

Sexism and Perceived Gender Diversity: Do Sexist Attitudes Predict How Many Subgroups We See in Women and Men?

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INTRODUCTION

People commonly categorize gender groups into familiar subgroups (e.g., "Mothers," "Asian"; **Fig. 1**) (Eckes, 2002; Bye et al., 2022). But what are these subgroups - and what does it mean to perceive more or fewer subgroups for men and women?

Two views offer competing hypotheses:

- **Individuation:** More subgroups reflect a nuanced, less stereotyped view of gender (Richards & Hewstone, 2001).
- **Stereotype Amplification:** More subgroups, especially for women, may signal stereotype-driven perceptions (Fiske, 1998; Cadinu et al., 2013). In contrast, men may be seen as more uniform and the societal "default" (Cheryan & Markus, 2020).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study examined how people mentally structure gender groups and how this relates to sexist attitudes:

- What subgroups do people commonly associate with men and women?
- Do sexist attitudes predict more or fewer perceived subgroups?
- Do the different types of sexism show distinct patterns?
- Is this shaped by the perceiver's or target's gender?

METHODOLOGY

Participants: 467 U.S. adults (235 men: $M_{age} = 38.70$, $SD = 12.73$; 232 women: $M_{age} = 38.22$, $SD = 13.32$).

Design & Procedure: In a between-subjects design, participants listed as many distinct subgroups as they could for either men or women in U.S. society.

Measures:

- *Ambivalent Sexism Inventory* (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 2001) - Sexist attitudes toward women.
- *Ambivalence Toward Men Inventory* (AMI; Glick et al., 2004) - Sexist attitudes toward men.

Dependent Variable: Number of subgroups listed.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Findings support the *individuation hypothesis*: Higher sexism predicted fewer perceived subgroups, suggesting more homogenized gender views. Lower sexism was linked to more nuanced gender distinctions.

This pattern aligns with prior work linking sexism to rigid gender schemas (Bareket & Fiske, 2023), and may reflect differences in how gender is cognitively represented.

Hostile sexism toward women and benevolence toward men showed the strongest (albeit small) associations with a more homogenized view of gender.

Only the combined sexism score predicted reduced subgroup listing; ASI and AMI alone did not-possibly due to limited power. A larger replication is planned.

COMMON SUBGROUPS IDENTIFIED



FIG.1: Common Gender Subgroups Identified by Participants

RESULTS

Higher sexism scores predicted fewer listed subgroups ($\beta = -0.12$, $p = .008$), suggesting that participants with stronger sexist attitudes perceived gender groups in more homogenized terms.

A full model including perceiver's and target's gender (see regression equation below) suggested this effect may be strongest among women evaluating women, though the three-way interaction was not significant ($\beta = -0.06$, $p = .494$; **Fig. 2**).

Among the four sexism types, hostile sexism toward women and benevolence toward men showed small, negative associations with the number of groups listed (**Fig. 3**).

