MODERN SEXISM IN MODERN TIMES: PUBLIC OPINION IN THE #METOO ERA

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Abstract

Issues of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and gendered power imbalances have risen to prominence in the wake of the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the rise of the #MeToo movement. This paper uses original panel and cross-sectional data to assess the degree to which levels of sexism have changed in response to current events, and finds very little change in levels of sexism from 2004 to 2018. The results also suggest that modern sexism significantly correlates with views undercutting the pervasiveness of sexual misconduct, purporting #MeToo has gone too far, and opposing mandatory workplace harassment training, among other beliefs. Overall, the evidence suggests modern sexism is firmly entrenched in the public mind and readily connected to public opinion in the wake of #MeToo.

MODERN SEXISM IN MODERN TIMES: PUBLIC OPINION IN THE #METOO ERA

In the United States, issues of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and gendered power imbalances have risen to prominence in the wake of the 2016 presidential election and the #MeToo movement. During the 2016 campaign, dozens of women accused Donald Trump of past sexual harassment and assault; an infamous tape surfaced featuring Trump boasting his celebrity status gave him a free pass to sexually assault women; and Trump displayed overt hostility towards accusers, often using language laced with misogyny. Trump's election as president catalyzed widespread demonstrations of defiance, manifested in Women's Marches and record numbers of (mostly Democratic) women running for office (Caygle 2018).

In October 2017, journalists at the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker* reported on decades of sexual harassment and assault by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. Days after these stories broke, actress Alyssa Milano invited those who had experienced sexual assault and harassment to write "Me Too" on social media, a phrase originated by activist Tarana Burke more than a decade earlier. Within the first 24 hours, "me too" appeared in over 12 million Facebook posts around the world, and after 48 hours, 45% of U.S.-based Facebook users had friends who posted "me too" (Park 2017). Google searches for the terms "metoo" and "sexual harassment" skyrocketed, as shown in Figure 1, and media coverage featuring the term "sexual harassment" also increased in 2017 and 2018, as shown in Figure 2.

[FIGURES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE]

This paper investigates the extent to which this set of highly salient events shaped levels of sexism among the American public. By designing and administering an

advantageously-timed re-interview of a nationally representative online panel of respondents, we probe the extent to which individuals updated their expressed levels of modern sexism over time. Conceptually, modern sexism represents a denial that discrimination against women exists and a resentment towards efforts to name or address gender inequities (Swim et al. 1995; Swim and Cohen 1997). It is distinct from flat out misogyny, as modern sexism does not directly endorse indiscriminate hatred towards women, but instead orients negativity towards specific types of women: those who complain about gender inequities.[1] It is distinct from old-fashioned sexist views that essentialize men and women into different gender roles and that social pressures have rendered less desirable to overtly state (Swim et al. 1995; Swim and Cohen 1997). Instead, modern sexism "reflect[s] insensitivity to gender inequality" (Swim and Cohen 1997, 106) and negativity towards women who highlight and challenge existing discriminatory structures. The conceptual distinction between old-fashioned sexist views and modern sexism means one can both explicitly reject traditional gender roles and not fully endorse gender equality (Swim et al. 1995). Studying modern sexism over time speaks to a larger literature that examines how political predispositions are shaped by and/or shape our interpretations of unfolding events (e.g., Tesler 2016).

This paper also briefly examines the effect of modern sexism on public opinion concerning issues of sexual harassment and sexual assault. While prior work has examined

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[1] This can still have negative consequences for all women, as they may censor themselves for fear of being perceived as "complaining" about gender inequality (see Swim and Cohen 1997 for a discussion of this type of silencing effect).

the relationship between modern sexism and candidate evaluations (e.g., McThomas and Tesler 2016; Simas and Bumgardner 2017; Valentino et al. 2018), less is known about its influence over policy and solutions-oriented outcomes. In this paper, we study modern sexism's effect on views about the #MeToo movement and ways to address sexual misconduct.[2] Taken together, the analyses reveal stability in levels of modern sexism among the American public and identify how modern sexism significantly shapes citizens' views on the #MeToo movement and its attendant policy solutions.

THE ARC OF THE #METOO MOVEMENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SEXISM

As the #MeToo movement gained momentum in the fall of 2017, allegations against dozens of mostly male figures arose almost daily. From news anchor Matt Lauer to Congressman John Conyers, comedian Louis C.K. and celebrity chef Mario Batali, the accusations spanned the realms of Hollywood, news, fashion, the restaurant industry, and politics. We view the combination of increasing revelations of sexual misconduct and the growth of #MeToo stories shared at the end of 2017 as part of a potential "critical moment," or an event that "defines, or redefines, the way the public responds to an issue" (Pollock 1994, 428). Scholars have identified "critical moments" in the past such as Earvin "Magic" Johnson's announcement that he is HIV-positive in relation to public opinion on AIDS (Pollock 1994), the death of Matthew Shepherd in relation to views on gay rights

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[2] Very little political science research actually examines sexism's influence on policy views (but see Cassese et al. 2015), let alone policy aimed to reduce sexual harassment and misconduct, in part because detailed questions of this nature have rarely been included on surveys.

(Brewer 2003), or the brutal police beatings of Rodney King and Malice Green in relation to worsening public opinion about police (Sigelman et al. 1997; Tuch and Weitzer 1997).[3] Similarly, prior scholarship finds high-salience political events (such as campaigns, protests, economic downturns, and presidential assassinations) can powerfully affect political attitudes (e.g., Markus 1979). We posit that the combination of events from the 2016 campaign through the growth of the #MeToo movement represents a potential critical moment that may have shaped individuals' views on gender relations.

