

2021

Fake News and Women: Fake and Real Media's Impact on Sexism in Consumer Attitudes

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**FAKE NEWS AND WOMEN: FAKE AND REAL MEDIA'S IMPACT ON SEXISM IN
CONSUMER ATTITUDES**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Psychology
in the College of Sciences
and in the Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term, 2021

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ABSTRACT

Gender-based discrimination is an issue that permeates many aspects of today's society and is influenced by numerous factors, including the presence of fake news, or emotionally driven, factually inaccurate, and misleading media. This study aimed to examine fake news' impact on consumer attitudes regarding women and to investigate how certain demographic factors relate to consumers' attitudes towards women. The current study had two main hypotheses: (1) participants exposed to fake news materials will report higher levels of both old-fashioned and modern sexism than those in other conditions and (2) participants with higher levels of sociodemographic factors such as right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and levels of religious involvement will have higher levels of both types of sexism. Data for the current study was collected from male students at the University of Central Florida. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions: watching three consecutive real news clips about women, watching three consecutive fake news clips about women, or watching nothing. Participants then completed online questions related to the study's aims. Analyses conducted included correlational analyses of all variables, analysis of variance to determine if there are differences in level of sexism based on experimental condition, and linear regression analysis to determine how various sociodemographic factors relate to consumer sexism. Results indicated no significant impact of fake news on participants' levels of sexism but does demonstrate justification for future research on the topic.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend extreme thanks to both my Thesis Chair, Dr. Wright, and my committee member Dr. Chesnut. I greatly appreciate your help and guidance through this process, and for all you've taught me along the way. I'd also like to like my family for everything they've done for me and continue to do; I am very grateful for your love and encouragement. Thank you to my friends who have shown me endless support and love, and to everyone along the way that has impacted me. Finally, I'd like to dedicate this research to the 97% of women that have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Sexism as a Construct

Sexism as a construct has developed over the years to include different waves and interpretations. Second wave feminists have described sexism as gender inequality, and is a direct result of the patriarchy, or male social dominance. Since the media has the power to decide both what they report and how they report it, second wave feminists especially believed the media's lack of coverage of their feminist movement was a direct result of sexism and the patriarchy (Easteal et al., 2015). Liberal feminists also believe that the main cause of sexism and gender inequality is in the social relegation of women to the home and household duties, therefore barring them from being able to start a career and be self-sufficient (Attenborough, 2014).

Sexism in the media is perpetrated by both conscious and unconscious media themes, actions, and choices. Reporting on sexism relies on recontextualization, in which a journalist uses their own words to tell their stories. As a result, the context now revolves around how the journalist tells the story and not just the story itself. Issues can arise because of recontextualization. While a speaker can actively defend what they are saying, if it is recontextualized by a journalist reporting on an event, it is the journalist's perspective about the event that consumers receive instead of the original speaker's words or actions (Attenborough, 2014). The media is able to recontextualize and create frames for the topics they cover and market it to the public in varying ways. For example, when studying an incident in which a male sports commentator made rude, sexist, and racist remarks toward a college women's basketball team, researchers found that certain voices were amplified over others. Silenced parties in coverage of the incident included the players themselves and the coach, as the media referenced

them very minimally in their coverage of the scandal. Most of the focus was on the male commentator and also tended to downplay the offensiveness of his actions, rarely quoting the remarks that lit the fire (Cooky et al., 2010).

Media representation, in both quantity and quality, matter in forming public opinions and schemas. While some may think that simply increasing female representation in mainstream media is a way to help combat sexism, it may not be the solution it is thought to be. If there is an over-abundance of sexist imaging, portrayals, text, and stories, it innately perpetuates a sexist society. Sexist media will still occur regardless of the amount of female representation (Pingree et al., 1976).

While all forms of sexism are innately harmful, a 1976 study conducted by Pingree et al. documented differing levels of sexism in media and advertising as part of an ordinal scale, the Butler-Paisley scale for sexism. This scale starts at Level 1, which is extremely stereotypical and sexist and portrays women solely to make fun of them and perpetuate stereotypes. Typically, this looks like extreme sexualization, dehumanization, objectification, and more. The other end of the scale, Level 5, is completely free of stereotypes, and differences between people focus on merit, not on gender. Rating ads featuring women from four different major US magazines, researchers found that almost half of all ads were Level 2, designed to keep women in stereotypical gender roles and perpetuate the status quo, and over a fourth of all ads were deemed Level 1. This shows how abundant stereotypes and sexism are in mainstream media and advertising (Pingree et al., 1976).

Sexism can also be seen in many different facets of everyday life. One example of this is in the workplace, specifically regarding women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields (van Veelan et al., 2019). The 2019 study conducted by van Veelan et al.

found that in the Netherlands, only 13% of all STEM workers were women. The STEM field is characterized by a lack of female representation and the presence of stereotypes. This study found that women and not men working in STEM or planning to work in STEM faced more gender identity threat than those not working in a STEM field. This shows how women in STEM are increasingly more susceptible to gender stereotypes and subsequent negative consequences like lower self-confidence. This study also found that the more women reported being outnumbered by male colleagues at work, the higher their levels of gender identity threat was, showing an increased presence of sexism in more male-dominated fields (van Veelan et al., 2019).

The Media and Women

The media has a big impact on consumers. The abundance of media as well as the salience of information through the incredibly fast internet means that many consumers have access to multiple forms of media. Through this wide reach, the media is able to influence, either unconsciously or consciously, the way that consumers view their content (Pingree et al., 1976). There are many tactics and strategies that the media can employ in order to influence their audience. Emotion plays a big role in media, as does persuasion. Emotion is used in helping increase the power of persuasion in media, whether it is positive or negative emotions. A journalist can increase their power by including an emotional aspect to their work to affect consumers more. This relates especially to fake news, discussed later, as it is described by some scholars as misrepresentations of the truth from an emotional root (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2019).

There is also a gender disparity in terms of media image and coverage. One example of a biased media image of women is in victim-blaming. Journalists, through their recontextualization

of events and word choices, can increase or decrease the severity of a victim's situation and victimhood. A study exploring a 2011 incident in which two male sports commentators made sexist remarks toward a female referee, a female coworker of theirs, and women in general. The two men made the remarks off-air but were still being recorded, and thus the conversations got out. After being fired, the reporters involved were widely written and talked about in the media and by consumers. The ways in which the media recontextualized the events were important in how consumers viewed the events. When discussing the firing of one of the commentators, it was often framed by the media as the female coworker he sexually harassed getting him fired, instead of the commentator being fired because of his actions. While this framing may not explicitly blame the female coworker for getting the commentator fired, it does relieve some of the blame from the man. In this sense, victim-blaming is somewhat employed as it is painted as the woman getting the man fired because she refused his sexual remark's advance. It also can be seen as victim-blaming as the woman had previously been a model, a fact that was often brought up in media coverage of the event. Including the context of the woman as a model, it could be interpreted as highlighting how she was seductive or inviting of his sexual harassment (Attenborough, 2014). While this is just one example, victim-blaming is used in many contexts by the media, often in a more diluted, unconscious way like this was.

