European Journal of Social Psychology
Eur. J. Soc. Psychol. **40**, 733–745 (2010)
Published online 6 July 2009 in Wiley InterScience
(www.interscience.wiley.com) **DOI**: 10.1002/ejsp.644

Research article

Women's reactions to ingroup members who protest discriminatory treatment: The importance of beliefs about inequality and response appropriateness

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Abstract

Our goal was to identify factors that shape women's responses to ingroup members who protest gender discrimination. We predicted and found that women who perceived gender discrimination as pervasive regarded a protest response as being more appropriate than a no protest response and expressed greater liking and less anger towards a female lawyer who protested rather than did not protest an unfair promotion decision. Further, beliefs about the appropriateness of the response to discrimination contributed to evaluations of the protesting lawyer. Perceptions that the complaint was an appropriate response to the promotion decision led to more positive evaluations of an ingroup discrimination protester.

Protest can be an effective means of improving the plight of a devalued group. Historically, there are many examples of protest, even from a single individual, that have advanced a group's social position (e.g. Meritor Savings Bank vs. Vinson, 477 US 57, 1986; Dekker vs. VJV-Centrum ECJ, 1992). Despite the potential gains to be obtained by protesting illegitimate treatment, protestors might not always be appreciated by members of their own group. Whether disadvantaged group members respond positively or negatively to ingroup protestors will likely depend upon the *perceived* implications that the protestor's action has for the ingroup. Unless protest is seen as justified by the social circumstances and an effective means of bringing about positive change, a protestor might be seen as making the ingroup look like complainers. Such threat to the ingroup's reputation could evoke the ire and disdain of the disadvantaged group towards the protestor. Hence, perceptions of the justification for and likely consequences of protest will be critical to others' reactions to an ingroup discrimination claimer. We propose that protest by an ingroup member will be seen as appropriate and thus appreciated to the extent that observers perceive that their ingroup is targeted by pervasive discrimination.

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF CLAIMING DISCRIMINATION

Gender discrimination continues to be widespread throughout Western employment settings (see Charles & Grusky, 2004). The continuation of gender discrimination has substantive negative implications for women's economic and

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Received 19 October 2008
Accepted 7 April 2009

psychological outcomes (Major & O'Brien, 2005; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). Moreover, concern about discrimination and social devaluation in male-dominated domains can have a demoralizing effect on women's aspirations (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007), comfort (Adams, Garcia, Purdie-Vaughns, & Steele, 2006) and performance (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). In sum, the evidence is overwhelmingly clear: gender discrimination is detrimental to women.

Despite the many costs of discrimination, members of disadvantaged groups, including women, often do not publicly complain about unfair treatment (Dixon, Storen, & Horn, 2002; Stangor, Swim, Van Allen, & Sechrist, 2002; Swim & Hyers, 1999). In survey (Dixon et al., 2002) and interview (Feagin & Sikes, 1994) research, respondents indicate that one key reason they keep silent about experiences with discrimination is that they fear they will be disliked or labelled a whiner and troublemaker. Laboratory studies show that low status group members tend to be reluctant to acknowledge an experience with discrimination in the presence of others (Postmes, Branscombe, Spears, & Young, 1999; Stangor et al., 2002; Swim & Hyers, 1999). These findings provide evidence that low status group members fear claiming discrimination because of the potential *social costs*; but, are such fears warranted?

Concerns about the social costs of claiming discrimination are valid. In laboratory studies, people tend to derogate individuals who publicly label an experience as discrimination (Garcia, Horstman Reser, Amo, Redersdorff, & Branscombe, 2005; Kaiser & Miller, 2001). Much of this 'social costs' research has focussed on people's reactions to *outgroup* discrimination claimers (e.g. men's derogation of a woman who claims discrimination). Less research attention has been paid to evaluations of discrimination claims by *ingroup* members, despite evidence that people are influenced more by ingroup rather than outgroup social pressure (Ellemers, Doosje, & Spears, 2004; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002). Consequently, the present research focuses on responses to ingroup discrimination claimers. A second concern is that little research has sought to identify the mechanisms underlying reactions to discrimination claimers, including the circumstances that might lead to support versus derogation. Although some research has examined the role of justice beliefs (Kaiser, Dyrenforth, & Hagiwara, 2006), it has focussed on how this factor affects reactions to outgroup discrimination claimers. Thus, we examine two factors that social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) predicts will influence responses to *ingroup* discrimination claimers: beliefs about pervasiveness of discrimination and the perceived appropriateness of the complaint in the specific situation.

Ingroup evaluations

Judgments of ingroup members tend to be more extreme than those of outgroup members (Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988). Relative to members of the outgroup, people are more likely to praise likable and norm-upholding ingroup members and derogate dislikeable and norm-violating ingroup members. By lauding 'good' ingroup members and castigating ingroup 'black sheep,' people can affirm the high standards and 'normative legitimacy' of their ingroup and maintain a positive ingroup identity. The proclivity for people to respond most extremely to ingroup members suggests that they may be particularly vigilant in monitoring ingroup responses to discrimination. Whether they support or derogate an ingroup discrimination claimer should depend on whether they perceive such protest as benefiting or harming their ingroup.