Beliefs about gender are typically characterized as predispositions, which are "relatively stable" across time, consistent with connected opinions, and influential over subsequently formed attitudes (Sears and Funk 1999, 1-2). Despite their general stability, recent work suggests that predispositions can actually be influenced by the political context. For instance, the increasing centrality of partisanship to citizens' lives in the 21st century caused individuals (particularly the most politically aware) to update their racial attitudes to match their party's stances (Engelhardt Forthcoming). Thus, it is possible that predispositions related to gender are not as rigid as traditionally conceptualized.

Existing research provides some evidence suggesting the malleability of attitudes about gender, specifically. It is undeniable that gender role attitudes (that is, the degree to which men and women should have equal roles in society or if women's place is in the home) have shifted seismically over time (see Supplementary Materials p. 1, Figure A1).

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[3] More recently, news reports have noted seismic shifts in public opinion about Black Lives Matter, race, and criminal justice in the wake of George Floyd's death and other instances of police brutality against Black Americans (e.g., Cohn and Quealy 2020).

Scholars have attributed these long-term secular trends to socialization, family changes (i.e., marriage and having a daughter) or labor force participation (e.g., Powell and Steelman 1982, Banaszak and Plutzer 1993, and Rhodebeck 1996 as cited in Bolzendahl and Myers 2004). Many of these studies, however, observe change occurring over a relatively long period of time (i.e., decades). It is unclear whether gender attitudes change in the short-term as a consequence of media events that may not be experienced first-hand.

Moreover, much (though certainly, not all) of this work focuses on gender role attitudes, where public consensus[4] has by now largely emerged. Less scholarship focuses on changing levels of sexism, or sexist predispositions, which are deeply connected to the #MeToo conversation.[5] We view the national conversation on sexism surrounding the 2016 election and the #MeToo movement as a focused and strong information flow (a precondition for the political context to matter) that increased the visibility of gender and potentially affected citizens' levels of modern sexism. We focus on modern sexism for several reasons. First, modern sexism taps a sense of resentment towards those who are unhappy with gender inequality in American society. The #MeToo movement shone a spotlight on instances of abuses of power and broadened the national dialogue on power

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[4] In fact, gender role attitudes have shifted so much that the latest installments of the ANES (beginning in 2012) do not even carry the question anymore.

[5] In an important exception, panel data from New Zealand from 2009 to 2016 finds evidence of decreasing levels of ambivalent sexism across time. The authors attribute this change to both women's empowerment and changes in perceived norms regarding gender and equality (Huang et al. 2019).

dynamics between men and women writ large; moreover, the movement focused on sexual

misconduct often occurring at the nexus of labor and gender inequality. Modern sexism is

useful because it measures the degree to which respondents recognize or dismiss the

existence of gender discrimination and gender inequality – issues that underpinned

discussions in the wake of events like the Access Hollywood tape, the Weinstein

revelations, and scandals surrounding Roy Moore and Al Franken (to name a few).

Further, modern sexism more closely maps onto these larger issues of

discrimination and inequality than other forms of sexist predispositions such as traditional

roles, old-fashioned sexism, and the prominent Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) (Glick

and Fiske 1996). The ASI consists of hostile sexism and benevolent sexism, the former of

which measures more classic conceptions of prejudice against women[6] and the latter of

which measures traditional views of women that are subjectively positive in tone yet

reinforce patriarchal beliefs. Though hostile sexism is correlated with modern sexism

(Glick and Fiske 1996), modern sexism is more closely related to the recognition of

discrimination against women than hostile sexism. Indeed, Glick and Fiske (1996), authors

of the ASI, explicitly note that "[T]he Modern Sexism... [scale] may have greater predictive

utility for exploring gender-related political attitudes whereas the ASI may be of particular

interest in the interpersonal relationships area..." (p. 509).

Like modern racism, the three-item modern sexism scale was created to measure

the extent to which individuals deny or acknowledge the existence of discrimination—in

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[6] Specifically, Glick and Fiske measure three subcomponents of hostile sexism: dominative

paternalism, competitive gender differentiation, and heterosexual hostility (1996).

this case, gender discrimination—as well as the degree of resentment individuals feel towards women who demand change to address such inequities (Swim et al. 1995). This scale "indirectly reflects people's perceptions of men and women through their beliefs about whether gender equity has been achieved" (Godbole et al. 2019, 702). Just as the modern racism battery was created to measure discriminatory racial views that old-fashioned questions could not uncover, the modern sexism battery was introduced to measure more subtly sexist views that differ from old-fashioned sexism. Repeated examinations of this battery suggest it is conceptually distinct from (though correlated with) "old-fashioned" views of women's place in society (Swim et al. 1995; Swim and Cohen 1997).

Scholarly work suggests modern sexism has become a powerful force in recent years. Modern sexism played a significant role in explaining the gender gap in vote choice during the 2012 U.S. presidential election (Simas and Bumgardner 2017)[7] and increasingly shaped evaluations of Hillary Clinton from 2008 to 2012, likely due to differential interpretations of her tenure as secretary of state (McThomas and Tesler 2016). Modern sexism was influential in candidate evaluation and vote choice in the 2016 election as well (Sides et al. 2018; Valentino et al. 2018; Godbole et al. 2019; Knuckey 2019).

Although recent work has established the role of modern sexism in candidate evaluation and vote choice, the current state of the literature gives little guidance regarding

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[7] Simas and Bumgardner (2017) note several studies (Dwyer et al. 2009 and Tate 2014) that found no effects for modern sexism in the 2008 election.

the malleability of modern sexism and whether high-volume information flows can shift it. As such, we investigate several possibilities relating to levels of modern sexism.

