

From Sex to Gender: A University Intervention to Reduce Sexism in Argentina, Spain, and El
Salvador

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Abstract

We present an intervention to reduce gender prejudice in future professionals of social sciences in three samples from Argentina (N = 28), Spain (N = 83) and El Salvador (N = 67), with slight differences across countries. The program was based on scientific research on sexism and gender-based power aimed at: a) increasing awareness of gender inequalities; b) reducing sexism in men and women; c) providing participants with resources to implement social interventions. First the intervention is described, and then empirical evidence of its efficacy is provided. Results showed a reduction of benevolent sexism (BS), hostile sexism (HS), and essentialist views, and higher support for collective actions in Argentina (Study 1). HS and system-justifying beliefs were reduced and support for collective action increased in Spain (Study 2). In El Salvador, HS, BS (marginally), system-justifying and homophobic beliefs were reduced (Study 3). Implications for interventions and policy making are discussed.

From Sex to Gender: A University Intervention to Reduce Sexism in Argentina, Spain, and El Salvador

Gender prejudice (and violence as its most extreme form) is a worldwide phenomenon (WHO, 2002). From a socio-psychological perspective there has been much research on perceptions of inequity (e.g., Shields, Zawadzki, & Johnson, 2011), but not so many on interventions to reduce sexism with remarkable exceptions (Becker & Swim, 2011, 2012; Cundiff, Zawadzki, Danube, & Shields, in press; Kilmartin, Smith, Green, Heinzen, Kuchler, & Kolar, 2008; Zawadzki, Shields, Danube, & Swim, in press). The purpose of the present work is twofold: On the one hand, to describe an intervention to reduce gender prejudice, increase inequity awareness and train future professionals in psychology and educational sciences for intervening in this area; on the other hand, to provide empirical evidence of its efficacy to reduce sexism; sexual prejudice; essentialist, system-justifying beliefs; proclivity to violence against women; and to increase collective actions and pro-equity values. The framework that guided the development of this intervention program is based on social psychological research on sexism and power (Pratto & Walker, 2004; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Vescio, Schlenker, & Lenos, 2010). In three studies, we implemented the intervention program in three Spanish-speaking countries (Argentina, Spain and El Salvador), with slight differences across them. We advocate that even those who are charged professionally with promoting gender equity and equality can still be influenced by cultural ideologies of inequality, women as well as men. Therefore, interventions with future professionals are fundamental to efficiently address gender prejudice and inequity, as a way to make inroads in the conduct of social institutions, and extend the impact to society through their work.

Description of the Intervention Program

This training program was developed in response to a policy attempt to include information in how to prevent gender violence at the University level for future professionals

of social sciences (i.e., at the University of Granada, the International Cooperation and Development Centre –CICODE- entrusted us the elaboration of a first proposal in 2008). Nowadays, abundant literature causally links gender prejudice and sexist ideology with the perpetration and biased perception of violence against women (e.g., Buchanan, Settles, Hall, & O'Connor, in press; Flood & Pease, 2009). Therefore, implementing programs to reduce sexism constitutes a promising intervention approach to reducing violence against women.

The aims of the intervention were: a) reducing sexism in both men and women; b) increasing awareness of gender inequalities in everyday life; c) providing participants with useful resources to develop their own social interventions as future professionals. In all cases the training course was directed to students and professionals with an interest in social issues (psychologists, school teachers, social workers, etc.) and was included in the official academic programs of the three universities involved at the graduate or postgraduate level.

Pratto and Walker's (2004) power and gender model and ambivalent sexism theory (AST; Glick & Fiske, 1996) were used as the main frameworks to structure the contents of the course. Based on the idea that gender inequality is a characteristic feature of group-dominance societies (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004), Pratto and Walker's model proposes four bases of gendered power: strength, resources, social obligations, and ideology. The first of these bases refers to the use of strength or the threat that it could be used. Physical and sexual aggression, and sexual or emotional abuse not only harm women but also limit their power reducing their capacities to obtain economic resources (e.g., maintain a paid job), make decisions independently, or even confront family or work-related harmful social relations (Gibson-Davis, Magnuson, Gennetian, & Duncan, 2005). The second base refers to the control over resources, which is a typically male form of gaining power and dominating the intimate relationship (Holvoet, 2005). This base of gendered power is strongly related to social obligations. The gendered-division of work implies that men are the economic

providers (control over resources) of the family whereas women are care-takers mainly in charge of child rearing. According to Pratto and Walker, this apparently complementary distribution of roles is rarely complementary in terms of power, limiting women to the private (domestic) sphere. The last proposed base is ideology, which is defined as a culturally shared set of beliefs that serves to legitimize power asymmetries in the other three bases.

Specifically, sexism justifies the *status quo*, reducing resistance from the subordinate group (women).

Whereas ideology, control over resources and strength provide more power to men over women, social obligations reduce the power of women. Further, Pratto and Walker (2004) propose that when men (as the dominant group) perceive a loss of power in any of these bases, they might use aggression and violence as a way to regain it. The four bases hold dynamic relations among them, therefore, successful attempts to reduce gender power disadvantage need to consider a change in all of them (Megías & Montañés, 2012). Pro-equity social interventions have typically focused on only one of these aspects disregarding the others. For example, attempts have been made to reduce sexism (e.g., Becker & Swim, 2011, 2012). Meanwhile others programs have focused on preventing gender-based violence (Heise, 2011). Finally, several interventions have targeted gender-equity in terms of resources control (especially in the workplace; Cundiff et al., in press; Shields et al., 2011;), and a more balanced distributions of social obligations at home (domestic labour and childcare; Escot, Fernández-Cornejo, & Lafuente, 2012). In our program, we made an attempt to develop an integrative intervention based on these four pillars of gender-based power.