The few studies that have examined responses to ingroup discrimination claimers have produced mixed evidence. Some research has shown that people are even *harsher* in their evaluation of ingroup discrimination claimers (Garcia et al., 2005). In contrast, Dodd, Giuliano, Boutell, and Moran (2001) observed ingroup social *support* for a woman who confronted rather than ignored a man who made a sexist comment. However, women only liked and respected the confronter more than a non-confronter when the comment was blatantly sexist. When the remark was ambiguous, women's evaluations were unaffected by the target's response to the remark.

The moderating role of ambiguity found by Dodd et al. (2001) provides insight into the discrepancy between the ingroup social support found in their study and the ingroup social costs found by other researchers. In the research by Garcia et al. (2005), participants read about an individual in a prior research study who had failed a creativity test. Although participants learned that the test-evaluator in that study was biased against the target's gender group, it is not certain that they attributed the failure to discrimination: a biased evaluator might not always lead to a biased evaluation, especially on standardized tests that could be assumed to use uniform grading criteria. Garcia et al. conjectured that if the discrimination had been less ambiguous (as in the Dodd et al. blatant condition), their results might have shown support for an ingroup discrimination claimer. This possibility highlights the role that perceptions of discrimination might have for

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

observers' reactions to ingroup discrimination claimers. Although the research by Dodd et al. relates to perceptions of discrimination concerning a specific event, we propose that perceptions of discrimination in general should also play an important role in evaluations of ingroup discrimination claimers.

Perceptions of Pervasive Discrimination against Women

The social identity approach emphasizes that women's subjective understanding of gender inequality will shape their beliefs about the appropriate response to structural differences between men and women (Tajfel, 1978). Accordingly, perceiving that their gender group experiences unfair devaluation will encourage women to self-define in terms of their gender group membership and support strategies that promote women's collective advancement and challenge the *status quo* (Ellemers, 1993). In contrast, women who feel that gender discrimination is uncommon and that status boundaries are permeable will be inclined to think in terms of their individual self and endorse individual mobility endeavours (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). These predictions about the importance of structural beliefs for collective mobility among disadvantaged group members have been well-supported (see Branscombe & Ellemers, 1998; Ellemers, 1993; Simon, Hastedt, & Aufderheide, 1997). We argue that variations in subjective understanding of gender relations should also influence beliefs regarding the appropriate response to individual experiences with discrimination.

Research regarding the psychological consequences of perceiving discrimination against one's group has focussed on how these perceptions affect individual well being (see Major & O'Brien, 2005; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002) or collective action tendencies (Wright et al., 1990). The present investigation considers how perceptions of discrimination influence observers' reactions to ingroup discrimination claimers. Like collective action, protest from individuals challenges unfair treatment; thus, we reason that beliefs about the pervasiveness of gender inequality will also influence support for a woman who protests discrimination. Following from social identity theory, we propose that support for an ingroup member who protests discrimination should be greatest among women who perceive gender discrimination as pervasive. Further, the extent to which perceptions of pervasiveness lead to support is likely to be a function of the perceived appropriateness of the protest in the given circumstances.

Appropriateness of a Response to Discrimination

Drawing on Kowalski's (1996) analysis of complaining, Garcia et al. (2005) conjectured that evaluations of ingroup members who claim discrimination would depend on the perceived appropriateness of the complaint. Although people often dislike complainers, they often support a complainer if the complaint is seen as appropriate (e.g. warranted, legitimate, impactful). Likewise, the more legitimate people think that collection action is as a means to foster positive change, the more inclined they are to support the action (Hornsey et al., 2006; Wright et al., 1990). Thus, people's responses to ingroup discrimination claimers should be shaped by the perceived appropriateness of the complaint. On this basis, we anticipate that women who believe sexism is pervasive are likely to regard protest as an appropriate way for group members to deal with unfair treatment, which in turn will lead them to favour an ingroup protestor.

Type of protest

Just as women can choose either individual or collective mobility strategies in response to gender inequality (Ellemers, 1993), they can respond to a personal experience with discrimination by expressing either individual or collective justice concerns. A collective approach to protest is one in which a woman responds to discriminatory treatment by pointing out the harm and unfairness to women in general and emphasizing the assets and capabilities of women as a whole. An individual approach to protest is one in which a woman responds by focussing on the harm and unfairness to herself and emphasizing her personal deservingness. We included both forms of protest to assess whether the type of protest matters. Although it is possible that women who perceive sexist discrimination as pervasive will favour an ingroup member who promotes women's collective advancement, it is also feasible that they will respond favourably to either form of protest. Regardless of the type of protest, an individual woman who confronts unfair treatment could be regarded as inspiring other

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women to do the same and opening the door for future women by overcoming the barriers in her way. Hence, women who perceive their gender group as disadvantaged could endorse both forms of protest to the extent they believe that protest is more appropriate than no protest in the given context.