Violence against women is a systemic and societal issue in which sexism and stereotypes reinforce and normalize violent attitudes and actions towards women. The media plays a big role in how consumers learn about and view violence against women. Researchers have found that when violence against women is covered in the media, it is typically portrayed as a surprising, rare, and isolated incident. The media also tends to sensationalize reports of violence against women. From many feminist theory points of view, media coverage on the topic of violence

against women is a manifestation of the media's attitude and history of exclusion of feminist discourses. The media also popularizes safety campaigns that focus on teaching women how to avoid violence or becoming a victim of violence. While this may seem helpful, it can be very retroactive as it normalizes violence against women. It essentially perpetuates the idea of victim-blaming in the sense of teaching victims not to be victims, instead of going to the root of the problem and teaching perpetrators not to be violent (Easteal et al., 2015).

The media has a lot of power when it comes to violence against women. The media can serve as a sort of facilitator, judge, and/or jury in the trial of public opinion about certain situations, including sexual assault. The ways in which journalists and the media frame sexual assault victims and situations can sometimes be biased, including tropes such as victim-blaming and othering. However, these biases may not always be conscious decisions intended to do harm, but rather unconscious from a patriarchal, sexist rape culture that permeates our society today (Easteal et al., 2015).

Advertising trends have also shown a focus on violence against women and women as victims. One such trend is sexual victimization, in which advertisements portraying women both sexualize and victimize them. This ultimately dehumanizes women, leading to a greater normalization of violence and sexual violence against women. It also glorifies women in a submissive role and sexualizes violence against women. Researchers studying these aspects in advertisements featuring women found that almost 10% of ads studied portrayed women as victims, and almost 75% of those ads victimizing women also sexualized them. This brings about an implicit association between sex and violence against women. This combination of sexual victimization by the media helps perpetuate stereotypes and shape consumers' opinions about women (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008).

As women are often portrayed in many stereotypical ways in the media, the media tends to paint women who do not conform to gender stereotypes in a negative light. Media images of women tend to focus on more materialistic aspects of the women, instead of their accomplishments or merits. When reporting on women who the media deem successful, there is a big focus on the women's appearances. Media coverage of successful women also commonly includes the mentioning the men behind the woman that are said to be the reason for the woman's success (Coman & Scarlat, 2014). When covering violence against women, stereotypes and clichés are often used to subtly and unconsciously frame or define the level of credibility and truthfulness associated with the story (Easteal et al., 2015).

While the quality of media coverage on women is not ideal, the quantity is also lagging behind that of men. This is especially prominent in women's sports, as female athletes and teams receive less coverage of their accomplishments, wins, and general news (Knight & Giuliano, 2003). A lot of media bias regarding women is subtle or unconscious, and is meant to fit into gender stereotypes, roles, and norms without over-exploiting them too much. In this way, the nuances seem more normal and natural, thus leading to regression of women's advancements in public opinion (Sherry et al., 2016).

Women in Sports

Sports are still seen by the media and by some consumers as being extremely gendered, as sports typically require strength, heavy physical exertion, and a high difficulty level. In keeping with outdated gender roles and gender stereotypes, sports are seen as being more masculine than feminine. Therefore, sports coverage of female athletes tends to overly sexualize them, as well as focus more on their personal lives, like their families or relationships, than their actual athletic accomplishments. This leads to male dominance in both sports and media and is

usually perpetrated by subtle yet present media bias towards female sports and female athletes. While sometimes these microaggressions are more unconscious, they still impact consumers' opinions of women in sports and leads to a lower public opinion of female athletes and women's sports (Sherry et al., 2016).

Sexism permeates sports often. Popularly referred to as the "image problem," female athletes are seen as overly masculine for participating in sports, a stereotypically masculine and male-dominated field. The image problem promotes both sexism and homophobia as female athletes are perceived as lesbians in sports media coverage (Knight & Giuliano, 2003). This contributes to the promotion of sexism in the media as stereotypes run rampant in media coverage. As a part of this image problem, female athletes are increasingly susceptible to the "feminine apologetic" in which the media tends to portray female athletes as overly feminine and overly heterosexual. They defend this usage by claiming this type of coverage is what viewers want. This over heterosexualization is an overcompensation of the media to reinforce traditional gender roles and force female athletes to act more "feminine" in order to justify their own existence (Knight & Giuliano, 2003). This is also a way for the media to market their work to predominantly men. While the image problem for homosexual men can still be an issue, there is still a double standard when it comes to gender and sexuality in sports. Female athletes are seen and portrayed as homosexual until they are able to seemingly prove that they are heterosexual. This puts pressure on female athletes as it is seen as their responsibility to prove their sexuality. On the other hand, male athletes are assumed to be heterosexual until proven otherwise. This places a burden and extra work on female athletes to get to the same place as male athletes, when their merits are put on the back burner so the media can focus on aspects of their personal life (Knight & Giuliano, 2003).

A study conducted by Knight & Giuliano (2003) found that when reading fake articles about male and female athletes, participants found the athletes portrayed as obviously heterosexual as being more respectable and more similar to an ideal man/woman than athletes portrayed as having an ambiguous sexual orientation, but did not significantly like one type of article better. This rebuts the media's defense of the feminine apologetic by showing that consumers do not actually prefer a specific portrayal of gender and sports (Knight & Giuliano, 2003).

The intersectionality of gendered sports coverage does not stop with homophobic sexism. Race also affects how female athletes are portrayed by the media, as Black female athletes are not only overly sexualized in sports media coverage, but also portrayed as less feminine than their White counterparts (Cooky et al., 2010). Gaps in intersectionality can also be seen when Don Imus, a sports media commentator, made sexist and racist remarks towards college basketball players. The Black players on the Rutgers women's basketball team were deemed "nappy headed hos" by Imus, even though the team had the same number of Black players as the opposing team. The only difference was that the opposing team's Black players were generally lighter skinned than the Rutgers team, making them more White-passing and therefore more accepted into mainstream White culture. This example of colorism in media and sports is a prime example of how different aspects of intersectionality affect sexism in the media (Cooky et al., 2010).

Advertising

Advertisements are essentially ubiquitous and unavoidable today. Due to their abundance, they are simply unavoidable for consumers and thus has a very big impact on culture, public opinion, and social frames. Advertisements are often seen as containing unconscious or

indirect meanings and messages as opposed to direct and conscious ones (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). One way that advertisements portray women is in an overly sexualized manner. Over time, women's bodies and sexuality have been used to sell and promote countless items, and female sexualization has seeped further and further into television shows, movies, ads, music videos, print and online media, and more year after year. While this practice has occurred for countless years, female criticism of sexualization in ads gained traction in the 1960s as a part of the women's rights movement's revival (Zimmerman & Dahlberg, 2008).