From these bases of power, ideology is arguably the main psychosocial factor that helps sustain the gender differences by making them appear as fair and logical (Jost & Kay, 2005). We focus on sexism as the main expression of this ideology that perpetuates gender inequalities in patriarchal societies. Ambivalent sexism theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996)

proposes that sexism integrates both negative (hostile sexism; HS) and presumably positive (benevolent sexism; BS) attitudes towards women. Whereas HS views women as inferior to men, BS considers women as pure and complementing men as far as they do not violate the traditional gender roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Given its positive and flattering affective tone, BS does not represent the prototype of easily recognizable sexist beliefs. Therefore, it tends to go unnoticed and is not usually identified as sexism by women themselves (Swim, Mallett, Russo-Devosa, & Stangor, 2005).

Although sexism is an ideology that legitimates women's subordination and men's superiority, paradoxically it is supported and maintained by both men and women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Also, gender-based power distribution is a dyadic process, implying the complicity of both genders (Pratto & Walker, 2004). For these reasons, attempts to actively reduce inequality should be directed not only to men but also to women. Mainly based on these theoretical approaches, we developed a first version of the program of intervention that was implemented at the Universidad de Granada (Spain) in May 2008. The efficacy of the program was evaluated informally through participants' comments about the course. Based on the feedback provided by participants on this first edition, an improved version of the program was developed which is presented in this paper.

Throughout the program, gender equality was promoted as a common goal for men and women, legally supported by institutions, in line with Allport's (1954) optimal conditions for intergroup contact (i.e., equal status, pleasant, cooperative, interdependent, and focused on superordinate goals). All concepts and data were contextualized to the country in which the training was held, and participants were motivated to provide specific examples and topics for discussion related to their own personal experience of gender identity in intersection with their other social identities (Shields, 2008). This pedagogical approach follows the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) in which people are more likely to change when they

see the issue as personally relevant (Petty & Cacciopo, 1984). Also, people are more likely to change when they believe they have persuaded themselves rather than being “talked into it” (Aronson, 1999). The program followed a workshop methodology, in which theoretical explanations were combined with small-group work and large-group debates. The whole seminar was built on interactive discussions, intertwined with short lectures on each one of the topics discussed, and practical assignments. It lasted approximately 20 hours structured in five or six sessions and, with small variations between countries (see below), included the following contents:

Session 1. Gender as a social construction: understanding the causes of inequality. We started by defining “sex” as implying biological mechanisms and “gender” as referring to those characteristics and traits socioculturally considered appropriate to males and females (Unger, 1979). The main aim of this session was to challenge essentialist beliefs (that the sexes are different for biological reasons) by contrast to social constructionist ones (that people are gendered through social learning and situational pressure). Secondly, participants were asked to discuss in small groups (three or four people) personal experiences of discrimination in four domains: workplace, romantic relationships, friends and family. Further, we presented evidence of gender discrimination and violence prevalence worldwide (e.g., WHO, 2002) in order to increase gender inequity awareness. Pratto and Walker’s (2004) power and gender model was used to delineate the general schedule of the intervention program. Additionally, in the third study, participants were asked to classify personal experiences of discrimination according to the four bases of power, and encouraged to pay attention to sexist episodes in their everyday lives in a daily diary while the program was carried out. This was motivated by recent research demonstrating that attention to daily encounters with sexism is an efficient way to reduce sexist beliefs (Becker & Swim, 2011).

Session 2. Resources and social obligations. This session addressed two of the four pillars of gender-based power (Pratto & Walker, 2004). To do so, extensive evidence was provided on men's control over resources in each country as well as worldwide (e.g., pay gap, feminization of poverty, gender division of labor, vertical/horizontal segregation), and women's greater social obligations (e.g., distribution of home tasks, time spent in activities according to social times, work overload, health consequences for women). The consequences of maternity for perceived competence of women at work were discussed) as an important barrier for women's career (e.g., Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2004).

Session 3. Ideology (I). Ambivalent sexism and the development of gender prejudice. This session introduced research on gender stereotypes and ambivalent sexism components, HS and BS (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and their consequences for gender inequality. There is evidence that providing information about the harming consequences of BS reduces the endorsement of it and increases the awareness of discrimination (Becker & Swim, 2012). Special emphasis was given to the development of sexism from childhood to adulthood (de Lemus, Moya, & Glick, 2010; Montañés, de Lemus, Megías, Moya, & Bohner, 2013), and ideas on how to prevent it.

Session 4. Ideology (II). New masculinities and homophobic attitudes. Social dominance theory proposes that often people believe that certain groups should be dominant over other groups (Sidanius, et al, 2004). It further posits that all forms of group-based discrimination (e.g., sexism, racism, sexual prejudice) rest on an individual's social dominance orientation (SDO) (Sidanius et al., 2004). A number of studies are available showing strong associations between sexual prejudice and sexism (e.g., Aosved, Long, & Voller, 2009; Davies, Gilston, & Rogers, 2012). For these reasons, this session focused on sexual prejudice (homophobic attitudes) and the risks and consequences of traditional masculinity (Vescio et al., 2010). The concept of "new masculinities" was introduced in the

first part of the session linked to empathy and the expression of emotions (Pescador, 2010). Recent studies have shown that empathy is an important factor for the effectiveness of sexism reduction interventions with men (Becker & Swim, 2011). In the second part of the session, we discussed the concept of heterosexism (Herek, 2000) and its influences on sexuality development from an early age (Hyde, & Jaffee, 2000). Taking an intersectional approach to gender and sexual identities, we discussed prejudice towards sexual diversity and the heterosexist assumptions that were often made in theory development and practise (Rose, 2000; see also Case, Hensley, & Anderson, in press).

