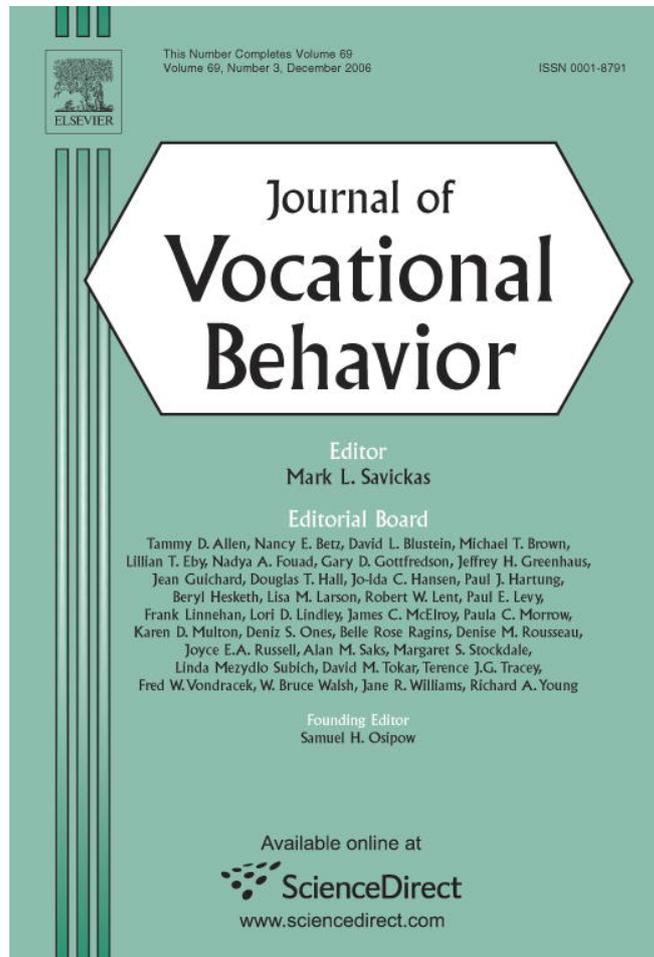


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Does it pay to be a sexist? The relationship between modern sexism and career outcomes

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Abstract

In this study, we examined the consequences of harboring “modern sexist” beliefs on the career outcomes of both men and women. We argued that individuals endorsing these beliefs disproportionately rely on men (versus women) for work-related advice and, in turn, obtain more promotions than do their less sexist counterparts. Results obtained from a sample of 192 communication workers supported our primary prediction, namely that modern sexism was positively related to advantageous outcomes in the workplace. The discussion focuses on the implications of modern (versus blatant) sexism in the workplace, especially in terms of the need for researchers and managers to recognize and address the organizational consequences of holding these subtle sexist beliefs.

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“A failure to join the traditional guy talk about sports can bar women from informal networks that make it much easier to navigate the male-infested waters.”

-Andrew Hacker (Epstein, 2005)

1. Introduction

Despite claims to the contrary, employment discrimination against women is alive and well (e.g., Reskin & Ross, 1995). For instance, a judge presiding over a recent case against Wal-Mart, the largest company in the United States (Fortune, 2005), observed that, “...women working at Wal-Mart stores are paid less than men in every region, that pay disparities exist in most job categories, that the salary gap widens over time, that women take longer to enter management positions, and that the higher one looks in the organization, the lower the percentage of women” (PBS, 2004). Furthermore, according to the 2003 United States Census Bureau, women make \$.77 to the male dollar, a discrepancy that cannot be explained solely by differences in education, job training, job experience, number of hours worked, or job type (United States General Accounting Office, 2003). Such findings suggest that the prejudice likely underlying such discrimination remains ubiquitous. Scholars, however, have argued that blatant or “old-fashioned” prejudice (e.g., sexism) has declined significantly in the United States (e.g., Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), as evidenced by the fact that overt claims of women’s inferiority no longer are socially acceptable (e.g., Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & St.-Pierre, 1999).