Research Hypotheses

The current research addressed three questions. First, we examined whether women's emotional and evaluative reactions to a female target who either protested or did not protest a biased outcome would depend upon beliefs about the pervasiveness of gender discrimination. We predicted that evaluations of both a protesting target and her response would be positive among those women who regard discrimination as pervasive, but negative among those who perceive discrimination as rare. Second, we tested whether the moderating effects of pervasiveness of discrimination on reactions to a protesting target would be mediated by beliefs about the appropriateness of the response. We predicted that women who perceive gender discrimination as pervasive would respond positively to a woman who protested an unfair hiring decision because they would regard a protest response as being more appropriate than a non-protest response. Third, we examined whether evaluations of a protesting target and her action would vary depending upon the form of protest she took—individual or collective. We examined whether women would favour either (a) an ingroup protestor who focussed on collective justice rather than individual justice concerns or (b) any ingroup protestor because both forms of protest would be better than no protest in the given circumstances.

To examine these questions, we had women read about an unfair hiring decision in which a law firm chose not to grant a highly qualified female lawyer partnership in the firm and instead promoted a less qualified male lawyer. We varied whether the female lawyer chose to protest the decision or not. We also considered two different types of protest—an individual strategy in which she focussed on the unfairness of the hiring decision for herself or a collective strategy where she emphasized the firm's unfairness to women. After reading the scenario, participants indicated their anger and liking for this female lawyer, and their perceptions concerning the appropriateness of her response to the hiring decision.

METHOD

Participants and Cover Story

We recruited 129 female undergraduates at the University of Kansas to participate in a study concerning 'impressions that people form of others in various life situations.' Participants received credit towards their introductory psychology course.

Materials and Procedure

Participants received a booklet containing the description of an event that ostensibly occurred in an American law firm and a series of questions concerning that event. All participants learned about an incident in which a male lawyer was promoted to senior partner over a more qualified female lawyer. The decision was clearly discriminatory. The female lawyer won more high profile cases, won greater average awards for her clients, brought more money into the firm and worked more hours than her male colleague. His assets were that he played golf well and some of the senior partners enjoyed the company of the male lawyer more and did not think women were cut out to be lawyers.

After reading that the female lawyer felt the decision was unfair, participants read one of three versions regarding her response to the discriminatory promotion decision. They were randomly assigned to the *No Protest* ($N = 41$), *Individual Protest* ($N = 43$) or *Collective Protest* ($N = 45$). In the *No Protest* condition, the female lawyer said that, despite her disappointment, she would learn to live with the firm's decision. She stated,

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The decision has been made and there's little that I can do about it at this point. Because I can't change things, I'm going to keep on working at the firm and make the best of my current position.

In the *Individual Protest* condition, the target decided to ask the firm to reconsider the decision and said

This firm did not look at my individual qualities sufficiently. I agree that most women are not cut out for partnership, but I am different from other women. I expect only to be judged on my individual qualifications. This firm is treating me unfairly.

In the *Collective Protest* condition, the target also decided to ask the firm to reconsider their decision and said

This firm is not fully considering the abilities of women. If they did, they would see that women could perform just as competently as men. I expect women to be treated equally to men. This firm is treating women unfairly.

Pervasiveness of Gender Discrimination

Participants completed the Modern Sexism Scale to assess their beliefs about the pervasiveness of gender discrimination. This 8-item scale includes statements such as 'Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States,' 'Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination,' and 'On average, people in our society treat men and women equally.' We averaged the items together, after the appropriate reverse-scoring, so that high scores indicated perceptions of gender discrimination as pervasive ($\alpha = .75$).

Outcome Measures

Our outcome measures included participants' beliefs about the promotion decision, emotional reactions to the female lawyer, evaluations of her, and perceptions of the target's response to the event. Participants responded to all measures using Likert type scales, which unless specified otherwise ranged from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*).

Anger Towards the Target

We assessed participants' anger towards the female target with a single item: 'I feel angry at Catherine.' The higher the score on this item, the greater amount of anger the participants expressed towards the target.

Evaluation of Target

Participants next evaluated the likeability of the target by completing six items. These items included: 'I like Catherine,' 'I admire Catherine,' 'Catherine is the type of person I would like to be friends with,' 'Catherine has many positive traits,' 'I would like to be a coworker of Catherine,' and 'I feel proud of Catherine.' We averaged these items together to create a *Liking* measure, with high scores indicating greater liking ($\alpha = .88$).

Evaluation of Target's Response

The next measure assessed evaluations of the target's response to the partnership decision. Participants specified how appropriate the target's response was, how effective her response was for achieving her personal goals, how assertive her response was, and how harmful her response was for other women (reverse-scored). We averaged these four items together

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to create a *Response Evaluation* measure ($\alpha = .76$). High scores on this measure indicated that the participants regarded the target's response to the promotion decision as a positive way of dealing with the firm's discrimination.

Unfairness of the Promotion Decision

We included three measures that assessed participants' impressions about the unfairness of the partnership decision. First, participants indicated who they thought was the more qualified candidate. Responses for this item were coded such that high scores indicated the female lawyer was perceived as the more qualified candidate and low scores indicated that the male lawyer was the more qualified candidate. Participants next completed a 9-item measure that assessed the extent to which the decision to promote the male lawyer to partner was regarded as gender discrimination ($\alpha = .87$). Items on this measure were: 'Catherine was denied the promotion because of sex discrimination,' 'I do not think the event was a valid instance of sex discrimination (reversed)' and 'I perceived this as a clear-cut case of discrimination.' We averaged the items together, with high scores indicating agreement that the promotion decision represented gender discrimination. These latter two measures allowed us to test whether participants interpreted the scenario as we intended. If the mean response on both measures is high, then participants correctly identified the female lawyer as the stronger candidate and regarded the promotion decision as discrimination.