The *collective awakening hypothesis* reflects an optimistic reading of the #MeToo movement: that it has sparked an awakening among the public by increasing awareness of the prevalence and extremity of gender discrimination and sexual misconduct across various domains in society. Citing increases in calls to the National Sexual Assault Hotline, web traffic to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and donations to the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund, journalistic accounts suggest the prevalence of this topic has skyrocketed in recent years and indeed, sparked a "collective awakening" (e.g., Salam 2018). Further, celebrity attention paid to gender disparities, sexual harassment, and sexual assault through the creation of Time's Up, posts on social media, and even the decision for most women to wear black to the 2018 Golden Globe Awards have also heightened the attention given to this topic. Thus, the months-long coverage of the 2016 election and the #MeToo movement may have caused some citizens to wrestle with and acknowledge the prevalence of gender inequality in society more than ever before.

H1a. *The Collective Awakening Hypothesis*: Average levels of modern sexism among the American public declined in the wake of the 2016 election and #MeToo.

However, the nature of the arc of the movement as well as its reception among political elites and the public suggests this first possibility may be overly optimistic, or even naïve. The #MeToo movement and its accompanying conversation about sexual misconduct and gendered power imbalances may have instead shifted the views of societal groups in differential, and perhaps offsetting, ways. Two possible cleavages fall along gender and party.

The nature of the conversation surrounding the 2016 election and the #MeToo movement has largely (though not exclusively) focused on misdeeds by powerful men against women. In response, women might have updated their views regarding the pervasiveness of gender inequality and discrimination more than men, particularly as previously untold #MeToo stories were shared publicly. Men may have expressed more hostility towards women "complaining" about said matters due in part to a perceived sense of threat that a claim of misconduct might be alleged against them. They may have also responded to this threat by downplaying or refusing to believe #MeToo stories. Thus, an awakening among women may have been counterbalanced by backlash among men.

H1b. *The Gender Polarization Hypothesis*: Women became less sexist over time while men became more sexist as the events of the 2016 election and #MeToo unfolded.

There is reason to believe, however, that national conversations around sexual misconduct may have been understood through partisan as well as—or even instead of—gender lines. These conversations were brought into particularly sharp relief in the context of the 2016 campaign and continued into other elections (i.e., the sexual abuse accusations against Republican senatorial candidate Roy Moore). Trump and other conservative elites exemplify a decidedly unsympathetic stance towards #MeToo.[8] Conversely, Democratic elites such as Senator Kirsten Gillibrand aligned themselves with the #MeToo movement and took a hard stance against members of their party accused of misconduct like former Senator Al Franken. Therefore, we expect partisans responded differently to the events of the 2016 election and #MeToo.

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[8] Indeed, Trump mocked the movement in a 2018 rally (Merica 2018).

H1c. *The Partisan Polarization Hypothesis*: Democrats became less sexist over time while Republicans became more sexist as the events of the 2016 election and #MeToo unfolded.

Another possibility is that any change that occurs (be it a collective awakening, gender polarization, or partisan polarization) may be primarily located among younger cohorts. If sexist predispositions are socialized early on like other predispositions, then individuals most likely to be affected by these unfolding events might be those in their impressionable years (Krosnick and Alwin 1989).

H2. *The Impressionable Years Hypothesis*: Sexism changed the most among young people, who were particularly affected by the events of the 2016 election and #MeToo.

Finally, we also acknowledge that gender relations, gender roles, and gender expectations are deeply engrained, universal, and often invisible. As Lorber (1994) so aptly states, "Talking about gender for most people is the equivalent of fish talking about water. Gender is so much the routine ground of everyday activities that questioning its take-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions is like thinking about whether the sun will come up" (p. 13). Sexist predispositions are rooted in biological differences and longstanding social traditions. Patriarchies have dominated social organizations throughout history mostly because of biological reasons including men's stronger social dominance orientation (Pratto et al. 1993 as cited in Glick and Fiske 1996) and of course, divisions of labor that assign most domestic duties—including childbirth and childcare—to women (Stockard and Johnson 1992 as cited in Glick and Fiske 1996). This viewpoint foreshadows the null hypothesis of no change.

H3. *Plus ça Change (Null) Hypothesis*: Despite the sound and fury surrounding the

2016 election and the #MeToo movement, levels of sexism stayed the same.

STABILITY OR CHANGE? SEXIST PREDISPOSITIONS OVER TIME

We rely on a unique and timely panel dataset from the Cooperative Campaign

Analysis Project (CCAP) that provides temporal leverage to detect changes in sexism as

these events unfolded. YouGov was commissioned to field a baseline online survey of

12,500 respondents from July 13, 2016 – July 18, 2016, and then re-interviewed baseline

respondents after the election from November 18, 2016 to December 27, 2016 (N=10,157).