Session 5. Strength. Violence against women constitutes the most extreme expression of gender inequality between men and women and has been related to gender-based power (Megías & Montañés, 2012) and ambivalent sexism (e.g., Flood & Pease, 2009). In this session gender-based violence was defined and discussed citing global and national figures. WHO (2002) warned that this violence was responsible for more deaths among women aged from 15 to 44 years than wars, traffic accidents or cancers. In Argentina in 2010, 260 women were murdered by men who, in 65% of cases, were their partners or ex-partners (La Casa del Encuentro, 2010). In El Salvador a total of 647 women were killed in 2011, 49% of them aged between 18 and 39 years (Ormusa, 2012). Meanwhile, in Spain from 2000 to 2012, 798 women were murdered by their partners or ex-partners (Ministerio de Sanidad, Política Social e Igualdad, 2012).

Additionally, in this session we focused on primary interventions (i.e., coeducational models) to prevent gender and sexual violence (Ryan & de Lemus, 2010), and secondary and tertiary interventions to provide victims of gender-based violence with psychological support (Dutton, 1992). In Study 3, two sessions (5 & 6) were devoted to this subject instead of one.

Evaluation of the program

We focus on providing evidence of the intervention's efficacy to reduce sexist ideologies and related social psychological constructs. The other two goals (increasing inequity awareness and training future trainers to develop interventions) are addressed in the intervention program (Session 1, 5 & 6), and their efficacy was more qualitatively assessed with different strategies (exams, self-reports, intervention project proposals), not included in this paper, mainly due to space limitations.

In all three studies we used the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Expósito, Moya, & Glick, 1998; Glick & Fiske, 1996) as a measure of gender prejudice. Further, it is known that sexism awareness is related to support for collective actions towards gender equality, both in men and women (Becker & Swim, 2011). One of the main results of intervention program should be to motivate people in engaging in actions to remove the circumstances that maintain gender inequity. So, we included collective action measures (e.g., Tausch et al., 2011).

We also considered whether our intervention was able to influence other ideological and individual factors proposed in the literature as related to gender prejudice. Essentialist beliefs were examined in Study 1 (Bastian & Haslam, 2006). Essentialism refer to attributes linked to social categories that are seen as "fixed, underlying, and identity- determining essences" (Bastian & Haslam, 2006, p. 229; e.g., assuming that personality traits are largely determined by biology). Previous studies have shown the link between essentialist beliefs and stereotypes (Bastian & Haslam, 2006), sexism, discrimination and acceptance of inequalities (Morton, Postmes, Haslam, & Hornsey, 2009). Further, to analyze the impact of the program on participants' motivation to support or change the patriarchal system we included a measure of gender specific system justification (Jost & Kay, 2005) in Studies 2 and 3. System justification motives have been associated with the maintenance of social power, and the justification of power hierarchies (see Kay, Banfield, & Laurin, 2010). Consistently, it is strongly related to the tendency to legitimate hierarchical social structures within societies

(i.e., social dominance orientation -measured in Study 2-; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Further, BS reduces support for social change as a consequence of enhanced system justifying motives (Becker & Wright, 2011). Hence, reducing system justification is an important goal of our program.

As mentioned above, gender-based violence is the most extreme form of inequity between men and women and is firmly rooted in sexist ideology. In order to have additional evidence of the program's efficacy, in Study 3 measures of attributions about specific episodes of gender-based violence, masculinity (Thompson & Pleck, 1986), and homophobic attitudes (Falomir & Mugny, 2009) were also added. Threats to masculinity are considered a main predictor of male aggression towards women (Vescio et al., 2010).

To sum up, we expected our program to successfully reduce sexism, sexual prejudice, essentialist and system justifying beliefs, proclivity to violence against women, and to increase collective actions and pro-equity values.

Study 1

The efficacy of the training program was evaluated for the first time at Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto (Argentina) in August 2009. Intervention efficacy was assessed using a field non-experimental methodology. That is, participants' beliefs and attitudes were measured before and after the intervention; no control group was used. Specifically, we analyzed participants' sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), essentialist beliefs (Bastian & Haslam, 2006) and collective action intentions (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Method

Participants. Twenty-five women and three men aged between 21 and 61 years old ($M = 30.26$; $SD = 11.63$), participated in the intervention. The sample was composed of 17 students of social sciences careers and 11 professionals of Psychology, Education and Nursing. They were taking part voluntarily in a postgraduate course on gender and education

offered by the University, and received course credits for their participation. Eighteen participants (17 women and one man) completed the questionnaire at Time 1 (just before the intervention) and Time 2 (the last day after the intervention was completed). One participant only completed the evaluation at Time 1 because he missed the first session; nine participants did not complete evaluation at Time 2 due to timetable incompatibilities. Therefore, 10 participants (7 students, 3 professionals) were not included in the analyses. No significant differences in our dependent variables were found at Time 1 between those who opted out and those who continued to post-test (all $F_s < 1.6$, ns).

Materials. Participants completed a questionnaire including the following measures before and after the intervention.