Manipulation Checks

We included two items to assess whether participants correctly understood Catherine's response to the promotion decision. Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed that 'Catherine wanted to be seen as an individual' and 'Catherine was concerned with how discrimination affects all women.' Although we anticipated that responses to the items might be higher to the items in both protest conditions compared to the no protest condition, we expected responses to the first question to be highest in the individual protest condition and responses to the second item to be highest in the collective protest condition.

RESULTS

Manipulation and Event Interpretation Checks

To test whether participants understood the target response conditions as we intended, we analysed participants' perceptions about why the female lawyer responded to the partnership decision as she did. Two one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) revealed that participants' perceptions of the female lawyer's response to the partnership decision varied across conditions for both the concern with individuality, $F(2, 126) = 11.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .29$, and the concern for women, $F(2, 126) = 14.43$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .32$, manipulation checks. Participants in the individual protest condition were more likely to agree that the female target wanted to be seen as an individual ($M = 6.49$, SD $= .77$) than were participants in the collective protest ($M = 5.42$, SD $= 1.50$), $t(126) = 3.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .31$ or the no protest ($M = 5.12$, SD $= 1.65$) conditions, $t(126) = -4.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .38$. In contrast, participants in the collective protest condition ($M = 4.84$, SD $= 1.67$) regarded the target as more concerned with how discrimination affects all women than those in the individual ($M = 3.77$, SD $= 1.59$), $t(126) = -3.07$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .26$ or the no protest conditions ($M = 2.95$, SD $= 1.67$), $t(126) = -5.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .43$. Participants in the individual condition also perceived the target as more concerned with the effects of discrimination on women than did participants in the no protest condition, $t(126) = -2.28$, $p = .024$, $\eta^2 = .20$. This finding indicates that participants regarded both forms of protest as reflecting a concern with women as a group to some extent.

We also examined whether participants' interpretation of the information that they read about the partnership decision corresponded with our intentions. That is, did participants perceive the female lawyer as the stronger candidate and did they regard the decision to promote the male lawyer as discrimination? We found that participants accurately identified the

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female lawyer as the better candidate for the senior partnership position. The mean response ($M = 6.43$, SD = .88) to the question 'Who was more qualified to receive the partnership?' (coded so that 1 = *Paul*; 7 = *Catherine*), was significantly greater than the midpoint of 4, $t(128) = 31.33$, $p < .001$. Participants also perceived the firm's decision as discrimination; The mean response on the measure assessing whether the event reflected discrimination ($M = 5.29$, SD = 1.11) was reliably greater than the midpoint of 4, $t(128) = 13.19$, $p < .001$. Judgments concerning who was the best candidate, $F(2, 126) = .07$, $p > .25$, and whether the decision was discriminatory, $F(2, 126) = .16$, $p > .25$, did not differ by response condition.[1]

Regression Tests for Moderation

The main goals of the moderated multiple regressions were to examine (a) whether the target's response to the hiring decision influenced evaluations of the target and her action and (2) whether these effects were moderated by beliefs about the pervasiveness of gender discrimination.[2] Thus, we subjected all dependent measures to separate moderated multiple regressions (MMR) with response type, pervasiveness of sexism beliefs, and their interaction simultaneously entered as predictor variables. Following Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003), we contrast coded the three-level protest type variable to represent the two contrasts of interest. 'Response Choice' contrasted the no protest group versus the two protest groups (no protest = −2/3, individual protest = 1/3 and collective protest = 1/3) and 'Protest Type' contrasted the collective protest group versus the individual protest group (no protest = 0, individual protest = −1/2 and collective protest = 1/2). Relative to dummy or effect coding, contrast coding is more appropriate when testing specific hypotheses because it allows one to compare orthogonal combinations of a categorical variable and provides greater statistical power (Cohen et al., 2003). After centring the continuous pervasiveness of sexism moderator variable, we computed the cross products of Response Choice and Pervasiveness of Sexism and Protest Type and Pervasiveness of Sexism to produce the two interaction terms required to represent the interaction between the experimental condition and the moderator variable. We then regressed each outcome variable simultaneously onto the two contrast variables, the continuous Pervasiveness of Sexism measure, and the two interaction terms (Cohen et al., 2003).[3]

Anger Towards the Target

Following the procedures outlined above, we regressed anger towards the target on the contrast and moderator variables. Response Choice reliably predicted anger, $B = -1.43$, $t(123) = -5.02$, $p < .001$: Participants expressed greater anger towards a target who did not protest ($M = 3.07$; SD = 2.07) than one who did protest ($M = 1.68$; SD = 1.27). Of greater interest, was the significant interaction between Response Choice and Pervasiveness of Sexism, $B = -1.08$, $t(123) = -2.92$, $p = .004$. As predicted, whether anger was greater for a non-protesting or protesting target depended upon participants' beliefs about the pervasiveness of discrimination. To understand the nature of this interaction, we computed simple slopes. As illustrated in Figure 1, the more sexism was perceived as pervasive, the greater anger was towards a non-protesting target, $B = .74$, $t(123) = 2.40$, $p = .018$, and less anger towards a protesting target, $B = -.35$, $t(123) = -1.82$, $p = .072$, though the latter effect was only marginally significant. Response Choice was the only contrast that produced significant effects. The type of protest that the target chose produced neither a main effect, $B = -.18$, $t(123) = -.54$, $p = .589$, nor an interaction with beliefs about pervasiveness of discrimination, $B = .18$, $t(123) = .44$, $p = .662$.