In order to gauge the degree to which the #MeToo movement and associated events

affected public opinion, we commissioned YouGov to re-interview 1,302 respondents in

April 2018. A fresh cross-section of 800 respondents from YouGov's standing panel was

also interviewed in April 2018. The sample, when weighted, is intended to be

representative of the general adult U.S. population.[9]

Importantly, the modern sexism battery was included throughout these three

waves. Thus, by drawing on the same measures before and after Election Day, as well as

over a year later, the levels of sexism can be traced over time without introducing

confounders such as question wording and survey house effects. Modern sexism is

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[9] The 1,302 participants were panelists from weeks 9 and 10 of the 2016 CCAP. They were

weighted to a general population sampling frame. AAPOR Response Rate was 78.45%

(COOP3). The fresh sample of 800 respondents were weighted to a general population

sampling frame; AAPOR Response Rate was 55.67%. More details on sampling

methodology and weighting are available in the Supplementary Materials.

measured identically across waves using strength of agreement or disagreement (assessed

using a 5-point Likert scale) with three items:

> *When women demand equality these days, they are actually seeking special favors.*
>
> *Women often miss out on good jobs because of discrimination. [reverse coded]*
>
> *Women who complain about harassment cause more problems than they solve.*

All items are recoded to range from 0 (not sexist) to 1 (sexist), and combined in an additive

and highly reliable scale for each wave (α ranges from 0.75 to 0.79 in the three interview

waves).

To contextualize our focus on the 2016-2018 period, we first situate this time period

within a broader 15-year window. Figure 3 presents mean levels of modern sexism based

on these three items across time, using the 2004 ANES and 2008 ANES, which included

identically worded instrumentation for three of the items, and the 2010 and 2012 ANES

Evaluations of Government and Society Surveys 1 and 4, which contained two of the three

items.[10] These means, along with 95% confidence intervals, appear in Figure 3, and they

display a stunning degree of stability in mean levels of sexism from 2004 to 2018. In the

broadest sense, there is little evidence that the events of the 2016 election and the #MeToo

movement have changed overall levels of sexism across this 15-year period.

[FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Zeroing in on the 2016-2018 panel, the mean levels of modern sexism among those

respondents who completed all three waves (baseline, post-election, and follow-up) are

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[10] Question wording changes in the ANES 2012 and 2016 Time Series make cross-time

comparisons impossible.

0.37 (s.e.=0.01), 0.38 (s.e.=0.01), and 0.37 (s.e.=0.01) in each of the respective waves.[11]

This initial set of descriptives provides little evidence of a collective awakening. The

statistical test of H1a involves computing individual-level change scores for each of the

three two-wave comparisons (the baseline and post-election, the baseline and 2018 follow-

up, and the post-election and 2018 follow-up). Because of the directional nature of the

hypothesis, one-tailed *p*-values are reported, and a Bonferroni correction of ($\alpha/3$) is

advisable due to the multiple comparisons. None of the paired comparisons met the

Bonferroni threshold of 0.017 (*p*~0.85, 0.24, 0.031, respectively). Thus, there is no

systematic evidence supporting the *collective awakening hypothesis*.[12]

Still, these pooled statistics may hide countervailing patterns. The test of H1b

warrants examining the mean levels of modern sexism among men and women across the

time periods. The average levels (and linearized standard errors) of modern sexism among

men and women were: 0.43 (0.02) and 0.33 (0.01) in the baseline, 0.44 (0.02) and 0.33

(0.01) in the post-election, and 0.41 (0.02) and 0.33 (0.01) in the 2018 follow-up. The

statistical test of the gender polarization hypothesis involves a difference-in-differences

(DiD) analysis to determine if the gender gap in modern sexism grows over time:

$$\left(\overline{MS}_{M,t+1} - \overline{MS}_{W,t+1}\right) - \left(\overline{MS}_{M,t} - \overline{MS}_{W,t}\right) > 0, \text{ where}$$

$\overline{MS}_{M,j}$ = mean level of modern sexism among men at time *j* and

$\overline{MS}_{W,j}$ = mean level of modern sexism among women at time *j*.

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[11] Histograms appear in the Supplementary Materials.

[12] Wave-to-wave averages for each of the items are similar as well: there is no clear

evidence to suggest that any one item shifted any more (or less) than another item.

As before, given the directional nature of these hypotheses, one-tailed *p*-values are reported, and a Bonferroni correction of ($\alpha/3$) is advisable due to the multiple comparisons. The three paired comparisons in the change in the gender gap in modern sexism (baseline to post-election; baseline to 2018; post-election to 2018) produce no significant comparisons (*p*-values of 0.24, 0.82, and 0.96, respectively).

The test of H1c involves examining the mean levels of modern sexism among Republicans and Democrats across the time periods. The average levels (and linearized standard errors) of modern sexism among Republicans and Democrats were: 0.54 (0.01) and 0.24 (0.01) in the baseline, 0.56 (0.01) and 0.23 (0.01) in the post-election, and 0.53 (0.01) and 0.22 (0.01) in the 2018 follow-up. The DiD analyses follow the same logic, above, to test whether the party divide grows over time. The DiD analyses produce one significant result: the baseline to post-election comparison yields a *p*-value of 0.0155, just under the Bonferroni-corrected *p*-value of 0.0167, where Republicans show a slight uptick in modern sexism and Democrats show a slight decline. The other comparisons are not significant (*p* ~0.31 and 0.95 for baseline to 2018 and post-election to 2018, respectively).

Overall, despite the prominence of the #MeToo movement, there is no clear evidence of *collective awakening, gender polarization,* or *partisan polarization* in sexist predispositions over time.

Perhaps change has occurred, but it is largely (or solely) located among individuals in their impressionable years. Table 1 presents the mean levels of sexism across four age

groups (19-30, 31-50, 51-65, and over 65).[13] There is little initial evidence to suggest that

young people's levels of sexism changed more or less compared to people in other cohorts.