Ambivalent sexism inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Spanish version by Expósito et al., 1998). This scale has 22 items on a scale from 0 (*completely disagree*) to 5 (*completely agree*), clustered into two subscales: hostile sexism (HS; e.g., “Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist”; $\alpha_{pre} = .85$; $\alpha_{post} = .86$) and benevolent sexism (BS; e.g., “Women should be cherished and protected by men”; $\alpha_{pre} = .88$; $\alpha_{post} = .90$).

Essentialism scale (Bastian & Haslam, 2006). 15 items (e.g., “The boundaries that define the differences between people are clear-cut”; $\alpha_{pre} = .85$; $\alpha_{post} = .93$), with a response scale from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*).

Collective action for gender equality. Eight items (e.g., “I am willing to sign a petition to support the movement”) ($\alpha_{pre} = .78$; $\alpha_{post} = .78$) on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Results & Discussion

Correlational analyses showed a positive relation between participants’ BS before the intervention and their essentialist views before ($r = .44$, $p = .02$) and after ($r = .60$, $p = .009$) the

intervention. This result is consistent with previous literature on essentialism (Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Morton et al., 2009). No other variables were significantly correlated.

The one-way repeated measures ANOVA analysis of pre-post measurement of participants' sexist attitudes showed a significant reduction of BS, $M_{pre} = 1.50$, $M_{post} = 0.82$, $F(1, 17) = 14.52$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .46$, and HS, $M_{pre} = 1.88$, $M_{post} = 1.28$, $F(1, 17) = 12.13$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .42$. They held less essentialist views after the intervention, $M_{pre} = 2.70$, $M_{post} = 2.05$, $F(1, 17) = 16.07$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .49$, and they supported more collective actions for gender equality, $M_{pre} = 3.74$, $M_{post} = 4.10$, $F(1, 17) = 4.78$, $p = .043$, $\eta^2 = .22$. That is, the results from the first study provided initial evidence of the efficacy of the program to reduce sexism and increase pro-change behavioural tendencies in an Argentinean sample.

Study 2

A quasi-experimental panel study was conducted at the Universidad de Granada (Spain) in March, 2010. To analyze the impact of the program on participants' motivation to support or change the patriarchal system we added a measure of gender specific system justification (GSSJ; Jost & Kay, 2005) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994). The efficacy of the training program was assessed by questionnaires completed at Time 1 and Time 2 (as in Study 1) in the intervention and control groups. The control group was formed by students taking part in a postgraduate course on environmental issues (not randomly selected) with similar age, and background studies to the participants in the intervention group.

Method

Participants. Fifty-seven women and twenty-six men aged between 18 and 53 years old ($M = 26.23$; $SD = 6.22$), participated in the study. The sample was composed of 63 students and 11 professionals of social sciences; nine participants did not indicate their occupation. Seventy-seven participants (intervention group: $N = 41$; control group: $N = 36$)

completed the questionnaire at Time 1 and fifty-one participants (intervention group: $N = 14$; control group: $N = 28$) completed it at Time 2. Therefore, 27 participants in the intervention group and 8 in the control group were not included in the final analyses of the efficacy of the program. In the intervention group, most of them did not participate in evaluation at Time 2 because we ran out of time in the last session, and most of them had to leave before the evaluation was completed. No significant differences in our dependent variables were found at Time 1 between those who opted out and those who continued to post-test (all $F_s < 1.7$, ns).

Materials. Participants completed the following measures before and after the intervention in the order presented.

Social dominance orientation (SDO). We used 16 items (e.g., “Inferior groups should stay in their place”) from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*) ($\alpha_{pre} = .76$; $\alpha_{post} = .84$).

Ambivalent sexism. BS ($\alpha_{pre} = .88$; $\alpha_{post} = .90$); HS ($\alpha_{pre} = .90$; $\alpha_{post} = .91$).

Gender-specific system justification (GSSJ). We used the 8-item GSSJ to measure gender specific system justification on a scale from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*) (e.g., “In general, relations between men and women are fair”). The computation of the score was based on the 5-items that loaded on one factor ($\alpha_{pre} = .71$; $\alpha_{post} = .73$).

Collective action intentions. In this study, respondents indicated how willing they were to engage in a set of six normative collective actions (Tausch et al., 2011), such as sign a petition to the government or join in a peaceful public rally or demonstration in support of gender equality, on a scale from 1 (*not at all willing*) to 11 (*very willing*). ($\alpha_{pre} = .84$; $\alpha_{post} = .87$).

Results & Discussion

Correlational analysis of the ideological factors. Correlational analyses between the measures at Time 1 showed moderate to high positive correlations between HS, BS, GSSJ,

and SDO (see Table 1, left panel). Further, all of these ideological factors were negatively related to collective action.

Analysis of the intervention impact. First, to test for eventual sample biases due to the non-random allocation of participants between the intervention and control groups, we conducted a MANOVA with intervention condition as IV and all our measures at Time 1 as DVs. Neither multivariate (*Wilks* $\lambda = .94$, $F < 1$, ns), nor univariate effects were statistically significant (all $F_s < 1.9$). Therefore, participants' responses to each one of the questionnaires were analyzed using a 2 (Gender: women vs. men) x 2 (Intervention: gender program vs. control) x 2 (Time: pre vs. post) mixed-ANOVA design with the last factor within-participants. All means and SDs are reported on Table 1 (right panel).