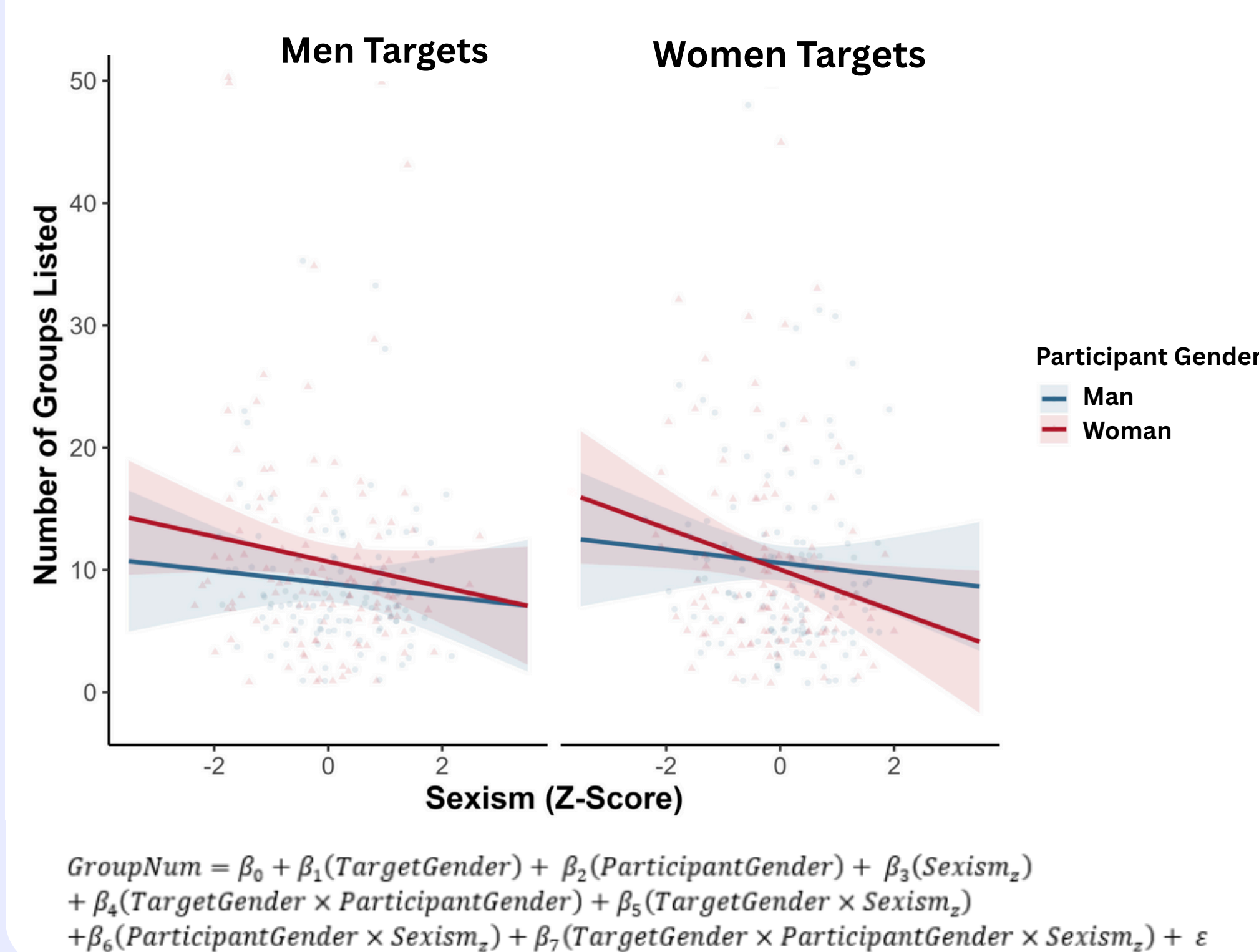


FIG. 2: Predicted Number of Groups by Sexism, Target Gender, and Participant Gender.

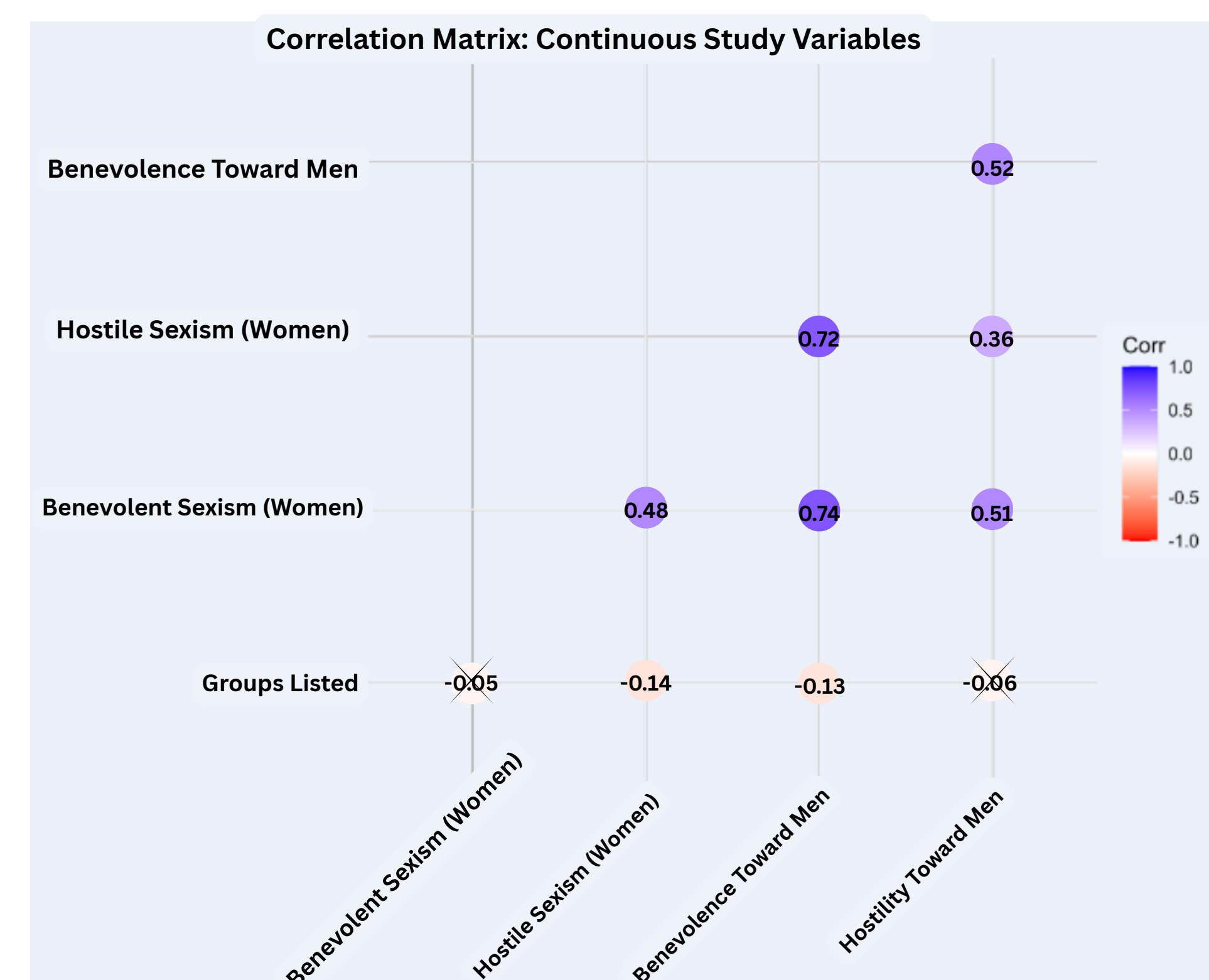


FIG. 3: Correlation Matrix: Sexism Subtypes and Number of Groups Listed

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