023).

Scholars who want to use data from different sources or compare levels of sexism across studies or countries should be aware of the importance of their degrees of freedom and be explicit about the reasons for their choices. "[R]esearchers should not simply copy questions from these surveys when designing their own questionnaire; instead they should first evaluate their quality" (Asensio Manjon, Revilla, and Weber 2022). This is of particular relevance, given the large number of original surveys conducted in the research on sexism and politics.

2 Search terms

The exact search terms were:

Web of Science: (TS=(sexis*)) AND (TS=(politician* OR turnout OR "political orientation*" OR "political value*" OR ("polic*" AND "support for") OR "political behav*" OR "political attitude*" OR "political preference*" OR "policy preference*" OR "party preference*" OR "party choice*" OR vot* OR elect* OR candidate*))

Scopus: (TITLE-ABS-KEY(sexis*)) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY(politician*) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(turnout) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY("political orientation*") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY("political value*") OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY("polic*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY("support for")) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(vot*) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY(elect*) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("political behav*") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("political attitude*") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("political preference*") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("policy preference*") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("party preference*") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("party choice*") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("candidate*"))

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