Researchers have noted that women are sexualized not only in advertisements directed at men, but also those directed toward women. Women have been found to hold generally negative attitudes towards sexualized ads regardless of gender, but particularly negative attitudes when the sexualized subject is female. One possible explanation for this trend of women reporting feeling more negative toward ads sexualizing women than men is based in the gender norm that women are not supposed to enjoy or flaunt sex. This stereotype could unconsciously have an effect on how women view gender and sexuality (Vezich et al., 2017).

Along with sexualization, women are often depicted in domestic roles, situations, or scenarios in ads. Researchers have studied the attitudes of women towards ads depicting women in different contexts, including domestic. In one study, all female participants took a baseline survey to see what attitudes they held towards women and ad portrayals of women. The next day, researchers showed participants ads depicting women in roles ranging from sexualized, normal, domestic, business, and aspirational, as well as some control pictures of cars. Participants were asked to rate how much they liked each image. While rating the images, fMRI images were taken of each participant's brains. Results from this study showed that participants reported liking the sexualized images significantly less than the domestic or control pictures, and the domestic

pictures more but not significantly more than control images. Based off of the baseline survey results compared to the rating results, participants with more traditional attitudes toward gender reported more positive attitudes toward ads featuring domestic women than participants with more progressive attitudes. The fMRI imaging measured activity in the amygdala and ventral striatum while viewing the images and showed greater activity when shown sexualized ads than any other group of images. These results show that although participants may have reported liking sexualized ads less, the areas of their brains that respond to emotional arousal and positive rewards were more active when viewing sexualized ads than other types of ads or control images (Vezech et al., 2017). This suggests that the participants may not have been completely honest, which could be due in part to stereotype threat, as participants may have wanted to keep in line with traditional gender roles and stereotypes for fear of being perceived as different. Results from this study's fMRI imaging also showed that participants who were deemed more socially traditional from the baseline survey showed greater ventral striatum activity when shown sexualized images than those seen as less traditional from the self-report survey. This could be an overcompensation of the participants to want to appear in line with stereotypes and may be afraid to be seen as breaking gender norms (Vezech et al., 2017).

As previously mentioned, the sexualization, victimization, and combination of both in regard to women in advertising has been increasing over time. This can lead to social consequences such as consumers becoming unconsciously desensitized to female objectification, sexualization, victimization, and in turn violence against women and sexism. Past research notes that exposure to sexually objectified women in the media and advertisements leads men to be more accepting of rape myths, violence, and gender role stereotypes (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008).

Exposure to ads that heavily sexualize and objectify women can have adverse effects on young women and girls' mental and physical health. Increased media literacy education for young children could be a way to help combat negative effects of these ads on society, especially for young women and girls, most notably with regard to eating disorders (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). Overly sexualized and heavily edited photos, ads, and depictions of women in the media also tend to over-accentuate stereotypical beauty ideals. This includes things like lighter skin, youth, thinness, blonde hair, and more (Want, 2009). This leads to lack of diversity in advertising as well as the objectification of women as photos are edited to make subjects appear more ideal by stereotypical beauty standards. The high saturation of these images into daily life can have negative impacts on female consumers as they compare themselves physically to the women in these images. This can lead to things like lower self-esteem, body image issues, and body and self-dissatisfaction (Want, 2009). A 2009 study conducted by Want found that portrayals of women in advertising had a significant influence on female participants' personal satisfaction with their weight and bodies.

Another common strategy included in advertising is the use of humor to portray sexist or stereotypical media. Sexist humor is often employed in advertisements as a way to justify the use of something sexist in nature. If it is called out for being offensive, there is a built-in defense of it being "just a joke." Through humor, there are many defensive strategies used to justify these examples of ambivalent sexism. A 2015 study conducted by Peters and Oswald found that when shown an explicitly sexist advertisement, only 7% of participants expressed dislike or disapproval of the ad. Researchers posited that in addition to the defense of "just a joke," some participants may have been worried about social consequences if they were to speak out against the ad. When discussing cavalier humor, one may be especially cautious to criticize a work for

fear of being seen as not being able to take the joke (Peters & Oswald, 2015). This leads to increased salience of the sexist media and greater overall acceptance, or at least ambivalence. This is also a way for advertisers and other media sources to promote sexism or stereotypes without fear of repercussion or backlash, thereby furthering a society rooted in gender bias and stereotypes (Peters & Oswald, 2015).

Fake News and the Media

Fake news is difficult to define, and has different definitions, meanings, and connotations depending on who is defining the term. Alba-Juez and Mackenzie (2019) defined fake news as an altered version of the truth that is emotionally based, meaning emotion plays a large part in the creation and intensity of fake news. Fake news is also characterized by a disregard for the actual truth, meaning there is purpose behind its falsehood. These researchers also draw a line between news that is false but did not aim to be, and media that purposefully holds no regard for the truth (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2019). Because of the immersion of news into casual outlets like social media, for consumers the line between accidental and intentional fake news has become more and more blurred over time. Fake news has proliferated unchecked as technology has grown, advanced, become more popular, and been more widely used. A single definition of fake news has been essentially impossible to nail down, as the main contributor to today's meaning, Donald Trump, continually changes it himself (Johnson, 2018).

While the 2016 Clinton v Trump US presidential race is usually heralded as the beginning of the most recent wave of fake news, it has existed well before this decade, let alone this century (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2019). The history of fake news has traveled from newspapers in the 1890s to pop culture and satire use to what it is today, which is heavily associated with the use of propaganda and politics (Higdon, 2020). While fake news is not a

modern invention, its increased prevalence and normalcy in today's vernacular and society are what bring pause to a consumer's relationship with the media. With the rise of virtual news as the internet has boomed in recent years, news and media is more accessible than ever.

While fake news may not have an uncontested, universal definition, pieces of fake news have many shared characteristics. A main characteristic of fake news is the manipulation of emotions of the audience, the emotion of the news itself, and the cultural atmosphere (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2019). Fake news stories are often very sensational in nature and tend to have a large shock value on consumers. A large shock value can increase the speed at which fake news stories travel and their subsequent salience into consumers' news feeds (Van der Linden et al., 2020). Fake news also usually plays into consumers' usage of the confirmation bias. Consumers may be unconsciously inclined to believe fake news if it aligns with or is similar to what they already think (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2019). In addition to the confirmation bias, fake news can also create a sort of echo chamber for consumers. Due to the nature of social media and the choice to "follow," "block," and be exposed to only certain accounts and viewpoints, echo chambers and filter bubbles can emerge when consumers' news feeds only promote certain opinions and perspectives. In turn, consumers will be more inclined to believe this news, even if it is fake, because of the intersection of confirmation bias and an echo chamber (Asr & Taboada, 2019).