[1]Two separate moderated multiple regression analyses (following the same procedure used to analyse the main dependent measures) produced neither a reliable main effect of response condition nor a significant interaction between response condition and the pervasiveness of sexism measure ps ≥ .20. The moderated multiple regression analyses produced one significant finding for each of the measures: beliefs about the pervasiveness of sexism were positively related to participants' beliefs that the female lawyer was the more qualified candidate $\beta = .41$, $t(123) = 4.96$, $p < .001$ and their perceptions that the promotion outcome was discriminatory, $\beta = .53$, $t(123) = 6.94$, $p < .001$.

[2]Before testing for the moderating effects of perceived pervasiveness of sexism, we ran a one-way ANOVA with response type as the independent variable and pervasiveness of sexism as the dependent variable. This analysis was not significant, $F(2, 125) = .782$, $p = .460$, indicating that pervasiveness of sexism beliefs were unaffected by the response type manipulation.

[3]We report unstandardized coefficients (*B*) rather that betas (β). Because βs are not properly standardized in interaction terms, they are not interpretable whereas *B* represents the difference between the unweighted means of the groups involved in the contrast (see Cohen et al., 2003).

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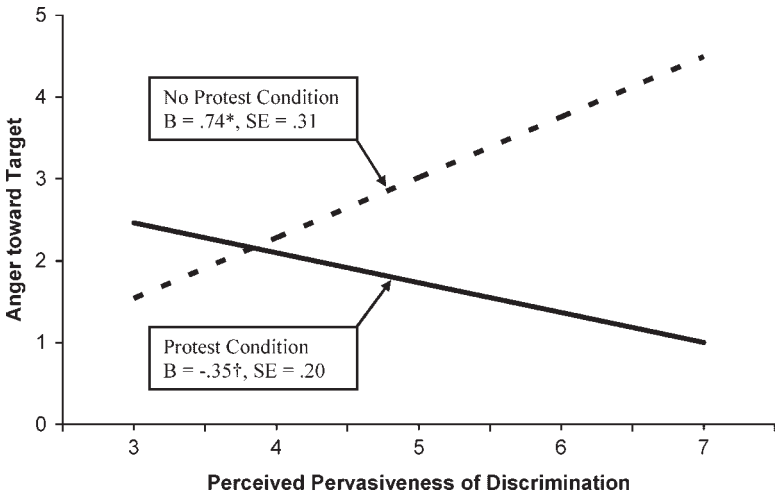

Figure 1. Beliefs about the pervasiveness of sexism moderate the relationship between the target's response to the discrimination and anger towards the target. * $p < .05$; † $p = .07$

Evaluation of Target

We followed the same MMR procedure as we did with the anger measure, this time regressing Liking onto the contrast and moderator variables. This analysis revealed a main effect of Response Choice, $B = .49$, $t(123) = 2.57$, $p = .011$, such that liking was greatest for the target when she chose to protest ($M = 5.79$; SD = 0.88) rather than not protest the hiring decision ($M = 5.31$; SD = 1.30). This main effect was again qualified by a significant interaction between Response Choice and Pervasiveness of Sexism, $B = .84$, $t(123) = 3.40$, $p = .001$. As illustrated in Figure 2, greater pervasiveness of sexism was associated with *less* liking for the target when she did not protest the promotion decision, $B = -.47$, $t(123) = -2.30$, $p = .023$, and greater liking for the target when she protested the promotion decision, $B = .36$, $t(123) = 2.67$, $p = .009$. Consistent with the anger measure, no effects of Protest Type emerged from these analyses either on its own, $B = .01$, $t(123) = -.025$, $p = .980$, or in combination with the pervasiveness of discrimination measure, $B = .12$, $t(123) = .46$, $p = .650$.

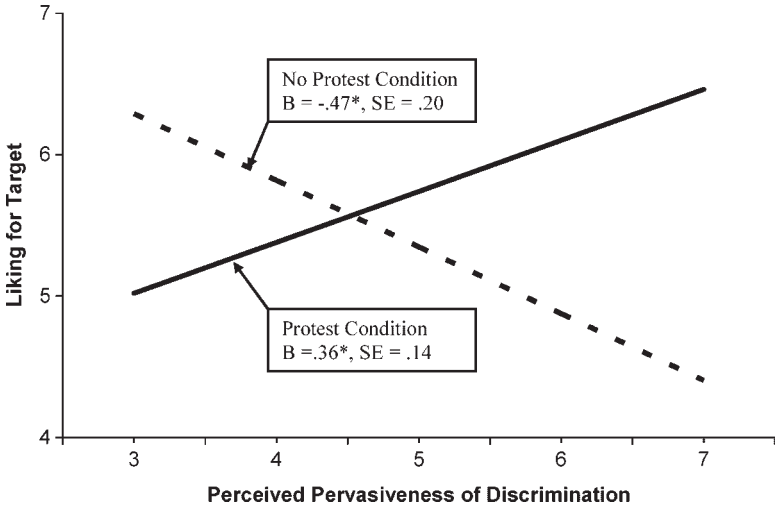

Figure 2. Beliefs about the pervasiveness of sexism moderate the relationship between the target's response to the discrimination and liking for the target. * $p < .05$