Sexism. Results revealed a main effect of gender, with higher HS in men, $M = 1.34$, than women, $M = 0.70$, $F(1, 41) = 4.33$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .10$, and a main effect of intervention on HS, $M_{gender} = 0.62$, $M_{control} = 1.22$, $F(1, 41) = 5.28$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2 = .11$. This was qualified by a marginally significant Time x Intervention interaction, $F(1, 41) = 3.63$, $p = .06$, $\eta^2 = .08$, indicating a reduction of HS for the gender program group, $M_{pre} = 0.82$, $M_{post} = 0.41$, $F(1, 41) = 4.66$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .10$, but not the control group, $F < 1$, ns. For BS, there was a main effect of intervention, $M_{gender} = 0.53$, $M_{control} = 1.06$, $F(1, 41) = 4.31$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .10$, not moderated by sex or time, $F < 1.2$, ns.

Gender system justification and social dominance. Results revealed a main effect of gender, with higher GSSJ scores for men, $M = 2.89$, than women, $M = 2.09$, $F(1, 40) = 6.54$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .14$, and a main effect of time indicating significant reduction in GSSJ from Time 1, $M_{pre} = 2.55$, to Time 2, $M_{post} = 2.28$, $F(1, 40) = 8.59$, $p = .006$, $\eta^2 = .18$. This result was qualified by a significant Time x Intervention interaction, $F(1, 40) = 9.54$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .19$, indicating a reduction in system justification for the gender program group, $M_{pre} = 2.46$,

$M_{post} = 1.65$, $F(1, 40) = 13.26$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$, but not the control group, $F < 1$, ns. There was no significant effect of the intervention on social dominance, $F_s < 1.2$, ns.

Collective action intentions. There was a marginal Time x Intervention interaction for normative collective action, $F(1, 33) = 2.88$, $p = .09$ suggesting non-significant trends in the predicted direction for the gender program group's support for collective action ($M_{pre} = 8.26$, $M_{post} = 8.82$, $F = 2.14$, ns).

Overall, the results from the second study provided evidence of the efficacy of the program to reduce (hostile) sexist and system legitimizing beliefs in a Spanish sample.

Study 3

The third study was conducted at the Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador (El Salvador) in August, 2011. In this case, Session 6 was added to the portion of the program focusing on interventions to prevent gender and sexual violence (Dutton, 1992; Ryan & de Lemus, 2010). Each participant developed an intervention project proposal as a final task. In order to have an additional index of the efficacy of Session 5 (Strength), the evaluation questionnaire included a measure of attributions for episodes of gender-based violence. Further, measures of masculinity and sexual prejudice towards homosexuals were added to measure the effects of Session 4 (Ideology II: New masculinities and homophobic attitudes). A quasi-experimental design was used. All participants were students from a Psychology specialization course. At the time the study was conducted there were two groups signed up for the course. Each group was randomly assigned to the intervention or the control condition.

Method

Participants. The sample was composed of 23 men and 44 women Salvadorean Psychology postgraduate students (83.3%) and professionals (16.7%). Regarding social class, 36.4% described themselves as middle, middle-upper or upper class, whereas 59.1% marked middle-lower or lower class. 81.9 % of the sample was Roman Catholic or protestant, and

13.6% non-religious. The intervention group was comprised of 14 men and 26 women aged between 23 and 66 years old ($M = 32.83$; $SD = 9.64$). The comparison group was comprised of nine men and 17 women aged between 23 and 46 years old ($M = 28.73$; $SD = 8.64$). Three women (two from the intervention and one from the control group) were not evaluated at Time 2.

Materials. First, participants responded to three scenarios each one of them portraying a situation of physical, psychological and sexual violence in a romantic relationship. For each scenario participants responded to five items, three of them referring to perceived responsibility of the victim (victim blame, e.g., “To what extent is Ana Sandra responsible for what happened at the end of the story?”), and two referring to responsibility of the aggressor (aggressor’s responsibility, e.g., “To what extent do you think Antonio should feel guilty for what happened?”) adapted from Megías, Romero-Sánchez, Durán, Moya, and Bohner (2011). The response scale ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*totally*). The physical violence scenario described a situation in which a married couple had an argument because she came home later than expected and he slapped her face (victim blame: $\alpha_{pre} = .91$; $\alpha_{post} = .94$; aggressor’s responsibility: $\alpha_{pre} = .76$; $\alpha_{post} = .85$). The psychological violence scenario described the case of a married couple in which he did not like his wife to go out with friends and they argued about it (victim blame: $\alpha_{pre} = .83$; $\alpha_{post} = .92$; aggressor’s responsibility: $\alpha_{pre} = .65$; $\alpha_{post} = .74$). The sexual violence scenario described a married couple in which she did not want to have sexual relations because she was too tired, but nevertheless the man penetrates her (victim blame: $\alpha_{pre} = .86$; $\alpha_{post} = .84$; aggressor’s responsibility: $\alpha_{pre} = .68$; $\alpha_{post} = .64$). Next participants completed a questionnaire including the following measures.

Ambivalent sexism. BS ($\alpha_{pre} = .80$; $\alpha_{post} = .84$); HS ($\alpha_{pre} = .80$; $\alpha_{post} = .86$).

System justification. Same GSSJ scale as in Study 2, mean scores were computed based on three items with acceptable reliability ($\alpha_{pre} = .67$; $\alpha_{post} = .75$).

Masculinity. We used the Masculine Role Norm Scale (MRNS; Thompson & Pleck, 1986) adapted and translated to Spanish by Martínez, Paterna, López, and Velandrino (2010) ($\alpha_{pre} = .84$; $\alpha_{post} = .85$) composed by three subscales: status (e.g., “A man always deserves the respect of his wife and children”; $\alpha_{pre} = .72$; $\alpha_{post} = .81$), toughness (e.g., “A real man enjoys a bit of danger now and then”; $\alpha_{pre} = .74$; $\alpha_{post} = .68$), and antifemininity (e.g., “It is a bit embarrassing for a man to have a job that is usually filled by a woman”; $\alpha_{pre} = .67$; $\alpha_{post} = .74$). Responses ranged from 1-completely disagree- to 7-completely agree-.