Not all fake news is completely made up; in some cases, it is a distortion of some root of actual truth. Another key attribute of fake news is in how it is produced. While truthful news has gone through a process of research, fact-checking, and verification, fake news has not been through this and thus while it may look like "news," it has not gone through the same rigorous editing process. Fake news is also characterized by the author or source not only giving out

knowingly false information but manipulating it and using emotion and persuasion tactics to make it as influential as possible (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2019).

In order to defend fake news, the media uses different tactics to seem more credible to consumers and to gain more support for whatever their viewpoint may be. This often includes the use of various types of fallacies. For example, the ad verecundiam fallacy can be used to support fake news by introducing a so-called “expert” that does not actually have proper experience or credentials to be discussing the topic. “Experts” in the media are used as authority figures on the topic being discussed and are meant to be seen as all-knowing and correct. These false experts are used to dispute those who challenge or disagree with what is being said, as a decorative figurehead. The ad populum fallacy is also used often by the media, in which widespread support for an idea, person, or viewpoint is used to defend it as true or correct. This usage of the bandwagon incorrectly translates support as verification and draws upon the power of social influence to gain support. Confirmation bias of consumers is also counted on by perpetrators of fake news. As discussed earlier, consumers are more inclined to believe news stories and other media that is similar to beliefs they already hold, even if it is a piece of fake news (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2019). These and more media techniques are used to convey messages and influence consumers.

Likes, retweets, and shares on social media sites have become the deciders of what is popular. Algorithms on social media and networking sites use these factors to automatically decide what is put at the top of user’s feeds and thus what is pushed out to more and more consumers. Consumers also often relate what is popular with what is true, thinking that if something has been seen and shared by many people it must have at least some ring of truthfulness to it (Johnson, 2018). Therefore, more popular articles, posts, or other media may be

seen as more valid because it has captivated such a wide audience. Online fake news stories are especially salient and travel fast, whether it be because of shock value or because they are labeled as “fake news” which then intrigues consumers more (Van der Linden et al., 2020). Because of this, there is a continual cycle that results in fake news articles being seen by wide audiences, and in turn also being seen as more credible and truthful by consumers because of its popularity.

One disadvantage of extreme internet growth is misinformation. Consumers cannot be sure that the information they are receiving is 100% factual, a journalist or creator’s opinion, or what a creator incorrectly thinks is a fact that miseducates consumers. There is no way to police all information on the internet, so harmful or fake information finds a fertile breeding ground on the internet (Leiblum, 2001).

Fake news is especially relevant in America, with a reported 42% of Americans agreeing that news outlets in the US report fake news to consumers in order to further an agenda (Van der Linden et al., 2020). This is concerning in a democracy particularly, as media is heavily counted on by both consumers and politicians to provide unbiased and unpartisan news and information. If consumers are reading, watching, and being exposed to tainted and biased news, it poisons the root of democracy.

The “fake news effect,” as discussed in the 2020 study by Van der Linden et al., is a psychological bias effect that is used by one group to discredit and demean news and media from sources associated with those from opposing viewpoints. In this sense, the fake news effect is very partisan, whether the news is about politics or not.

One free association study aimed to gain an understanding of people’s knee-jerk, underlying feelings and reactions toward fake news. Researchers asked a sample of 1000

participants to say the first thing that came to mind when prompted with the term “fake news.” Results were divided into two categories: “association,” in which participants associated the term with another concept, or “descriptive,” in which participants essentially defined the term. Then, responses were further categorized into similar groups within the two main groups: association was divided into negative affect, media, or politics while descriptive was divided into false information or agenda. Participants were also asked to rate how much they believe in well-known conspiracy theories, how much they trust mainstream media, and their political leanings and ideologies. Results showed support for the fake news effect in both directions of the political spectrum. Participants identifying as liberals on the pre-test baseline survey associated the term fake news more with politics while conservatives associated it more with the media. Researchers also found significant results that indicated a negative correlational relationship between the belief that mainstream media promotes fake news and the conspiracy theory that Russia had a hand in influencing the 2016 US Presidential election. Finally, results indicated a significant relationship between participants that reported voting for Trump in 2016 and those that associated mainstream media with promoting fake news. Participants that voted for Trump were 187% more likely to associate media with fake news (Van der Linden et al., 2020). This study shows support for the fake news effect in both directions, meaning members of both political parties, republican and democrat, are privy to bias in evaluating and trusting certain media and news.

Politics

Fake news as it is used in most cases today has deep roots in politics, as the 2016 US presidential election brought the term to the forefront of the political aisle. However, not all fake news has to be political in nature, and present-day fake news extends beyond the realm of

politics and into other subjects and topics outside of political news, such as health care and celebrity gossip (Asr & Taboada, 2019). During Donald Trump's first year in office, he used the term "fake news" more than 400 times (Higdon, 2020). His radicalization and politicization of the term has gained much traction over time. Fake news in politics is used as a political weapon to serve oneself and preserve one's image. The biggest motivators for media producers to use fake news are for political gain and monetary gain (Asr & Taboada, 2019).

Politics and fake news also intersect with gender in various ways. Female politicians and women who work in the field are faced with many obstacles stemming mainly from gender. Journalists tend to interpret female politician's behavior more so than their male counterparts. Journalists also tend to look at female politicians negatively when they express behaviors that are typically associated with men and masculinity, such as aggression or toughness. Women in politics are criticized for their actions as well as their personalities and behaviors. A common portrayal of female politicians is as weak or feeble, and actual action taken by these female politicians is seen as less important because of their gender. Women in politics are treated as equal to males in the field when the subject is negative topics, like selfishness. Also, women are seen as rising to power not because of talent but because of trickery and falsehoods (Coman & Scarlet, 2014).

Another common media trope when portraying female politicians is when they are seen as newsworthy mainly when their actions can be taken in negative light, especially in the form of breaking a gender stereotype. Another route of media criticism for female politicians is in the way they look. If they are conventionally attractive by the media's beauty standards, they are compared to female actresses, models, and celebrities (Coman & Scarlet, 2014). This demeans women in politics by focusing on physical attributes instead of their actual work, and shapes

consumers' views of women in power positions. It trivializes the work female politicians do by disregarding their actions and focusing on materialistic aspects of them.