The mean levels of modern sexism for those in the youngest age cohort were similar to

those in the other age groups: 0.36 in the baseline, 0.38 in the post-election wave, and 0.36

in 2018. Even more, the results suggest only a slight shift of 0.02 among this age cohort

before returning back to baseline levels. Levels of modern sexism in the other age groups

were similarly stable, with the difference between the lowest and highest reported levels

across the three waves reaching 0.02 in the 31-50 and over 65 age cohorts and only 0.01

for those ages 51-65. Using a DiD approach that compares change in levels of modern

sexism among the youngest cohort with everyone else yields no significant comparisons (p

$\sim$ 0.25, 0.28, and 0.57 for the three temporal comparisons of baseline to post-election,

baseline to 2018, and post-election to 2018, respectively).

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

In assessing whether gender polarization emerges more keenly among youth than

everyone else, greater gender polarization among youth emerges in one of the comparisons

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[13] When weighted, these age groups correspond to 22%, 31%, 30%, and 19% of the sample,

respectively (and reflect age as observed in the 2018 follow-up). We note, however, that

the survey is not optimally powered for subgroup analyses within the youngest age cohort.

The raw (unweighted) number of panel survivors in the youngest age cohort is 123, of

which there are only 38 male respondents. Hence, there is a high degree of imprecision in

the estimates for the youngest cohort, and even more imprecision when this youngest

cohort is crossed by gender or partisanship.

involving the post-election wave (baseline to post-election, $p<0.01$); the other two do not surpass the Bonferroni-corrected standard ($p\sim0.03$ in baseline to 2018; $p\sim0.75$ in the post-election to 2018). In the test of whether party polarization occurs more among the young compared with others, none of the comparisons of change in modern sexism by cohort across the time periods is significant ($p\sim0.89$, 0.91, 0.65 for comparisons from baseline to post-election, baseline to 2018, and then post-election to 2018, respectively). Thus, there is very little systematic change among the youngest cohort generally or by gender or partisanship. Taken together, there is little support for the *impressionable years hypothesis*: there is no evidence of *collective awakening* or *partisan polarization* among young people, and there is only a glint of *gender polarization* among them that might have emerged around the post-election but appears to have receded by 2018.

Wave-to-wave correlations in modern sexism allow for leveraging the cross-temporal, intra-individual panel nature of the data. The raw correlations reveal the extent to which there is a linear relationship between modern sexism in one time period compared with another time period. These raw correlations are quite high: 0.77 from the baseline to the post and 0.75 from the post to the follow-up (0.71 from the baseline to the follow-up). Recognizing the measurement error inherent in attitudinal questions (Erikson 1978), Wiley-Wiley corrections are applied (Wiley and Wiley 1970). The Wiley-Wiley stability coefficient from the baseline to the post is 0.95 and from the post to the 2018 follow-up is 0.92; both suggest an extremely high level of intra-individual stability.[14]

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[14] Wiley-Wiley estimates by subgroup are available in the Supplementary Materials, suggest high levels of stability, and yield few differences across groups.

It is possible that ceiling and floor effects attributable to measurement compromise the ability to detect change. This possibility is addressed in two ways. First, individuals scoring at 0 or 1 (for whom the instrumentation prevents polarization) are removed and the averages across time are re-calculated in the aggregate and among subgroups. Doing so produces no evidence to support a collective awakening, gender polarization, party polarization, or impressionable years pattern.[15]

Second, a series of tobit models predict levels of sexism in the post-election and 2018 waves with predicted sexism from the base wave while accounting for right- and left-hand censoring at the tails of the modern sexism distribution. The goal of these analyses is to understand whether and to what extent modern sexism in the base maps 1:1 onto modern sexism in subsequent waves while also addressing the aforementioned censoring. Table 2 reports the results for our first-stage tobit model which predicts modern sexism in the base wave with demographic factors also measured in the base wave.[16] Partisanship, ideology, gender, ethnicity, education, and age significantly correlate with modern sexism. The tobit model in Table 2 is used to generate predicted levels of modern sexism in the base period, which are now uncensored. The predicted levels are then used in a second set of tobit analyses that regress modern sexism in the later waves (post-election and 2018 interviews) on the predicted values from the base period. Column 1 of Table 3 indicates that this "purged" version of modern sexism from the base wave maps 1:1 onto modern sexism in the post-election interview (b=1.09; s.e.=0.06); an adjusted Wald test suggests

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[15] Full results appear in the Supplementary Materials.

[16] Variable coding is described in the Supplementary Materials.

the null that this coefficient is equal to one cannot be rejected (p~0.12). Column 2 of Table 3 reports the results for modern sexism as measured in 2018. Here, predicted modern sexism from the base wave nearly perfectly predicts modern sexism measured almost two years later (b=0.95; s.e.=0.06); this coefficient is indistinguishable from one (p~0.34).

[TABLES 2 AND 3 ABOUT HERE]

Taken together, the various analyses support the null hypothesis (H3) that modern sexism is a stable predisposition, unchanged by the events of the 2016 election and the #MeToo movement. Breaking the sample down by party, gender, and age, average levels of modern sexism remain largely unchanged over time. Cross-time correlations yield very high estimates of stability, especially when measurement error is accounted for using Wiley-Wiley corrections. More sophisticated tobit analyses predicting modern sexism in the post-election period and in 2018 with predicted values of sexism from the base period also point to a near 1:1 mapping of this predisposition across time. Importantly, the events spanning the 2016 campaign through the spring of 2018 make for a particularly strong test of sexism's stability, and these analyses uncover consistent evidence that modern sexism is impervious to what seem to be large-scale streams of social and political information.