Collective action. The same scale as in Study 2 was used ($\alpha_{pre} = .80$; $\alpha_{post} = .91$).

Sexual prejudice. Sexual prejudice was measured with the *Attitudes Towards Homosexuality Scale* (Falomir & Mugny, 2009; adapted by Falomir, Martínez & Paterna, 2010), including seven items measuring acceptance of contact with homosexuals (e.g., “I’d have no problem sharing an apartment with a homosexual”, $\alpha_{pre} = .83$; $\alpha_{post} = .90$) on a 7-point scale from 1-completely unacceptable- to 7-completely acceptable-, and 12 on attitudes towards homosexuality (e.g., “Homosexuality is contrary to the values of the family”, $\alpha_{pre} = .86$; $\alpha_{post} = .90$) on a 7-point scale from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*).

Results & Discussion

Correlational analysis of the ideological factors. As shown in Table 2 (left panel), the analysis of correlations between the ideological factors measured before the intervention (Time 1) indicated that system justifying beliefs were correlated with HS and (marginally) with BS, as in Study 2. Further, BS, HS and GSSJ were all significantly positively correlated with the three dimensions of masculinity (toughness, anti-femininity, and status). Attitudes towards homosexuality and acceptance of contact with homosexuals were negatively related to BS. That is, participants with higher BS endorsed more negative attitudes towards homosexuality and less willingness to be in contact with homosexuals. Finally, acceptance of contact with homosexuals was also negatively related to antifemininity and toughness. That

is, the more participants valued toughness and antifemininity as components of masculinity, the less contact they wanted to have with homosexuals.

Analysis of the intervention impact. Participants' responses were analyzed using a 2 (Gender: women vs. men) x 2 (Intervention: gender program vs. control) x 2 (Time: pre vs. post) mixed-ANOVA design with the last factor within-participants.

Victim blaming for violence in romantic relationships. There was an interaction of Gender x Time x Intervention for victim blaming in the physical violence scenario, $F(1, 58) = 4.48, p = .04, \eta^2 = .07$, that revealed a Time x Intervention interaction for women, $F(1, 58) = 6.05, p = .02, \eta^2 = .09$, but not for men, $F < 1, ns$. The planned comparisons indicated that women in the gender program group reduced the victim blaming, $M_{pre} = 2.56, M_{post} = 2.04, F(1, 58) = 3.73, p = .06, \eta^2 = .06$, but not in the control group, $F < 2.6, ns$. Regarding the psychological and sexual violence scenarios, there was just a main effect of time (psychological violence: $F(1, 57) = 13.86, p < .001, \eta^2 = .20$; sexual violence: $F(1, 58) = 5.12, p = .03, \eta^2 = .08$) indicating a general reduction of victim blaming over time (psychological violence: $M_{pre} = 4.60, M_{post} = 3.83$; sexual violence: $M_{pre} = 2.88, M_{post} = 2.25$), not moderated by intervention or sex of participants, $F_s < 1, ns$.

Aggressor responsibility for violent behavior in romantic relationships. There was a marginally significant Gender x Time x Intervention interaction for the physical violence scenario, $F(1, 58) = 3.61, p = .06, \eta^2 = .06$, that revealed a Time x Intervention interaction for women, $F(1, 58) = 5.54, p = .02, \eta^2 = .09$, but not for men, $F < 1, ns$. The planned comparisons indicated that women in the gender program group increased the attributed responsibility to the aggressor, $M_{pre} = 5.40, M_{post} = 6.27, F(1, 58) = 5.61, p = .02, \eta^2 = .09$, but not in the control group, $F < 1.3, ns$. Regarding psychological violence, there was just a main effect of time, $F(1, 57) = 13.58, p = .001, \eta^2 = .19$, indicating a general increase of aggressor's responsibility over time, $M_{pre} = 3.11, M_{post} = 3.86$, not moderated by

intervention or sex of participants, $F_s < 1.8$, *ns*. There were no effects for aggressor's responsibility for the sexual violence scenario, $F_s < 2.1$, *ns*.

Sexism. Results (see Table 2, right panel) revealed a significant interaction of Time x Intervention for HS, $F(1, 58) = 5.74$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .09$. Planned comparisons indicated a reduction of HS for the intervention, $M_{pre} = 2.22$, $M_{post} = 1.69$, $F(1, 58) = 9.40$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .14$, but not the control group, $F < 1$, *ns*. A significant Time x Gender interaction for BS, $F(1, 58) = 4.69$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2 = .075$, indicated that whereas BS decreased over time for women, it increased for men (planned comparisons, $F_s < 2.6$, *ns*). Further, a marginally significant Time x Intervention interaction, $F(1, 58) = 3.28$, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .05$, suggested a non-significant trend for BS to decrease over time for the gender program group, $M_{pre} = 2.64$, $M_{post} = 2.42$, and increase for the control group, $M_{pre} = 2.25$, $M_{post} = 2.42$. Planned comparisons were not significant in either condition, $F_s < 2.1$, *ns*. These results are in line with the previous studies in Argentina and Spain.