Media portrayals of women in politics focus more on their personality and charm because the media see it as the only way a woman can enter into the political or professional arena. Another criticism of female politicians comes in the roles they play. If a female politician or professional is a mother or wife, the media might speculate on if she has enough time to fill both domestic and public service roles, as the home and family are seen more so as women's duties. It is often assumed that a woman cannot perfectly fill both roles and is rarely applied to men in the workforce. Qualities like sensitivity and kindness are often used against women, as the media speculate that those are hard to find in the female politician. Women that excel in professional roles and are often written about as having their accomplishments and positive qualities come from their personalities, not their work or intelligence (Coman & Scarlat, 2014).

These tendencies could be seen during the 2008 US presidential primary as Hilary Clinton, a woman, was running for the Democratic nomination. Researchers have studied TV news interviews in which claims of sexism against Clinton during the race were discussed. Researchers noted a difference in how the interviews were conducted based mainly on timing: from when Clinton was seen as winning the race to when she was seen as losing, a several month time difference. In the interviews studied, it was mainly male hosts interviewing usually multiple female guests. Researchers noted that when discussing the claims of sexism against Clinton when she was seen as winning, the male hosts tended to be very skeptical of the claims, antagonistic towards their female guests, and use tactics like frequent interruption and incorrectly rewording the guest's statements or speaking for them. In interviews after Clinton was seen as losing the race, which she ended up doing, the hosts were more open to the claims of sexism and

willing to accept that they were real. These interviewers interrupted their female guests less and made less challenges to the claims of sexism being discussed (Romaniuk, 2015). This exemplifies some of the bias seen in the media when discussing women in politics. In this example, the media frame used essentially said that until women are losing or being beaten, sexism cannot apply to the situation.

Factors Related to Sexism

Sexist attitudes and negative attitudes related to women and women's issues have been associated with several factors examined in this study. These include right wing authoritarianism (RWA) (Austin & Jackson, 2019; Christopher & Mull, 2006; Patev et al., 2019; Sibley et al., 2007), political and religious ideology (Austin & Jackson, 2019; Van Assche et al., 2019), and sociodemographic variables of race, age, social class, and biological sex (Austin & Jackson, 2019; Bracic et al, 2019; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Many of these factors interact with each other in relation to sexist attitudes and negative attitudes toward women. Interestingly, these are the same factors that previous research has found influences increased susceptibility to believing fake news (Wright et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2020).

While conservatism has a long-standing connection with RWA (Eckhardt, 1991; Federico et al., 2011), RWA began to increase substantially in the U.S. with the emergence of the Tea Party movement in 2009 and then the 2016 presidential election (Havercroft & Murphy, 2018). RWA includes ideals related to a resistance to change and valuing traditional social norms and values (i.e., conservatism), authoritarian submission, and authoritarian aggression (Altemeyer, 1981; 1998; Duckitt, 2001; Jost et al., 2003; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008; Weber & Federico, 2007). Previous research has found a relationship between higher levels of RWA and sexism, negative

attitudes toward women, and negative views related to women's issues (Austin & Jackson, 2019; Christopher & Mull, 2006; Patev et al., 2019; Sibley et al., 2007).

Several previous studies have reported a direct connection between benevolent sexism and hostile sexism with increased levels of RWA (Austin & Jackson, 2019; Christopher & Mull, 2006; Sibley et al., 2007). Austin and Jackson (2019) also found that hostile sexism could be predicted by higher levels of conservatism. Additionally, Patev and colleagues (2019) found that negative attitudes related to women's issues, specifically abortion, as well as sexism was associated with increased levels of RWA. Considering the connection between conservatism, RWA, political ideology, and social class, Bracic and colleagues (2019) found that White male conservatives from lower social class backgrounds held higher levels of sexism compared to other males (other race, other political ideology). Additionally, Van Assche and colleagues (2019) found that sexism is associated with religiosity levels and that the relationship can likely be explained based on people's perspective on the social world based on religious teachings.

The Current Study

This study aimed to address the existence of connections between consumer attitudes towards women and the representation of women in fake and real media. It is hypothesized that the presence of fake news will have a significant impact on participants' ratings of sexism, and therefore, participants that are exposed to fake news materials are hypothesized to report higher levels of both old-fashioned and modern sexism than participants that are not. This study also aimed to take a look at how many different demographical aspects of consumers can affect their attitudes towards women and media. It is hypothesized that participants with higher levels of sociodemographic factors such as RWA and levels of religious involvement will have higher levels of both types of sexism.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

Participants and Procedures

Data for the current study was collected in Qualtrics, after receiving IRB approval (see Appendix A). The current study is part of a larger study examining the impact of fake news on consumers views and attitudes regarding underrepresented groups in the United States. The subset examined in the current study focuses on consumer attitudes regarding women and sexism. Participants in the current study included 70 male adults, age 18-28 years ($M = 20.02$, $SD = 2.59$). Participants were students from the University of Central Florida who were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions. Participants varied in racial identities with the majority being White (approximately 54.3%), and non-White participants making up the remaining amount (approximately 45.7%).

Participants in the first condition were exposed to three consecutive real news clips containing news involving women. The first clip is from Bloomberg Politics and discusses Gretchen Carlson suing FOX News' CEO (01:59 minutes), the second clip is from CBS News and discusses a male wrestler who refused to compete against a girl (04:36 minutes), and the third clip is from Sky News and discusses sexism in the tech industry (02:07 minutes). Participants in condition two were exposed to three consecutive fake news clips containing news involving women. The first clip is from PragerU and falsely claims that feminism does not exist (05:09 minutes), the second clip is from The Telegraph and falsely claims that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer (0:43 seconds), and the third clip is from ABC News and falsely claims that Roe versus Wade was passed because Norma McCorvey lied about being raped (01:22 minutes). Participants in the third condition were not exposed to any news media involving women.

After participants viewed the news clips, if applicable to their experimental condition, participants then completed an online questionnaire. Participants answered questions related to modern and old-fashioned sexism, followed by demographic questions, right-wing authoritarianism, and religious involvement. It took participants approximately 45 minutes to complete the online study.

Measures

Sexism

Participants answered a total of thirteen questions, derived from Swim and colleagues (1995), to assess their level of old-fashioned and modern sexism. Example items include “Women are generally not as smart as men” and “Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States.” All items are scored on a 4-point Likert scale with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 4 being *strongly agree*. Alpha reliability for old-fashioned sexism was .61 in the current study. Modern sexism has an alpha reliability of .82. The scale can be found in Appendix B.

Demographics

Participants answered a total of 8 questions regarding their age, racial background, biological sex, political preference. Participants were also asked to indicate their current relationship status and level of seriousness if applicable. An additional 9 items were included to assess participants social class (Rubin & Wright, 2017). For social class, the items were first converted to z scores and then averaged to obtain the social class measure that was used in analysis. Alpha reliability for social class was .69 in the current study. The complete list of items can be found in Appendix C.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism

Participants answered a total of 10 items, derived from Rattazzi and colleagues (2007), to assess their level of right-wing authoritarianism. Example items include “What our country needs most is disciplined citizens, following national leaders in unity” and “What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil and take us back to our true path.” All items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 5 being *strongly agree*. Alpha reliability for this scale was .91 in the current study. The scale can be found in Appendix D.