Sexism now manifests itself in a subtler and ostensibly benign set of beliefs including denial of continuing discrimination against women and antagonism towards women’s demands (e.g., Glick & Fiske, 1996; Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). In particular Swim et al. (1995), in extending work on the “new face” of racial prejudice (e.g., McConahay, 1986; Sears, 1988), suggested that beliefs regarding the absence of enduring sexual prejudice and discrimination are indicative of, not arguments against, present-day sexism. According to Swim and colleagues (1995, p. 200), this newer form of sexism, which they termed “modern sexism,” is characterized by the following: beliefs that discrimination against women is a thing of the past, antagonism towards women who are making political and economic demands, and resentment about special favors for women. Notably, individuals espousing such views do not regard these notions as sexist or unfair and, accordingly, fail to perceive themselves (Swim, Mallett, & Stangor, 2004) or others (e.g., Swim, Mallett, Russo-Devosa, & Stangor, 2005) as sexist. Instead, they conclude that, given the even-playing field upon which the two sexes now compete, the continuing under-representation of women in certain roles (e.g., management positions; Reskin & Ross, 1995) must be a result of women’s own choices or inferiority as opposed to discrimination (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005).

Modern sexism recently has been evoked to explain the enduring discrimination against women (e.g., Swim et al., 1995). In particular, several researchers (Swim et al., 1995) have reasoned that modern sexism should be a better predictor of discrimination than blatant sexism partially due to the fact that modern sexist views, unlike blatant sexist notions, are socially acceptable and, therefore, are more likely to be endorsed by respondents. Supportive of this idea, findings indicate that modern sexism is associated with negative attitudes toward feminists, positive attitudes toward male chauvinists (Swim & Cohen, 1997), and insensitivity to sexist language (Swim et al., 2004) and gender inequality (Benokraitis, 1997; Davies-Netzley, 1998). Moreover, a growing number of empirical studies demonstrates that modern sexism is

related to differential perceptions and treatment of men versus women in the workplace. For instance, [Swim et al. \(1995\)](#) found that those scoring higher on a measure of modern sexism were more likely than low scorers to overestimate the percentage of women in male-dominated jobs (e.g., airplane pilots, physicians) and to believe that biological differences, rather than differences in socialization or discrimination, were responsible for the gender-segregated workforce. In addition, Tougas and colleagues found that modern sexism, which they labeled neosexism, predicted unfavorable opinions toward Affirmative Action programs designed to benefit women ([Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995](#)).

Thus, the existing literature seems to support the notion that the expression, not the presence, of sexism has changed, as people continue to endorse sexist beliefs, albeit *covertly*. However, we are unaware of any research that explicitly has addressed the organizational experiences and outcomes of those who *possess* these modern sexist beliefs. That is, although researchers have documented how sexist views potentially impact others (e.g., targets; [Tougas et al., 1999](#)), we presently know very little about the organizational experiences of those who possess these modern sexist beliefs. In the present study, we attempt to redress this void in the literature by assessing how individuals' sexist beliefs impact their own work-related outcomes. Specifically, we investigated the questions of how and why modern sexism might influence career outcomes such as the number of promotions one receives. Below, we begin by asserting that workers' modern sexism is associated with the gender of those upon whom they rely for work-related advice. Subsequently, we discuss how the gender of these advice-givers may impact workers' opportunities for career advancement. Specifically, we argue that, given their negative attitudes toward women and corresponding preference for men (e.g., [Swim et al., 1995](#)), modern sexists are especially likely to gravitate toward men (instead of women) for advice, in turn, achieving greater career advancement than those holding less modern sexist beliefs.

1.1. Modern sexism and seeking work-related advice

Empirical research overwhelmingly indicates that developing “the right” social relationships at work is associated with positive career outcomes such as promotions, earnings, satisfaction with pay, and greater career advancement (e.g., [Dreher & Ash, 1990](#)). Indeed, some researchers have argued that forging social relationships is as instrumental as is human capital (e.g., education and experience) in attaining organizational benefits and rewards (e.g., [Kanter, 1977](#); [Kram & Isabella, 1985](#); [Podolny & Baron, 1997](#)). This social capital facilitates and encourages career advancement by providing access to informational resources and work-related advice that workers otherwise would not obtain ([Coleman, 1986](#)). When seeking such advice, modern sexists should be especially likely to rely on their male (versus female) co-workers. This assertion is derived from findings that modern sexists evaluate members of the two sexes differently. For instance, [Swim et al. \(1995\)](#) found that modern sexism was associated with a preference for a male versus a female senatorial candidate. Especially germane to the current study, studies show that modern sexists also perceive men as being more competent than women. For example, [Tougas et al. \(1999\)](#), in a study of female workers at a Canadian federal agency, demonstrated a significant, positive relationship between neosexism and pro-male bias, such that individuals who held subtle sexist beliefs viewed male managers as more qualified and competent than female managers. Similarly, [Beaton, Tougas, and Joly \(1996\)](#) found that neosexism was negatively related to evaluations of women's competence and abilities. Given that modern sexists perceive