Gender system justification. Regarding participants' endorsement of system justifying beliefs, results revealed lower scores in men, $M = 2.22$, than women, $M = 2.88$, $F(1, 58) = 7.45$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2 = .11$. This result is the opposite of Study 2 results, however, it is consistent with system justification theory's claim that low-status individuals might be equally (and sometimes even more) motivated to rationalize the *status quo* (see Kay et al., 2010). Further, a marginally significant Time x Intervention interaction, $F(1, 58) = 3.40$, $p = .07$, $\eta^2 = .06$, indicated a reduction in GSSJ in the gender program group, $M_{pre} = 2.92$, $M_{post} = 2.22$, $F(1, 58) = 8.33$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2 = .13$, but not the control group, $F < 1$, *ns*. Therefore, the effectiveness of the intervention to reduce system justifying beliefs was (marginally) replicated.

Masculinity. There was a marginal Gender x Time x Intervention interaction for the toughness dimension of the MRNS, $F(1, 58) = 3.12$, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .05$, that revealed a Time x Intervention interaction for men participants, $F(1, 58) = 3.65$, $p = .06$, $\eta^2 = .06$, but not

women, $F < 1$, *ns*. The planned comparisons indicated that men's endorsement of toughness was reduced in the gender program group, $F(1, 58) = 7.93$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .12$, $M_{pre} = 3.29$, $M_{post} = 2.37$, but not in the control condition, $F < 1$, *ns*. For the status subscale, there was only a main effect of time, indicating a general reduction of status beliefs from Time 1 to Time 2, $F(1, 58) = 7.01$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .11$, $M_{pre} = 4.15$, $M_{post} = 3.66$, not moderated by participant gender or intervention, $F_s < 2.2$, *ns*. No significant effects appeared on antifemininity, $F_s < 2.7$, *ns*. These results suggest that the intervention might have some impact on men's masculine identity, especially in relation to the prescription that men should be physically, and psychologically tough. This is in line with the "new masculinities" approach adopted in Session 4.

Collective action. There was no significant increase in collective action after the intervention, all $F_s < 1.4$, *ns*.

Sexual Prejudice. The analysis of participants' acceptance of contact with homosexuals indicated a significant effect of gender, $F(1, 58) = 6.15$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .10$, such that women ($M = 5.12$) expressed more positive attitudes towards homosexuals than men ($M = 4.18$). Further, results revealed a significant Time x Intervention interaction for the acceptance of contact with homosexuals subscale, $F(1, 58) = 4.83$, $p = .03$, $\eta^2 = .08$, indicating increased acceptance of contact with homosexuals for the gender program group, $F(1, 58) = 3.77$, $p = .057$, $\eta^2 = .06$, $M_{pre} = 4.42$, $M_{post} = 4.80$, but not the control group, $F < 1.6$, *ns*. The analysis of the attitudes towards homosexuality subscale showed a main effect of intervention, $F(1, 58) = 5.39$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .08$, such that the control group ($M = 5.43$) held more positive attitudes towards homosexuality than the gender program group ($M = 4.78$). Further, there was a significant Time x Intervention interaction, $F(1, 58) = 7.97$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .12$, indicating that the gender program group held more positive attitudes toward

homosexuals after the intervention, $F(1, 58) = 9.57, p = .003, \eta^2 = .14, M_{pre} = 4.55, M_{post} = 5.00$, but the control group did not, $F < 1.6, ns$.

General discussion

Our intervention program focused mainly on the modification of ideological factors such as sexism that are considered fundamental antecedents of gender discrimination and violence. Increasing sexism awareness and reducing endorsement of sexist beliefs is an important step in terms of fighting gender inequalities in our societies (Becker & Swim, 2011; 2012; Swim et al., 2005). The main results of the three studies suggest that overall, the intervention program successfully managed to reduce participants' HS and (marginally) BS. Also, Studies 1 and 2 suggest that the program might have increased participants' support for collective action, at least in Spain and Argentina. In Studies 2 and 3, gender system justification beliefs (not measured in Study 1) were also reduced after the intervention. Finally, Study 3 included new measures which showed a significant reduction in victim blaming and an increase in aggressor perceived responsibility after a physical aggression episode among women. Also, homophobic attitudes were reduced after the intervention and there was some evidence of change in men's endorsement of toughness as a dimension of masculinity. Therefore, results were consistent across studies except for the lack of effect on collective action in Study 3.

This program was developed trying to integrate research, theory and practice to create an effective intervention to reduce gender prejudice. The strength of this approach is that it incorporates an empirical assessment of the strategies implemented. However, there are some limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, although the data as a whole are encouraging in terms of sexism and gender prejudice reduction, we did not find empirical evidence supporting all our hypotheses. Ideally the effects would have been more robust in reducing BS, but given our small sample sizes the power of our data was probably insufficient to detect

some of the predicted differences. Also, the mean scores on this measure were very low (especially in Study 2), which might imply that there was a floor effect for this sample, not allowing for changes to be reflected in the data. Further, the apparently positive tone of BS makes it hard to explicitly confront it in order to reduce it. In the case of violence-related measures, the intervention did not influence attributions about psychological or sexual aggression. This might be due to the intervention itself; however, it could also be due to the fact that the physical aggression episode was always presented as the first scenario (order of the scenarios was not counterbalanced). Also, it only influenced women's responses, but not men's. Maybe our intervention should include more affective-related components such as empathy and perspective taking in order to successfully influence men's sexist beliefs (Becker & Swim, 2011) as well as their reactions to violence scenarios. Second, due to the characteristics of the population targeted and the facilities provided by the institutions, the studies lack rigorous experimental control (i.e., lack of control group in Argentina, and non-randomized distribution of participants in groups in Spain and El Salvador), and the sample characteristics compromise our ability to make generalizations from these data to the general population. Further, we could not evaluate all of the participants after the intervention, which importantly reduced the sample size even further, especially in Studies 1 and 2. Finally, participants were mostly women; therefore the gender distribution of the groups was not balanced. It is important to incorporate more men to intervention programs to reduce gender prejudice (see Case, Hensley, & Anderson, in press; for successful interventions with men).