Religious Involvement

Participants answered a total of 5 questions, derived from Koeing and Bussing (2010), to determine participants level of religious involvement. Example items include “How often do you attend church or other religious meetings” and “In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine.” Alpha reliability for this scale was .90 in the current study. The complete list of items can be found in Appendix E.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Plan for Analysis

Preliminary analyses to assess the reliability of scales, distributional characteristics, and the extent of missing data was first conducted. Analyses relevant to the hypotheses of the study included: (1) correlational analysis of all study variables, (2) an analysis of variance to determine if there are differences in level of sexism based on experimental condition, and (3) a linear regression analysis to determine how sociodemographic items, right wing authoritarianism (RWA), and religious involvement relate to participants level of sexism and the impact of priming on participants' reported sexism.

Intercorrelation of Study Variables

Intercorrelation of study and demographic variables was conducted. Sociodemographic variables included race, religious involvement, and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA). Results indicated a negative correlation between levels of modern sexism ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.62$) and RWA ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 0.89$; $r(67) = -0.53$, $p < .01$). Levels of modern sexism were also negatively correlated with participants being White (coded where 1 = White and 0 = non-White due to low participant numbers) ($M = 0.54$, $SD = 0.50$; $r(67) = -0.25$, $p < .05$).

There was a negative correlation found between levels of old-fashioned sexism ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.47$) and religious involvement ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.29$; $r(68) = -0.36$, $p < .01$). There was also a negative correlation found between old-fashioned sexism and RWA ($r(68) = -0.43$, $p < .01$). Finally, old-fashioned sexism levels were positively correlated with participants reporting their race as White ($r(68) = 0.25$, $p < .05$).

There was also a positive correlation between levels of modern and old-fashioned sexism ($r(67) = 0.37$, $p < .01$). This means that higher levels of modern sexism were connected with

higher levels of old-fashioned sexism, and vice versa. Correlational results can be found in Appendix F in Tables 1 and 2.

Sexism and Experimental Condition

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted for each type of sexism, modern and old fashioned, to determine if there are any significant differences in level of sexism based on experimental condition. As well as being totaled, levels of modern sexism was also divided into three subscales: denial of continuing discrimination against women, antagonism towards women's demands, and resentment about special favors to women. For total levels of modern sexism, results indicated no significant difference ($F(2, 66) = 0.03, n.s.$) between experimental conditions for the participant group watching real news ($M = 2.80, SD = 0.49$), the group watching fake news ($M = 2.79, SD = 0.71$), and the control group that was not exposed to any news media ($M = 2.79, SD = 0.67$).

ANOVA results for the three subscales of modern sexism were also assessed. Results for levels of denial of continued sexism showed no significant differences ($F(2, 66) = 0.07, n.s.$) between the participants group watching real news ($M = 2.82, SD = 0.52$), the group watching fake news ($M = 2.84, SD = 0.70$), and the control group that was not exposed to any news media ($M = 2.77, SD = 0.72$). Results for levels of antagonism towards women's demands showed no significant differences ($F(2, 67) = 1.26, n.s.$) between the participants group watching real news ($M = 3.14, SD = 0.74$), the group watching fake news ($M = 2.85, SD = 0.98$), and the control group that was not exposed to any news media ($M = 2.76, SD = 0.82$). Results for levels of resentment about special favors to women showed no significant differences ($F(2, 67) = 2.57, n.s.$) between the participants group watching real news ($M = 2.24, SD = 0.83$), the group

watching fake news ($M = 2.42, SD = 1.02$), and the control group that was not exposed to any news media ($M = 2.86, SD = 0.96$).

Results for levels of old-fashioned sexism showed no significant differences ($F(2, 67) = 1.44, n.s.$) between the participants group watching real news ($M = 3.42, SD = 0.49$), the group watching fake news ($M = 3.58, SD = 0.33$), and the control group that was not exposed to any news media ($M = 3.36, SD = 0.56$). All ANOVA results can be found in Appendix F in Tables 3 through 7.

Predicting Sexism

Linear regression analyses were conducted to determine what sociodemographic factors and fake news conditions were associated with modern and old-fashioned sexism levels. The overall model was significant for modern sexism ($F(4, 68) = 6.66, p < .01, R^2 = .29$). RWA ($t(4, 68) = .08$) was found to be significant in relation to modern sexism. Old fashioned sexism was also found to be significant in this model ($F(4, 69) = 6.47, p < .05, R^2 = .29$). RWA ($t(4, 69) = -.38$) and the fake news condition ($t(4, 69) = -.10$) were both found to be significant in relation to old fashioned sexism. Table results for the linear regression analyses can be found in Appendix F in Tables 8 and 9.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The current study was part of a larger study examining the impact of fake news on consumers views and attitudes regarding underrepresented groups in the United States. The subset examined in the current study focused on consumer attitudes regarding women and sexism. It was hypothesized that the presence of fake news would have a significant impact on participants' ratings of sexism, and therefore, participants that were exposed to fake news materials were expected to report higher levels of both old-fashioned and modern sexism than participants that were not. This study also aimed to examine how sociodemographic variables, along with RWA, political, and religiosity variables were associated with participants attitudes toward women.

The hypothesis that the presence of fake news would have a significant impact on participants' ratings of sexism, and therefore, participants that were exposed to fake news materials would report higher levels of both old-fashioned and modern sexism was not supported by the current data. Results from the current study indicated no significant difference between participants' fake news conditions in relation to old fashioned sexism, modern sexism, and the three subscales of modern sexism. Due to the influential nature of fake news media as well as the use of emotion, it has a large possibility to act persuasively (Alba-Juez & Mackenzie, 2019). As Pingree et al. (1976) posited, when media depictions of women are inherently sexist or stereotypical, viewers are more likely to develop more sexist and/or stereotypic views about women. This concept was used in the formation of the hypothesis; however, it stands in contradiction to the results from this study. While this is not to say that fake news as a whole has no significant effect on sexist attitude towards women, it definitely raises more questions regarding the true depth of the impact of fake news.

This study also aimed to examine how sociodemographic variables, along with RWA and political and religiosity variables were associated with participants' attitudes toward women. Results indicated a wide variety of implications from this study. Correlational results indicated negative correlations between levels of modern sexism and both RWA and participants reporting their race as White. Essentially, this meant that higher levels of modern sexism were related with lower levels of RWA as well as participants choosing a race option other than White. These results do not support the study's hypothesis that participants with higher levels of these factors would also in turn have higher levels of both modern and old-fashioned sexism. This prediction was based off of previous research that showed a relationship between these factors (RWA, religiosity, etc.) and increased susceptibility to believing a fake news story (Wright et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2020). The results of this study do not support conclusions made by previous researchers on similar topics, which have shown a relationship between higher levels of RWA and higher levels of various types of sexist attitudes towards women, such as negative attitudes towards women's issues, a subset of the modern sexism scale (Austin & Jackson, 2019; Christopher & Mull, 2006; Patev et al., 2019; Sibley et al., 2007).