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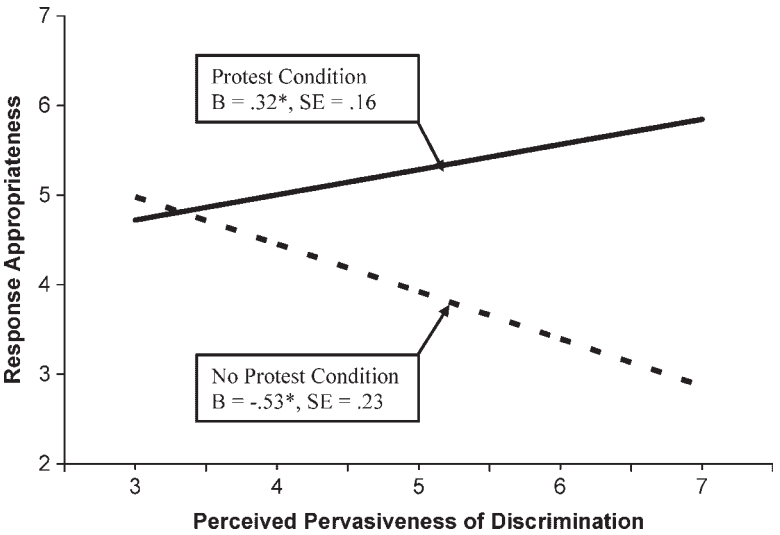

Figure 3. Beliefs about the pervasiveness of sexism moderate the relationship between the target's response to the discrimination and the perceived response appropriateness. * $p < .05$

Evaluation of Target's Response

We next submitted the response appropriateness measure to the MMR analyses. Once again, we found a main effect of Protest Choice, $B = 1.44$, $t(123) = 6.66$, $p < .001$: Participants perceived a protest response as being more appropriate ($M = 5.31$; SD = 1.30) than a no protest response ($M = 3.88$; SD = 1.46). This main effect was qualified by a significant interaction of Response Choice and Pervasiveness of Sexism, $B = .86$, $t(123) = 3.04$, $p = .003$. As beliefs about the pervasiveness of sexism increased, a no protest response was rated less appropriate, $B = -.53$, $t(123) = -2.25$, $p = .026$, whereas a protest response was rated as more appropriate $B = .32$, $t(123) = 2.04$, $p = .043$ (see Figure 3). The Protest Type contrast produced one marginal effect. Participants tended to rate an individual protest as being more appropriate than a collective strategy, $B = -.41$, $t(123) = -1.73$, $p = .087$. However, the Protest Type X Pervasiveness of Discrimination interaction was not significant, $B = .25$, $t(123) = .79$, $p = .433$.

Tests of Mediated Moderation

Our next goal was to test our mediated moderation model. Mediated moderation occurs when two predictor variables (in our case: Response Type and Pervasiveness of Discrimination) interactively affect a mediator, which in turn influences an outcome variable (Morgan-Lopez & MacKinnon, 2006). The previous MMR analyses established that the Response Choice × Pervasiveness of Discrimination interaction was associated with Response Appropriateness (mediator) and both Anger and Liking. A regression test confirmed that the mediator was related to both Anger, $\beta = -.53$, $t(127) = -7.11$, $p < .001$, and Liking, $\beta = .49$, $t(127) = 6.41$, $p < .001$. When Response Appropriateness was added to the MMR models, the Response Choice × Pervasiveness of Discrimination interaction appeared to reduce for both Anger, $B = -.63$, $t(122) = -1.78$, $p = .077$ and Liking, $B = .52$, $t(122) = 2.25$, $p = .026$, but Evaluation Response remained unchanged and significant for both, $B = -.53$, $t(122) = -4.81$, $p < .001$ and $B = .37$, $t(122) = 5.10$, $p < .001$, respectively. To test this polential mediation effect, we followed the bootstrapping method (with 1000 iterations) advocated by Preacher, Rucker and Hayes (2007; see also Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005).[4] This procedure tests the null hypothesis that the indirect path from the interaction term to the dependent variable via the mediator does not significantly differ from zero. If zero is not

[4]We chose bootstrapping methodology as a means of testing mediation over the commonly used Sobel test. Because the Sobel test assumes large sample sizes and that the indirect effect is normally distributed, bootstrapping methodology was a more appropriate test of mediation (Muller et al., 2005; Preacher et al., 2007).