men as more capable than women, especially in terms of workplace competence, such individuals are expected to rely more on men than women when seeking advice at work. Given this reasoning, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 1. *Modern sexism is positively related to the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work.*

1.2. Advice-givers are important

In terms of ascending the organizational hierarchy, workplace relationships are typically associated with power (e.g., Ferris, Perrewé, Anthony, & Gilmore, 2000). Substantial research indicates that the job- and organization-relevant knowledge that has been associated with positive career outcomes (e.g., Judge & Bretz, 1994) can be acquired through developmental relationships at work (e.g., Coleman, 1986; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). The benefits of these relationships are likely to vary as a function of the knowledge and influence that the advice-givers possess. Thus, the adage, “it is not what you know; it is who you know,” may better be phrased as, “who you know dictates what you know.”

Findings suggest that social capital is especially valuable if one forms relationships with those possessing greater status, power, influence, and knowledge (Lin, Vaughn, & Ensel, 1981; Seibert et al., 2001). In particular, Seibert et al. (2001) found that access to relevant resources and information accounted for the relationship between social capital and career outcomes, such as salary and the number of promotions received. Considerable evidence indicates that positions of power and influence in the workplace disproportionately are held by men (e.g., Halaby, 1979; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Smith & Grenier, 1982). For example, Elliott and Smith (2004), analyzing multi-city survey data, found that women, relative to men, encounter significant difficulties in attaining power, which the authors operationalized as organizational position. Such findings suggest that workers who rely on men for work-related advice differentially gain access to resources as compared to those who tend to rely more on women for their advice. Supportive of this idea, past research indicates that discrepancies in male–female earnings partially are due to the fact that women have unequal access to organizational power positions, structures, and resources (e.g., Hultin & Szulkin, 1999). Similarly, Brass (1985) found that women in integrated workgroups (i.e., those containing both men and women), as compared to women in women-only workgroups, had greater influence, held more critical positions, and had greater access to the dominant coalition.

A related stream of research demonstrates that having a male (versus female) mentor results in greater objective career benefits for proteges (e.g., Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). For example, Dreher and Cox (1996) found that proteges who had a white, male mentor enjoyed higher total compensation than did those with other mentors. The benefits of having a male mentor derive not only from men being higher in the formal organizational hierarchy (Elliott & Smith, 2004), but also from the perception that male mentors are more legitimate than women mentors (Ragins, 1989).

Thus, all other things being equal, an overwhelming amount of research clearly has demonstrated that men continue to earn more money (e.g., Ostroff & Atwater, 2003; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993), have more authority (e.g., McGuire & Reskin, 1993), and receive more promotions (e.g., Brass, 1984) than do women in the workplace. Given this reasoning,

we propose that reliance on relatively more men than women for work advice should result in more opportunities for advancement (Ferris et al., 2000). Specifically, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 2. *The proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work is positively related to the number of promotions received.*

We have argued that modern sexism is associated with seeking advice from men and that doing so is related to receiving a greater number of promotions. Taken together, these predictions imply that those high in modern sexism should receive more promotions than do their less sexist counterparts. It is important to note that we do not predict a direct relationship between modern sexism and the number of promotions received. According to our theorizing, modern sexism is related to promotions through the behavioral act of seeking advice from men. Harboring modern sexist beliefs alone is not necessarily advantageous; the proposed relationship between modern sexism and promotions is expected to hold when the intermediary act of seeking advice from men is considered. That is, our arguments form a model in which modern sexism is linked to career outcomes through the proportion of men from whom one seeks work-relevant advice. Thus, we offer the third hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3. *Modern sexism is indirectly related to the number of promotions received through the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work.*

1.3. Control variables

In testing the study hypotheses, we felt it necessary to control for two variables, gender and organizational tenure. Regarding gender, we did not offer separate theorizing or predictions for men and women because women (as well as men) can be modern sexists (Swim et al., 1995). However, since gender is likely correlated with modern sexism (Swim et al., 1995), with the gender of advice-givers (Brass, 1985), and with number of promotions (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005), we controlled for its potential influence in our tests of all hypotheses. Thus, support for our hypotheses would indicate that modern sexism is positively related to reliance on men for advice and, in turn, promotions, beyond the influences of gender. Additionally, organizational tenure was entered as a control variable for Hypotheses 2 and 3 because it might be related to both having men as advice-givers as well as the number of promotions received (e.g., Ng et al., 2005).