Correlational results also indicated negative correlations between old-fashioned sexism and religious involvement, RWA, and participants reporting their race as White. This meant that higher levels of old-fashioned sexism were related with less serious religious involvement, lower RWA levels, and participants reporting their race as White. Given that valuing traditional social norms is an ideal related to RWA, it was predicted that this relationship would extend to traditional gender roles, which is closely related to old-fashioned sexism (Altemeyer, 1981). The results did not, however, confirm this hypothesis. The current study's results are also in contradiction to findings from Austin and Jackson (2019) that higher levels of conservatism

(ideals valuing traditional social norms) could predict hostile sexism. Additionally, the results of the current study regarding religious involvement were not consistent with previous research that found a relationship between sexism and higher levels of religiosity (religious involvement) (Van Assche et al., 2019).

These results showed an interesting trend in the relationship between sexism and different sociodemographic factors. While fake news did not have a significant impact on participants' levels of sexism in this study, it is possible that in combination with other sociodemographic factors (RWA, religious involvement, etc.), fake news may have a strengthening effect on attitudes or feelings already present in participants. The correlational relationships between participants' race, RWA, and religious involvement and their levels of various types of sexism indicates that various social factors could have an important impact on participant's susceptibility to fake news media, as well as predisposition to sexist attitudes towards women. More research on these relationships is needed, such as using the specific religious group or religion participants belong to as another social factor.

Linear regression analyses indicated significant relationships between modern sexism and RWA, as well as between old fashioned sexism and both RWA and experimental condition. Additionally, linear regression analyses indicated some significance between fake news condition and sexism. This research is supported by previous studies that have shown relationships between both RWA and susceptibility to believing fake news, and RWA and higher levels of sexism (Wright et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2020). Previous research has also found a relationship between higher levels of RWA and sexism, negative attitudes toward women, and negative views related to women's issues (Austin & Jackson, 2019; Christopher & Mull, 2006; Patev et al., 2019; Sibley et al., 2007). While not proving the existence or absence of any

relationship between sexism and fake news, this finding does provide a basis for further research into the possibility of a relationship.

Limitations

This study was affected by various obstacles that acted as limitations for the study. This study was affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic, as it limited availability for in-person subject study as well as limiting possible participant exposure to the study. Therefore, small sample size was also a large limitation of this study, as more participants would be needed in order to make well-founded generalizations of results. Also, this study consisted only of students at the University of Central Florida (UCF), which also limits the randomization of the sample and therefore restricts generalization to other populations.

Another limitation can be found in the relative reliability of one of the measures used in this study. The alpha reliability for the questionnaire by Swim and colleagues (1995) measuring levels of old-fashioned sexism was .61, which is lower than the typical .70. The alpha reliability for the measure regarding modern sexism, however, was above the alpha reliability threshold. While .61 is not an extremely low alpha reliability, it warrants further investigation into the measure's reliability.

Appendix A: IRB Approval



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

April 2, 2020

Dear Chrysalis Wright:

On 3/31/2020, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	News content and views regarding SES, religion, race, women, and the LGBTQA population
Investigator:	Chrysalis Wright
IRB ID:	STUDY00001630
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB Wright 1630 HRP-254-FORM 3.31.2020 B.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • IRB Wright 1630 HRP-255 - FORM 3.31.2020 B.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Questionnaire, Category: Survey / Questionnaire; • Video Description, Category: Test Instruments;

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in are detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Due to current COVID-19 restrictions, in-person research is not permitted to begin until you receive further correspondence from the Office of Research stating that the restrictions have been lifted.

Sincerely,

Kamille C. Birkbeck

Kamille Birkbeck
Designated Reviewer

Appendix B: Sexism Scale

Modern & Old-Fashioned Sexism

Source: Swim, J. K., Aikin, K. J., Hall, W. S., & Hunter, B. A. (1995). Sexism and racism: Old-fashioned and modern prejudices. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 199-214.

*indicates reverse coding

Please rate how much you agree with the following statements using the following scale:

- a) strongly disagree
- b) somewhat disagree
- c) somewhat agree
- d) strongly agree

Old-Fashioned Sexism

1. Women are generally not as smart as men.*
2. I would be equally comfortable having a woman as a boss as a man.
3. It is more important to encourage boys than to encourage girls to participate in athletics.*
4. Women are just as capable of thinking logically as men.
5. When both parents are employed and their child gets sick at school, the school should call the mother rather than the father.*

Modern Sexism

Denial of Continuing discrimination

1. Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States. **
2. Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination.
3. It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television.*
4. On average, people in our society treat husbands and wives equally.*
5. Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.*

Antagonism toward women's demands

6. It is easy to understand the anger of women's groups in America."
7. It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities.

Resentment about special favors to women

8. Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences.*

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic Questionnaire

- 1) What is your current age?
- 2) Which of the following best describes your racial background?
 - a. Black or African-American
 - b. White
 - c. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - d. Asian or Pacific Islander
 - e. Hispanic
 - f. Other
- 3) What is your biological sex?
 - a. male
 - b. female
- 4) What year are you in college?
 - a. first-year
 - b. second-year
 - c. third-year
 - d. fourth-year
 - e. postgraduate
- 5) What is your current grade point average?
- 6) What is your biological parents' current marital status?
 - a. married to each other
 - b. divorced
 - c. divorced and one or both parents have remarried
 - d. never married
 - e. I do not know
- 7) What is your current relationship status?
 - a. not dating
 - b. casually dating
 - c. seriously dating
 - d. engaged
 - e. living with partner
 - f. married
- 8) The highest education level achieved by my father was/is:
 - No formal schooling
 - Primary school (Kindergarten to Year 6)
 - Secondary or high school (Years 7 to 10)
 - Senior secondary school (Years 11 & 12)
 - Technical and Further Education (TAFE)
 - University - undergraduate degree (Bachelor degree)

- University - postgraduate degree (Masters or PhD)
- Don't know

9) The highest education level achieved by my mother was/is:

- No formal schooling
- Primary school (Kindergarten to Year 6)
- Secondary or high school (Years 7 to 10)
- Senior secondary school (Years 11 & 12)
- Technical and Further Education (TAFE)
- University - undergraduate degree (Bachelor degree)
- University - postgraduate degree (Masters or PhD)
- Don't know

10) Please indicate how you think most people would rate your mother's main occupation in terms of its prestige and status.