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contained within the confidence intervals (CI) computed by the bootstrapping procedure, then one can conclude that the indirect effect is indeed significantly different from zero at $p < 0.05$. We adapted the SPSS macro provided by Preacher and Hayes (2008) for tests of multiple mediation to test for mediated moderation. We entered the interaction between Response Choice and Pervasiveness of Discrimination as the independent variable, Response Appropriateness as the mediator and the main effects of Response Choice and Pervasiveness of Discrimination as covariates. Separate analyses confirmed the significance of the indirect effect of the Response Type × Pervasiveness of Discrimination interaction via Response Appropriateness on both Anger (95% CI = −0.9058 to −0.0830) and Liking (95% CI = 0.0675 to 0.6776). Because zero is not contained within either confidence interval, the findings illustrate that the interactive effect of Response Type and Pervasiveness of Discrimination on Anger and Liking for the target is a function of beliefs about the appropriateness of the target's response.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined two factors that could influence women's reactions to an ingroup member who protested unfair treatment: perceptions of pervasive gender discrimination and beliefs about the appropriateness of the protest. Overall, we found that women expressed less anger and greater liking for a woman who protested an unfair hiring decision. They also perceived protest as being more appropriate than no protest. Most notably, these positive feelings for a protestor and her response were moderated by perceptions of pervasive gender discrimination. As beliefs about pervasive gender discrimination increased, so did liking for the protestor and appropriateness ratings of the protest response, whereas anger towards the target decreased. The opposite occurred for a non-protestor: as pervasiveness beliefs increased, a non-protestor elicited greater anger, less liking and lower appropriateness ratings. Together these findings support our predictions that beliefs about gender inequality (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) shape how women perceive ingroup responses to experiences with discrimination. Our findings suggest that women who perceive gender discrimination as pervasive will be positive towards a protest response and protestor, and negative when protest is absent.

Our prediction concerning the mediational role of response appropriateness on liking and anger was also supported. Perceptions of gender discrimination as pervasive were associated with increased beliefs about the appropriateness of a protest response and decreased beliefs about the appropriateness of a non-protest. These beliefs about response appropriateness generated greater positive affective and evaluative responses towards a protestor, but greater negative reactions towards a non-protestor. These findings suggest that women who regarded their group as pervasively disadvantaged preferred a protestor because they regarded her response as being more appropriate than no protest. Paralleling past research showing that people are supportive of complaints (Kowalski, 1996) and collection actions (Hornsey et al., 2006; Wright et al., 1990) that they perceive as warranted, the present research indicates that women's responses to ingroup discrimination claimers may depend upon the perceived appropriateness of the complaint.

The type of protest chosen by the target did not produce any effects on anger or liking for the target. Women's proclivity to prefer a target who protested the hiring decision did not vary as a function of whether she employed an individual or collective protest strategy. Moreover, although beliefs about the pervasiveness of discrimination moderated evaluations of a protestor versus non-protestor, these beliefs did not produce a similar moderation effect for the type of protest. Thus, target evaluations were unaffected by protest type, regardless of women's beliefs about their collective disadvantage. Appropriateness ratings did differ; however, across the two types of protest. There was a marginal tendency for women to regard individual protest as more appropriate than collective protest. The results for response appropriateness; however, were limited to this main effect.

The finding that participants favoured a target who protested the hiring decision, regardless of whether she employed an individual or collective protest strategy appears counterintuitive, especially when applied to women who strongly believe that their group experiences pervasive discrimination. These women could be expected to prefer strategies that stress women's collective assets rather than an individual woman's ability. So, why did we not find that evaluations of the female protestor varied as a function of the form of protest she took in conjunction with beliefs about pervasive discrimination?

To address the above question, we draw on both the concern about women measure and the appropriateness ratings of the different forms of protest. Recall that women in our study regarded (1) *both* the individual and collective protestors to be concerned about women *as a group* relative to a non-protestor, and (2) the individual protest as more appropriate than

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

the collective one. These findings are consistent with research showing that in Western societies, people generally prefer individual rather than collective protest (Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993), even when it is clear that token mobility is possible for only a few individuals (see Wright, 2001). Because individual approaches to employment mobility are congruent with workplaces that emphasize individual responsibility for personal outcomes, they may be especially favoured in these settings. The tendency for our participants to be more supportive of an individual strategy could reflect both beliefs about the strategy's efficacy in the given context and the inference that the female lawyer was using similar knowledge to be strategic. Women may fear that in an individualistic 'boys' club' (such as a law firm) publicly claiming discrimination will be socially undesirable and result in further harm (see Kobrynowicz & Branscombe, 1997). A protest that insinuates that men are sexist and disregard women's abilities would be more threatening to decision makers than one that stresses an individual woman's abilities and does not directly challenge the men's views about women. If an individual strategy was regarded by participants as minimizing potential defensiveness in the men, it could then be considered more effective than arguing 'women's cause' at enhancing the woman's future success in the firm. In addition, regardless of the strategy used, individual women who achieve advancement might be seen as opening doors for other women, and improving women's status overall. Indeed, women in our study did regard an individualistic protestor as being concerned about women as a group.