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Data for the current study are part of a larger study (James, Brief, Dietz, & Cohen, 2001) conducted at a communications company in the southeastern United States. The company's major activities include data transmission, as well as the installation and maintenance of data transmission equipment. The company employed approximately 600 employees of which 300 voluntarily agreed to participate in the original study and completed a survey packet on company premises for what was described as a research study on attitudes about work-related issues. Only those participants who responded to relevant

study variables were included in the present analyses, yielding a total sub-sample size of 192 from the original sample of 300. The demographic profile of the study participants did not significantly differ from that of the participants' not included in the analyses on the variables which we could assess in both samples, $\chi^2(1, N = 300) = .27$, ns, for gender; and $\chi^2(1, N = 300) = 1.66$, ns, for supervisory duties. Further, those participants used in our analyses were not significantly different on modern sexism, organizational tenure, or number of promotions within the organization from those who were not included, $F(1, 293) = .01$, ns, for modern sexism, $F(1, 235) = .90$, ns, for organizational tenure, and $F(1, 225) = 1.28$, ns, for number of promotions within the organization. The mean age in the sample was 36.12 years ($SD = 9.47$); mean organizational tenure was 6.28 years ($SD = 4.86$); 116 (60.4%) of the respondents were male and 76 (39.6%) were female. The racial composition of the sample was 49% White, 45.3% African American, 2.1% Hispanic, .5% Asian, and 2.1% "other." Thirty-eight percent among both female and male respondents reported having supervisory responsibilities. That a significant percentage of women and men were supervisors indicated that respondents potentially could seek advice from both women and men. This further indicates that it is likely that respondents could have sought advice from male or female supervisors as well as male or female peers. In other words, the respondents seemed to have had discretion regarding the gender of supervisory as well as same-level employees from whom they requested advice.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Modern sexism

Modern sexism was measured using an eight-item scale developed by Swim et al. (1995; see Yoder and McDonald, 1997, for more information on the psychometric properties of this scale). Representative items are "Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States" and "It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television." Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed with each item on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly). Responses to the eight-items were averaged to yield a scale score, with higher scores indicative of higher levels of modern sexism. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach, 1951) of the modern sexism scale for the current sample was .72, consistent with prior estimates (Swim et al., 1995; $\alpha = .75$). As in Swim et al.'s (1995) research, there was only a moderate correlation between gender and sexism, $r = .35$, $p < .001$. Men tended to score somewhat higher on the modern sexism scale ($M = 2.70$) than did women ($M = 2.28$), indicating that women too can be modern sexists (Swim et al., 1995).

2.2.2. The proportion of men from whom one seeks advice

Respondents were instructed to list the names and gender of up to five co-workers "who have provided [them] with valuable job/career-related advice and information." Given the nature of this open-ended question, participants could include others who were above, below, or at the same level as them in the organizational hierarchy. Participants were instructed to indicate at which level each member in his or her advice group resides (1 = below manager; 2 = manager; 3 = director and above). The mean organizational level for advice groups was 1.62 with a standard deviation of .25. We operationalized the gender composition of each respondent's advice-givers by computing the proportion of men from whom he or she reported seeking advice. Proportions, unlike other indices of diversity (e.g.,

Pelled, Eisenhardt, & Xin, 1999), allow researchers the ability to assess the direction (e.g., higher proportion of men versus women), in addition to the degree of heterogeneity (Williams & Mean, 2004). Proportions also take into account the recognition that not all participants listed five work group members. Thus, consistent with the nature of our hypotheses, and with previous investigations (e.g., Rentsch & Klimoski, 2001), we calculated the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work, with higher proportions indicative of more men as advice-givers.