MODERN SEXISM AS AN ANCHOR FOR PUBLIC OPINION IN THE #METOO ERA

Sexist predispositions are remarkably stable. To what extent do they anchor public opinion on sexual harassment and concomitant policy solutions? Our April 2018 survey included a number of questions that tap respondents' understanding of the scope of sexual

misconduct, and provide a snapshot of opinion highlighting the role modern sexism plays in determining these attitudes and policy stances.[17]

One survey question asked whether the recent high-profile incidents of sexual misconduct reflect isolated instances (a view espoused by about a third of respondents) or a widespread problem (a position adopted by the remainder). Another question asked about evaluations of the #MeToo movement: whether the #MeToo movement has gone too far (31% of respondents), not far enough (17%), or is about right (32%), with another 20% unsure. These two questions are quite similar to two items in the modern sexism battery, but they are explicitly and narrowly focused on the events related to the #MeToo movement. Analyses examining the correlation between modern sexism and these items speak to the degree to which individuals are mapping this (stable) predisposition onto their views about recent events. The April 2018 survey also asked respondents whose responsibility it should be to address sexual harassment in the workplace (entirely or mostly the company's responsibility, or entirely or mostly the responsibility of the individuals involved) and whether the participant supports or opposes mandatory sexual harassment training in the workplace. Analyses of these items shed light on how modern sexism influences views on potential solutions to sexual misconduct in one key domain of life: the workplace. The data indicate that while only a bare majority of respondents believe it is entirely or mostly the responsibility of companies to address these issues, over two-thirds of respondents support mandatory sexual harassment training in the workplace.

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[17] Question text and frequencies appear in the Supplementary Materials.

We model these opinions as a function of modern sexism, party identification, and ideology as well as a set of demographic controls.[18] The ordered probit results appear in Table 4, and predicted probabilities holding all demographic characteristics to their modal values appear in Figure 4. The table and figure highlight the powerful influence of modern sexism across all four dependent variables. Figure 4 also illustrates particularly dramatic differences between those with the lowest versus highest levels of modern sexism for all four dependent variables. Partisanship also significantly affects these dependent variables (though it matters less than modern sexism), and even after controlling for modern sexism and partisanship, men still offer significantly less progressive responses than women across most of the dependent variables.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE / FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]

We also probed the degree to which the effects of modern sexism vary by the cleavages analyzed above (gender, partisanship, and age) as well as the best available proxy for political awareness: political interest. While the stability of modern sexism does not appear to vary by gender, partisanship, and age, it is possible that these individual-level factors may shape the personal salience of the #MeToo movement and thus, the mapping of modern sexism to policy opinions across these characteristics. The results, reported in the Supplementary Materials, produce almost no meaningful differences in how modern sexism maps onto these various DVs across subgroups. That is, broad homogeneity

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[18] Data from the 2018 panel re-contact and the fresh cross-section are pooled. No material differences emerge across the panel respondents and fresh cross-section. Variable coding is described in the Supplementary Materials.

characterizes the degree to which modern sexism anchors public opinion on matters relating to #MeToo, the nature of sexual harassment, and what to do about it.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE

To many observers, the events since the 2016 campaign have ushered in a renewed national dialogue about gender discrimination, power inequity, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. Given these changes in societal discourse, we sought to evaluate changes in the levels of sexist predispositions across time. Drawing on a unique panel dataset that interviewed respondents throughout the 2016 campaign, after the 2016 Election Day, and in the spring of 2018, this paper uncovered evidence of remarkable stability in levels of modern sexism over time – overall and amidst gender, partisan, and age subgroups. That is, despite the ubiquitous coverage of sexual harassment and assault as well as the growth of the #MeToo movement, individual-level sexist predispositions did not seem to change much in response.

Perhaps this stability is not that surprising. This is certainly not the first time the country has focused its attention on sexual harassment. For instance, many observers noted the disarming resemblance between the 1991 large-scale discussion of sexual harassment centered around Anita Hill's allegations of sexual harassment against Clarence Thomas and conversations in the #MeToo era (e.g., Totenberg 2018). Given that national discourse seems to revisit this topic in an almost identical manner nearly every few decades, the findings of stability—even in the face of an unprecedented event like the rise of the #MeToo movement—seem to align with historical patterns.

Future work might examine whether other forms of sexist predispositions remain stable in the face of such events. This paper focuses on modern sexism because it is most

closely tied to the central themes underlying the #MeToo era, but our instrumentation does allow us to trace levels of old-fashioned sexism by registering participants' reactions to: "Women should return to their traditional roles in society." The data suggest those views are even more stable than modern sexism, with weighted aggregate means of 0.28 (right around "somewhat disagree," which is coded as 0.25) in all three waves. Future research might analyze panel data that measure additional forms of sexist predispositions such as benevolent sexism (Glick and Fiske 1996) to understand whether they have changed over time.

Our analyses suggest that levels of modern sexism are (still) firmly in place within the American public. Moreover, they significantly anchor responses to questions about the nature of sexual harassment in the workplace and possible policy solutions. The mapping of modern sexism to these opinions applies broadly and does not vary consistently across prominent cleavages such as gender, party, age, or even political interest. These descriptive findings are the first that we have seen directly tying modern sexism to a series of opinions about sexual harassment and assault in the #MeToo era. Future surveys should continue to pose such questions so scholars can understand whether the effect of modern sexism on views about these topics fluctuates over time, particularly because recent work finds sexism's influence on candidate evaluations and voter turnout has grown in the past decade (e.g., Valentino et al. 2018; Cassese and Barnes 2019; Kam and Archer Forthcoming). Even more, Gallup polling data finds the degree to which people believe sexual harassment in the workplace is a major problem has decreased since the fall of 2017, particularly among men (Brenan 2019). Thus, even if modern sexism itself does not shift, other topics related to sexual misconduct still merit future research.