When implementing the program we realized the importance of adopting an intersectional perspective of gender and national identities, considering each country's idiosyncratic views and past experiences on gender issues. Participants often brought up examples to discuss in the group about gender disadvantages from their own perspectives and mixed social identities. Special attention was devoted in the sessions to the intersection of

gender and sexual orientation, emphasizing the need to include sexual contents in educational intervention programs. Due to the situated nature of gender, it is possible that we would find different results with other groups such as non-social sciences students and professionals. It is difficult to predict how these other groups would react to our training program. We would expect that, if an adequate adaptation of its contents is done to take into account the different cultural, normative, identity-based perspectives, the effectiveness of the program should be maintained or even improved. For instance, recently we have been asked by the Salvadorean institutions to apply such trainings to police-officers, and legal workers (judges, lawyers, etc.). In that case, we would need to strengthen the argumentation that links socio-structural (i.e., power and status) and psychological (i.e., ideology, sexism) variables with specific acts of gender violence. Further, we would also need to focus on analyzing situations and cases familiar to the participants. To identify the relevant contents, it might be useful to start by creating focal groups with these professionals to discuss their views on sexism and gender violence, as well as specific identity-related concerns in their domain, before implementing the intervention.

In the future, it is worth exploring the efficacy of a shorter version of the program, and including a “refresher session” a few months later. This would facilitate higher adherence of participants with time constraints, especially when working with professionals. Further, it is important to test the long term effect of the intervention and its influence on participants’ work-related behaviour. This could be done, for instance, by directly collecting their subjective impressions about the impact of this training on the way they face gender-related issues at work, related to specific behaviours or procedural changes that they could implement in the workplace.

Overall, the positive outcomes of this intervention stress the importance of developing social policies that support (institutionally and economically) the implementation of effective

interventions to reduce sexism. The three countries that took part in the program (Argentina, El Salvador and Spain) have specific legislation that emphasizes education on the prevention of gender violence, and the need for specialized attention to victims of gender-based violence. We argue that the first step to implement such preventive programs is to incorporate these contents in the curriculum of professional training. Although, specific gender studies are often offered, these contents are generally optional at the graduate level. We advocate that the implementation of gender policies at educational and social institutions should be preceded by education on gender issues and intervention to reduce sexism for the professionals in charge of these policies. For this purpose, the presented intervention program provides a useful tool to start this process of change.

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Table 1

Correlational analyses between ideological factors and their Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) at Time 1(T1) and Time 2 (T2) in Study 2.

Measure	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	Gender program		Control	
						T1	T2	T1	T2
						<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
1. BS	-	.72***	.48***	.44***	-.35**	0.62 (.71)	0.45 (.82)	1.02 (.89)	1.10 (.80)
2. HS		-	.58***	.55***	-.58***	0.82 (.79)	0.41 (.73)	1.21 (.93)	1.23 (.95)
3. GSSJ			-	.43***	-.62***	2.46 (1.06)	1.64 (.87)	2.59 (.95)	2.61 (1.02)
4. SDO				-	-.45***	1.86 (.50)	1.78 (.87)	2.14 (.78)	1.97 (.69)
5. Collective action					-	8.26 (2.00)	8.82 (1.94)	8.36 (2.14)	8.22 (2.26)

Note. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responding in the direction of the construct assessed. BS = Benevolent Sexism; HS = Hostile Sexism; GSSJ = Gender System Justification Scale; SDO = Social Dominance Orientation.

***. Correlation is significant at the .001 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2

Correlational analyses between ideological factors and their Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) at Time 1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2) in Study 3.

Measure									Gender program		Control	
									T1	T2	T1	T2
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
1. BS	-	.52***	.22	.59***	.59***	.29*	-.28*	-.31*	2.64 (.83)	2.42 (1.05)	2.25 (1.19)	2.42 (1.14)
2. HS		-	.26*	.37**	.56***	.32**	-.12	-.11	2.22 (.78)	1.69 (.96)	2.02 (1.13)	2.05 (1.08)
3. GSSJ			-	.32**	.40**	.32*	-.04	-.06	2.92 (1.21)	2.22 (1.31)	2.67 (1.41)	2.84 (1.50)
4. Masculinity (status)				-	.53***	.23	-.12	-.17	4.22 (.92)	3.55 (1.22)	4.05 (1.17)	3.83 (1.30)
5. Masculinity (toughness)					-	.56***	-.25*	-.17	2.76 (.95)	2.18 (.82)	2.87 (1.23)	2.54 (.85)
6. Masculinity (antifemininity)						-	-.29*	-.16	2.64 (.78)	2.36 (.66)	2.52 (1.14)	2.45 (.89)
7. Contact with homosexuals							-	.78***	4.42 (1.46)	4.80 (1.57)	5.18 (1.15)	4.91 (1.46)
8. Attitudes towards homosexuals								-1	4.55 (1.16)	5.00 (1.28)	5.52 (1.18)	5.35 (1.33)

Note. For all scales, higher scores are indicative of more extreme responding in the direction of the construct assessed. BS = Benevolent Sexism; HS = Hostile Sexism; GSSJ = Gender System Justification Scale.

***. Correlation is significant at the .001 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).