2.2.3. Promotions

The questionnaire also asked participants to list the total number of promotions in rank that they had received since joining the company. Respondents were instructed to list all promotions that moved them from one level to a higher level, but not transfers or lateral moves.

2.2.4. Control variables

As previously mentioned, we controlled for gender and organizational tenure. Specifically, gender was entered as a control variable for all three hypotheses, with women coded as 1 and men coded as 2. Organizational tenure was entered as a control variable for Hypotheses 2 and 3. The measure of tenure was an item asking respondents to report how long they had been employed by the company.

3. Results

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables appear in Table 1. A series of regression analyses were conducted to test Hypothesis 1 and 2. Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relationship between modern sexism and the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work. The results for this regression analysis appear in Table 2. In support of this Hypothesis, the relationship between sexism and the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice was positive and significant ($\beta = .15$, $t_{(189)} = 2.45$, $p < .05$). Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive relationship between the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work and the number of promotions received. Consistent with our prediction, this relationship also was statistically significant ($\beta = .21$, $t_{(189)} = 2.41$, $p < .05$). Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported. Notably, these results were significant after controlling for gender in both hypotheses and organizational tenure in Hypothesis 2.

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Modern sexism	2.54	.65	—				
2	Proportion of men from whom one seeks advice	1.61	.37	.35**	—			
3	Number of promotions	1.89	2.25	.14	.28**	—		
4	Gender	1.60	.49	.35**	.63**	.19*	—	
5	Organizational tenure	6.28	4.86	.03	.14*	.38**	.03	—

Note. $N = 192$. For proportion of men from whom one seeks advice and for gender, women were coded as 1 and men were coded as 2. Correlations involving gender were point-biserial correlations.

* $p < .05$.

** $p \leq .01$.

Table 2
Multiple regression results for Hypotheses 1 and 2

	Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>H1</i>							
DV: proportion of men in advice group							
	Gender of respondent	.44	.05	.58**			
	Modern sexism	.08	.03	.15*			
	Model				.41	2, 189	68.45**
<i>H2</i>							
DV: number of promotions							
	Gender of respondent	.21	.39	.05			
	Organizational tenure	.16	.03	.35**			
	Proportion of men in advice network	1.25	.52	.21*			
	Model				.19	3, 188	15.73**

Note. *N* = 192. For proportion of men from whom one seeks advice and for gender, women were coded as 1 and men were coded as 2.

* $p < .05$.

** $p \leq .01$.

In order to assess Hypothesis 3, we computed the indirect effect of modern sexism on promotions through the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work. To test this prediction, we examined whether the indirect effect, computed as the product of the unstandardized coefficients for the two paths, is significantly different from zero. Recent investigations have demonstrated that using the multiplicative coefficient is superior to other techniques of assessing indirect effects (e.g., Baron & Kenny, 1986) in terms of both statistical power and intuitive appeal (see MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002; Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Because the sampling distribution of indirect effects likely will deviate from normality unless the sample size is extremely large, we used the bootstrapping procedure developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004) to test the statistical significance of the indirect effect. Specifically, we estimated 5000 bootstrap samples to derive the appropriate standard error. The standardized and unstandardized path coefficients as well as the standard errors appear in Fig. 1. The first coefficient represents the relationship between modern sexism and the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice, controlling for gender. The second coefficient represents the relationship between the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice and the number of promotions received, controlling for modern sexism, gender, and organizational tenure. The bootstrapping procedure yielded a significant test statistic of .17, $p < .05$, for the indirect effect of modern sexism on number of promotions received through the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported as well.

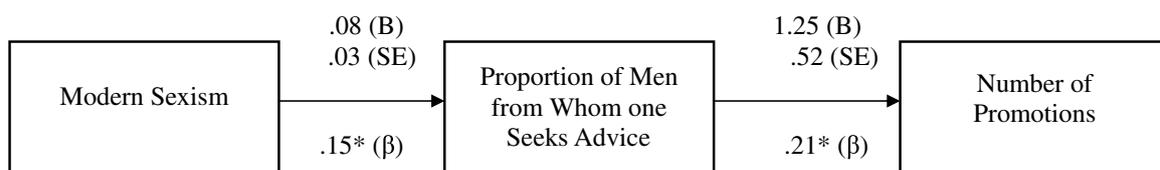


Fig. 1. Model linking modern sexism to promotions through the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice at work, controlling for gender and organizational tenure. Note. *N* = 192. * $p \leq .05$.