Finally, the results of this paper point to the importance of modern sexism in understanding public reaction to mandatory sexual harassment training. Though levels of modern sexism among the mass public did not respond to the rise of #MeToo, policymakers did. In 2018, both Delaware and New York joined the small group of states that require such training for companies above a certain threshold of employees (Dragoo and O'Neill 2018; Nagele-Piazza 2018). Given that lawmakers continue to assess the effectiveness of these trainings (which is debated [see Cain Miller 2017 for an overview]) and push for their required implementation, it is important to know that modern sexism is the most influential fault line in public opinion around this policy – and that levels of modern sexism appear to be unshakeable. As political leaders, activists, and others seek to find agreement on these and other policy solutions that have arisen in recent years, the results of this paper demonstrate that modern sexism is firmly entrenched among the American public and strongly influences views on the nature and seriousness of the issue as well as its attendant policy solutions. Any attempts to build consensus for change will need to reckon with the stability of modern sexism and its strength in anchoring public opinion in this domain.

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FIGURES

Figure 1. Information Searches for #MeToo and Sexual Harassment.
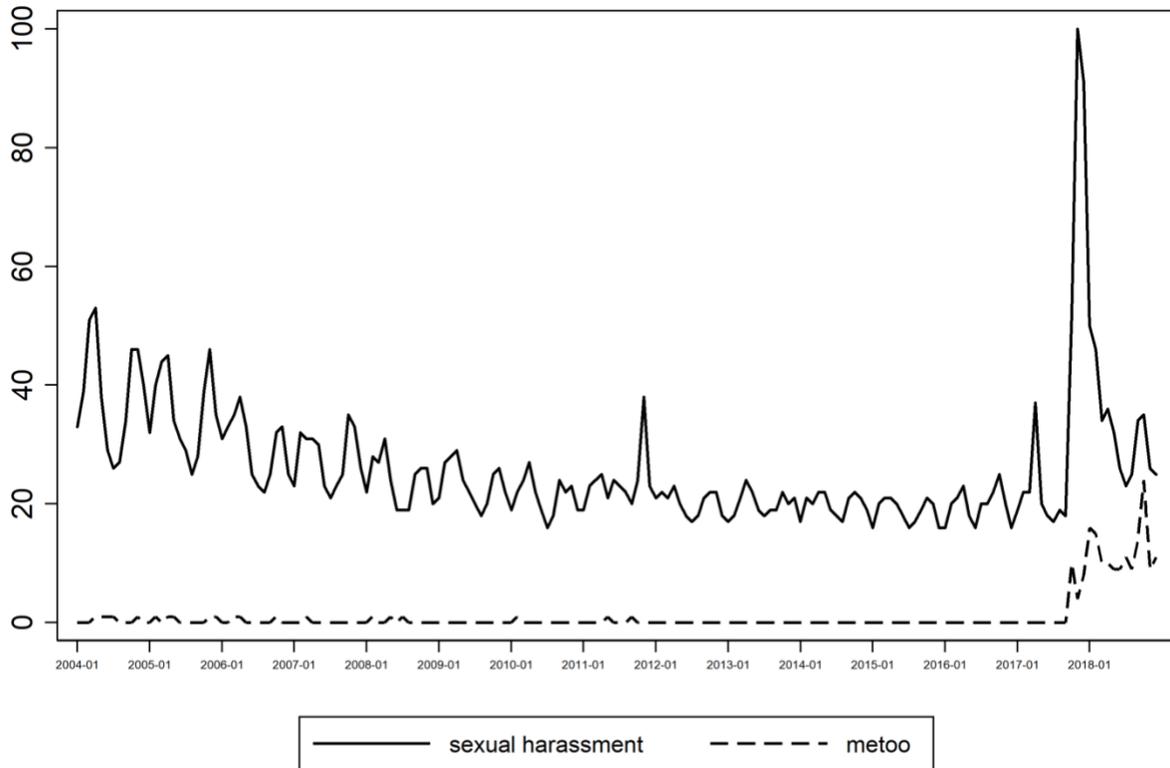
Source: Google Trends, Jan 2004-Dec 2018. DV: Google Trends' relative popularity score for each search term, which is normalized to the time and geography of the search parameters and ranges from 0 to 100.