The preference for the individual strategy could also be attributed to the inexperience of our participants, who may be unaware that individual mobility approaches are successful for only a few women and not foresee how such approaches could undermine women's interests (Wright, 2001). Indeed, our finding that women regarded an individual strategy as showing concern for women as a group (relative to a non-protestor) suggests they did not realize the harmfulness of that approach for their collective interests. Unfortunately, the preference to adopt individual strategies to improve personal status might be further encouraged if such behaviour elicits appreciation from ingroup members. Yet, the use of individual strategies tends to be ineffective at fostering positive change and undermines women's support for collective action (see Wright, 2001). Thus, our participants' support for a woman using individual mobility strategies can ironically be detrimental to women, individually and collectively.

Implications, Limitations and Future Directions

The mediational role of perceived appropriateness raises some caution regarding the empirical investigation of the social consequences faced by discrimination claimers. The type of complaint made by discrimination claimers often differs across research studies. In some research, participants learn that after failing a test graded by a potentially biased evaluator, the target attributed the failure to discrimination in a survey about the test-taking experience (e.g. Garcia et al., 2005; Kaiser & Miller, 2001). In other studies, the participant learn that the target confronted the discriminator (e.g. Dodd et al., 2001). As argued by Garcia et al. (2005), circling a number on an anonymous survey is not equivalent to confronting the perpetrator or protesting the outcome. The latter two are likely to be perceived by participants as a more effective means than the former and research shows that people will be supportive of complaints they deem as having instrumental value (Kowalski, 1996). Despite these important differences, the various responses to discrimination are often used interchangeably within the literature, and the import of the particular type of discrimination claim used in a specific study is seldom discussed. One fruitful future research direction would be to examine directly the consequences associated with various forms of discrimination claims.

There are other methodological features worth considering that provide insight into discrepant findings across past research studies. For example, we found that women expressed less anger and greater liking toward a woman who protested rather than did not protest the promotion decision. These findings are in contrast to the ingroup social costs observed by Garcia et al. (2005) but are consistent with the ingroup support observed by Dodd et al. (2001) in the blatant sexism condition. Given that participants strongly agreed that the female lawyer experienced discrimination, the event in the current study more closely resembled the blatant condition in the Dodd et al. study. With this similarity, our findings expand upon those by Dodd et al. by showing that even when discrimination is blatant, subjective beliefs about gender discrimination in society as a whole (not just the objective likelihood of discrimination in a specific situation) can influence support for ingroup discrimination claimers.

The current study is similar to Dodd et al. in two other key ways. First, like Dodd et al., the current study used a discriminatory outcome that was more consequential than the one used by Garcia et al. (2005). Being refused a deserved

DOI: 10.1002/ejsp

promotion in a prestigious law firm because of one's gender is more consequential than failing a test in a research study. People tend to be more supportive of complaints against consequential rather than trivial outcomes (Kowalski, 1996). Furthermore, as noted earlier, protesting the outcome (current study) or confronting a man for his sexist comment (Dodd et al., 2001) is a more effective means of addressing the issue than is privately circling a survey response (Garcia et al., 2005).

The possibility that different research approaches contribute to different findings in the social costs literature provides an opportunity to expand our understanding of the factors that influence reactions to discrimination claimers. In real world settings, discrimination claims can take on several different forms and address a variety of discriminatory outcomes, which vary in ambiguity and consequentiality. Based on the discrepant findings across the research discussed above, we propose that support for ingroup discrimination claimers will be greatest when the discrimination is consequential and unambiguous, and the discrimination claim could foster positive change (see Garcia et al., 2005). Although our research indicates that appropriateness does matter, it would be informative to isolate what factors lead to perceptions that protest *is* appropriate. We suggest that manipulating the effectiveness of the response (the discrimination claim results in positive, negative, or no change) would be a useful direction for further research.

In summary, the current research extends past findings that publicly claiming discrimination can have social consequences by examining two factors that we hypothesized would influence women's evaluations of a discrimination claimer: beliefs about the pervasiveness of gender discrimination and perceptions about the appropriateness of the protest. We argued that women's reactions to a woman who protested an experience with gender discrimination would be determined by the perceived implications that the protestor has for the ingroup. If the woman's response was perceived as harming the ingroup, she would face ingroup rejection. If her protest was regarded as benefiting the ingroup, she would experience support. Consistent with this argument we found that women who believed their group to be targeted by gender discrimination were more supportive of a woman who protested rather than accepted a discriminatory outcome. Further, the joint effects of response type (protest versus no protest) and perceptions of pervasive sexism were mediated by response appropriateness. Perceiving pervasive sexism led women to regard protest as more appropriate than no protest, which in turn generated positive evaluations of a protestor and negative reactions to a non-protestor.

CONCLUSION

Past research indicates that people will be especially inclined to tailor their public responses to discrimination in order to maximize ingroup approval (e.g. Ellemers et al., 2004; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002). Given the many advances that groups have made as a result of individual and collective protest, it is essential for a group's well being that people feel encouraged by their own ingroup to confront discrimination and use collective mobility strategies. Although silence and individual mobility approaches may provide temporary benefits for the individual and group's social identity—particularly if nothing effective can be done in the particular circumstances, it can also prevent long-term progress. Consequently, further investigation is warranted to understand the factors that influence the social forces that shape how people respond to personal experiences with discrimination.

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DOI: 10.1002/ejsp