Furthermore, to explore the practical meaning of the findings detected, we split the sample based upon the median modern sexism score (2.56). Those high in modern sexism reported an average of 2.14 promotions, and those low in modern sexism reported an average of 1.64 promotions. Thus, respondents high in modern sexism reported 31% more promotions than those low in modern sexism.

4. Discussion

In this study, we asked an important and previously unaddressed question; how does being (or not being) a modern sexist impact one's own workplace outcomes? We predicted and demonstrated that modern sexism positively relates to advantageous career outcomes. Specifically, we found support for each of our three hypotheses; namely that modern sexism is positively related to relying on men for work-related advice, that such reliance on men is positively related to the number of promotions one obtains, and that modern sexism is indirectly related to the number of promotions obtained through its relationship with reliance on men for advice. Below, the theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

This study, by focusing specifically on modern (versus old-fashioned or blatant) sexism, represents one of the first inquiries demonstrating that this ostensibly more benign set of views has real implications for workers and for the make-up of organizations. Although a few studies have investigated how modern sexism impacts targets in the workplace (e.g., Tougas et al., 1999), the current endeavor is the first of which we are aware that explicitly examines how holding these beliefs relates to one's own career outcomes. We believe that focusing on the consequences of modern sexism is increasingly important precisely because of its subtlety and outwardly non-sexist nature (Swim et al., 2005). That is, given the seemingly benign nature of these beliefs, modern sexists likely engage in workplace behaviors that are not regarded as prejudicial in nature (Swim et al., 1995; e.g., only seeking advice from men). Conversely, those unabashedly advocating blatant sexist views or claims of women's inferiority likely would be ostracized and not embraced by other workers, as most people regard such beliefs as inappropriate (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). Thus, although modern sexism may appear to be less insidious than blatant sexism, in truth, modern sexism is potentially more consequential, due, paradoxically, to its innocuous nature.

The present results, which remained significant after controlling for gender of respondent, indicate that women (as well as men) benefit from being sexist. That is, whereas previous research has demonstrated that women too can be sexists (e.g., Swim et al., 1995; Tougas et al., 1999), the current results further suggest that such prejudice benefits women as well, at least in terms of career outcomes. Given these findings, an important question, both theoretically and practically, becomes that of whether sexist women's organizational ascension serves to break down or to maintain existing gender-based hierarchies. In one sense, these women's successes in climbing the organizational ladder demonstrates that such outcomes are attainable, thereby likely increasing other women's efficacy for doing so. Moreover, the women who have received promotions should be able to provide the mentoring that women often have difficulty obtaining (e.g., Lyness & Thompson, 2000). From this perspective, women's successes, regardless of their modern sexism, would, over time, result in greater workplace outcomes for women in general.

Conversely, viewed through alternate theoretical lenses, the fact that those women endorsing modern sexist beliefs are precisely the women most likely to gain promotion

suggests that their successes may actually prolong or extenuate current gender-based hierarchies. This detrimental outcome could occur through several mechanisms. The women holding modern sexist beliefs who, in turn, move up the organization, may be the women least likely to assist other women in getting ahead. These women, due to their modern sexist belief that gender-based discrimination is no longer a problem, would not regard corrective actions as necessary or appropriate. Moreover, because those in power strive to preserve their status by closing off opportunities to outsiders (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Weber, 1978), organizational leaders might act to maintain the status quo by only promoting women who would support (i.e., modern sexist women), and not disrupt the current gender-based hierarchy. By using sexist beliefs as promotion criteria for women, current leaders not only ensure that their positions go unthreatened, but also dispel any claims of gender-based discrimination. Finally, according to system-justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994), unequal societal stratification is maintained partially because low-status members, upon observing the success of other members of their group, conclude that their own low-status position is legitimate and not the result of discriminatory social policy. Applied to the current context, this perspective suggests that some women who are lower in both status and modern sexism might incorrectly infer that higher status women achieved those positions solely due to their ability, failing to account for the higher status women's sexist views.