- Extremely low status and prestige
- Very low
- Low
- Moderately below average
- Slightly below average
- Average
- Slightly above average
- Moderately above average
- High
- Very high
- Extremely high status and prestige
- Don't know

11) Please indicate how you think most people would rate your father's main occupation in terms of its prestige and status.

- Extremely low status and prestige
- Very low
- Low
- Moderately below average
- Slightly below average
- Average
- Slightly above average
- Moderately above average
- High
- Very high
- Extremely high status and prestige
- Don't know

12) My family income when I was a child was:

- Well below average

- Slightly below average
- Average
- Slightly above average
- Well above average
- Don't know

13) The number of bedrooms in the house that I lived in when I was 15 years old was:

- One
- Two
- Three
- Four
- Five
- Six
- Seven or more

14) My mother's social class was/is:

- Working-class
- Lower middle-class
- Middle-class
- Upper Middle-class
- Upper-class
- Don't know

15) My father's social class was/is:

- Working class
- Lower middle-class
- Middle-class
- Upper middle-class
- Upper class
- Don't know

16) My social class is:

- Working class
- Lower middle-class
- Middle-class
- Upper middle-class
- Upper class
- Don't know

17) What is your political preference?

- a) Republican
- b) Democrat
- c) Undecided

Appendix D: Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale

Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale

Source: Rattazzi, A., Bobbio, A., & Canova, L. (2007). A short version of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale. *Personality and Individual Differences, 43*, 1223-1234.

Please rate how much you agree with the following statements using the following scale:

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Somewhat disagree
- c. neither agree nor disagree
- d. Somewhat agree
- e. Strongly agree

- 1.) Our country desperately needs a mighty leader who will do what has to be done to destroy the radical new ways and sinfulness that are ruining us.
- 2.) The majority of those who criticize proper authorities in government and religion only create useless doubts in people's mind.
- 3.) The situation in our country is getting so serious, the strongest method would be justified if they eliminated the troublemakers and got us back to our true path.
- 4.) What our country really needs instead of more "civil rights" is a good stiff dose of law and order.
- 5.) Obedience and respect for authority are the most important values children should learn.
- 6.) The fact on crime, sexual immortality and the recent public disorders all show we have to crack down harder on deviant groups and troublemakers, if we are going to save our moral standards and preserve law and order.
- 7.) What our country needs most is disciplined citizens, following national leaders in unity.
- 8.) The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leader in power, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas.
- 9.) Once our government leaders give us the "go ahead", it will be the duty of every patriotic citizen to help stomp out the rot that is poisoning our country from within.
- 10.) What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path.

Appendix E: Religious Involvement

Religious Involvement Scale

Source: Koenig, H. G., & Bussing, A. (2010). The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL): A five-item measure for use in epidemiological studies. *Religions*, 1, 78-85. Doi: 10.3390/re/1010078

1. How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?
 - a) Never
 - b) Once a year or less
 - c) A few times a year
 - d) A few times a month
 - e) Once a week
 - f) More than once a week
2. How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or Bible study?
 - a) Rarely or never
 - b) A few times a month
 - c) Once a week
 - d) Two or more times a week
 - e) Daily
 - f) More than once a day
3. In my life, I experience the presence of the Divine (i.e., God)
 - a) Definitely not true
 - b) Tends not to be true
 - c) Unsure
 - d) Tends to be true
 - e) Definitely true of me
4. My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life.
 - a) Definitely not true
 - b) Tends not to be true
 - c) Unsure
 - d) Tends to be true
 - e) Definitely true of me
5. I try hard to marry my religion over into all other dealings in life.
 - a) Definitely not true
 - b) Tends not to be true
 - c) Unsure
 - d) Tends to be true
 - e) Definitely true of me

Appendix F: Tables

Table 1: *Intercorrelation of Study Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Group		.06	-.27*	.26*	-.04	-.03
2. Race	.06		.14	.01	-.18	.14
3. Political Preference	-.27*	.14		.12	.21	.22
4. Resentment	.26*	.01	.12		.21	.54**
5. Old Fashioned Sexism	-.04	-.18	.21	.21		.37**
6. Modern Sexism	-.03	.14	.22	.54**	.37**	
7. Denial	-.03	.17	.23	.41**	.38**	.95**
8. Antagonism	-.18	.11	.16	.24*	.23	.81**
9. RWA	-.06	-.08	-.24*	-.49**	-.43**	-.53**
10. Religious Involvement	-.19	.16	.03	-.14	-.36**	-.17
11. White	-.03	-.74**	-.20	-.04	.25*	-.25*

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

Table 2: *Intercorrelation of Study Variables Continued*

	7	8	9	10	11
1. Group	-.03	-.18	-.06	-.19	-.03
2. Race	.17	.11	-.08	.16	-.74**
3. Political Preference	.23	.16	-.24*	.03	-.20
4. Resentment	.41**	.24*	-.49**	-.14	-.04
5. Old Fashioned Sexism	.38**	.23	-.43**	-.36**	.25*
6. Modern Sexism	.95**	.81**	-.53**	-.17	-.25*
7. Denial		.65**	-.50**	-.17	-.25*
8. Antagonism	.65**		-.31*	-.08	-.25*
9. RWA	-.50**	-.31*		.29*	-.05
10. Religious Involvement	-.17	-.08	.29*		-.20
11. White	-.25*	-.25*	-.05	-.20	

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

Table 3: *Modern Sexism ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	.02	2	.01	.03	.97
Within Groups	25.90	66	.30		
Total	25.92	68			

Table 4: *Denial of continuing discrimination against women (MS subscale) ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	.06	2	.03	.07	.93
Within Groups	27.57	66	.42		
Total	27.63	68			

Table 5: *Antagonism towards women's demands (MS subscale) ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	1.83	2	.92	1.26	.29
Within Groups	48.81	67	.73		
Total	50.64	69			

Table 6: *Resentment about special favors to women (MS subscale) ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	4.52	2	2.26	2.57	.08
Within Groups	58.97	67	.88		
Total	63.49	69			

Table 7: *Old-Fashioned Sexism ANOVA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	.62	2	.31	1.44	.24
Within Groups	14.45	67	.22		
Total	15.07	69			

Table 8: Regression Coefficients Results for Modern Sexism

	Significance	Beta
RWA	.00**	-.50
Religious Involvement	.60	-.06
Race	.27	.12
Fake News Condition	.48	-.08
R^2	.29	
F	6.66	

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

Table 9: Regression Coefficients Results for Old-Fashioned Sexism

	Significance	Beta
RWA	.00**	-.38**
Religious Involvement	.04*	-.24*
Race	.13	.17
Fake News Condition	.37	-.10
R^2	.29	
F	6.47	

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

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