The current study also demonstrates an alternative method through which sex-based differences in workplace status may be maintained. Whereas prior research has focused on how individual and institutional prejudice can directly impede women's progress (e.g. Reskin & Ross, 1995; Tougas et al., 1999), the current study suggests that sexists (including women) also may benefit in more subtle ways that do not entail subjugating or discriminating against those targets. That is, sexists may benefit by acting in ways that, on the surface, do not even involve the targets and, by implication, may not appear sexist. We showed that sexists, by turning to men for advice to get ahead, leave their more egalitarian colleagues behind. This finding coincides with recent work demonstrating that, although discrimination in the workplace has become increasingly subtle and difficult to detect in recent times, it is still harmful. For instance, Deitch et al. (2003), in three studies, found that the subtle, everyday discrimination experienced by Blacks (e.g., being excluded from meetings), negatively impacted their psychological well-being. In addition, prior research indicates that those harboring subtle prejudicial beliefs are more likely to act on their prejudices when an authority figure gives justification to discriminate against Black job applicants (Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow, 2000) and immigrants (Petersen & Dietz, 2005). Perhaps, these findings could generalize to the current study, suggesting that modern sexists in an organization whose supervisors offer justification for discriminating against females (e.g., male customers prefer to interact with male employees) will be more likely to obey the authority figure.

Practically, our results raise additional concerns that necessitate managers' attention. To the extent that overt discrimination against women has declined, people may more readily accept the notion that women have equal opportunities (e.g., Swim et al., 1995). Thus, efforts to inform employees about the nature, prevalence, and consequences of modern (versus only blatant) sexism, for example, through diversity training programs, should be useful. In particular, to the degree to which individuals recognize that gender inequality in the workplace remains, they should be more likely to support or endorse policies designed explicitly to promote women's career advancement. Importantly, we are not suggesting that women do not offer valuable information and assistance in developmental relationships. However, in terms

of advancement, we have demonstrated that men may obtain and thus provide more career-related resources, presumably due to their disproportionate standings in and access to powerful positions. This unfortunate finding should provoke managers to be concerned with and, hopefully, balance the presence of women and men represented in the upper echelons of organizations so that women will have the opportunity to offer the same kind of valuable career advice to others as do their male counterparts.

As with most empirical research, the present study is not without limitations. First, our examination of only one organization may limit the generalizability of our findings. Thus, this research should be replicated in other settings to identify the potential conditions under which it may or may not be “beneficial” to be a modern sexist. For example, one might hypothesize that the differential access to power and resources among men may not be as prevalent in organizations where there are more women in positions of power, where there are no women in an environment, or in environments where accessibility to various resources or important organizational knowledge is more uniform across individuals. Second, although we have implicitly assumed that men possess and have access to more resources than do women in this particular organization, information to assess this assumption concerning the male advice-givers who were not supervisors unfortunately was not available. However, as previous findings consistently demonstrate gender differences in terms of power in the workplace (e.g., [Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989](#)), we regard this assumption and, in turn, our conclusions, as plausible. Third, due to the correlational nature of our data, firm causal relationships among variables cannot be asserted. For example, the positive correlation between modern sexism and the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice does not, by itself, speak to the directionality of the relationship. We acknowledge that seeking advice from more men may, in fact, increase one’s tendency to hold modern sexist views because presumed differences between the genders (e.g., in task knowledge) are confirmed. However, such a notion is highly speculative. Given the fact that attitudes are relatively stable and can be useful in predicting behavior (e.g., [Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975](#)) especially in uncontrolled situations in which people have some degree of volition to engage in certain behaviors (e.g., [Snyder & Ickes, 1985](#)), we accept that modern sexism likely predicts the proportion of men from whom one seeks advice. Finally, our measure of career outcomes was limited to the number of promotions received. Subsequent efforts examining the relationship between modern sexism and other career success indicators such as organizational level, base salary, bonus, and stock options (e.g., [Lyness & Thompson, 2000](#)) would be enlightening. Incorporating these additional measures would mitigate concerns that promotions may differ by unit or job type.

Despite these limitations, our research findings and the reasoning upon which they rest clearly raise interesting theoretical and practical questions. Thus, we hope that our study will encourage future studies dedicated to examining the implications of being a modern sexist. We also hope that this study has provided managers with new information regarding sexism in their organizations. Sexism, albeit in a mutated form, is alive and well in organizations, demanding scholarly and managerial attention.

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