Figure 2. Media Mentions of Sexual Harassment.
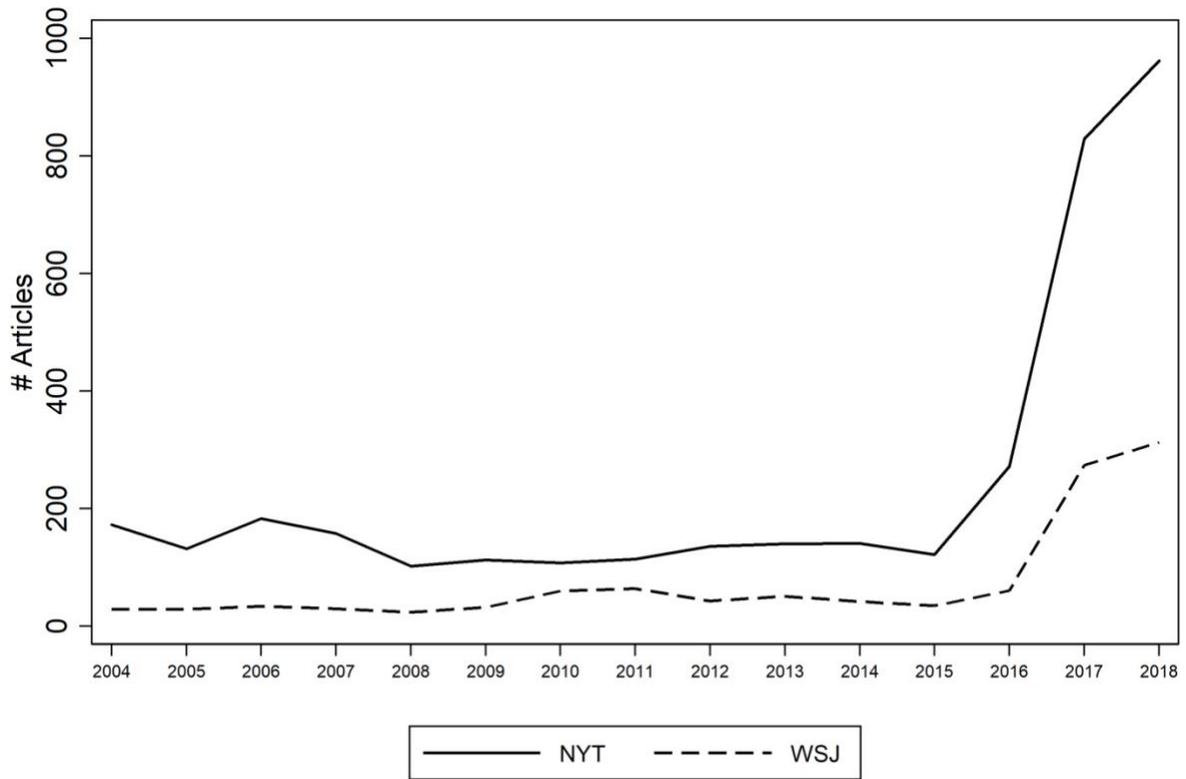
Source: ProQuest, Jan 2004-Dec 2018. *The New York Times Late Edition* and *The Wall Street Journal Eastern Edition*. DV: Annual counts of newspaper articles with term "sexual harassment."

Figure 3. Modern Sexism Across Time, 2004-2018.[19]
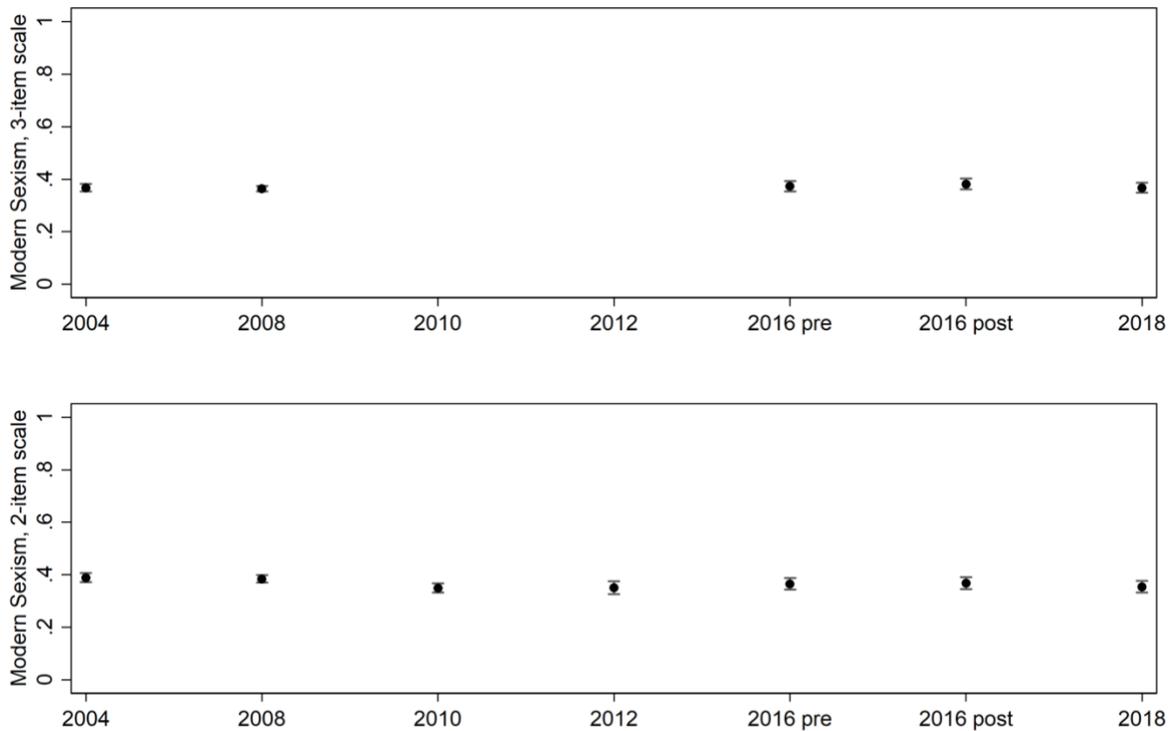
Sources: 2004 ANES Time Series; 2008 ANES Time Series; 2010 ANES Evaluations of

Government and Society Study (Survey 1); 2012 ANES Evaluations of Government and

Society Study (Survey 4); CCAP panel spanning 2016 pre-election, 2016 post-election, and

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[19] Three-item scale contains:

1. When women demand equality these days, they are actually seeking special favors.

2. Women often miss out on good jobs because of discrimination. [reverse coded]

3. Women who complain about harassment cause more problems than they solve.

Two-item scale contains items 1 and 3.

2018 re-contact. Means with 95% confidence intervals, survey weights applied. Top panel

displays the years in which the 3-item battery was administered. Bottom panel includes the

years in which the 2-item battery was administered.

Figure 4. Modern Sexism and Public Opinion on #MeToo, Harassment, and Training.
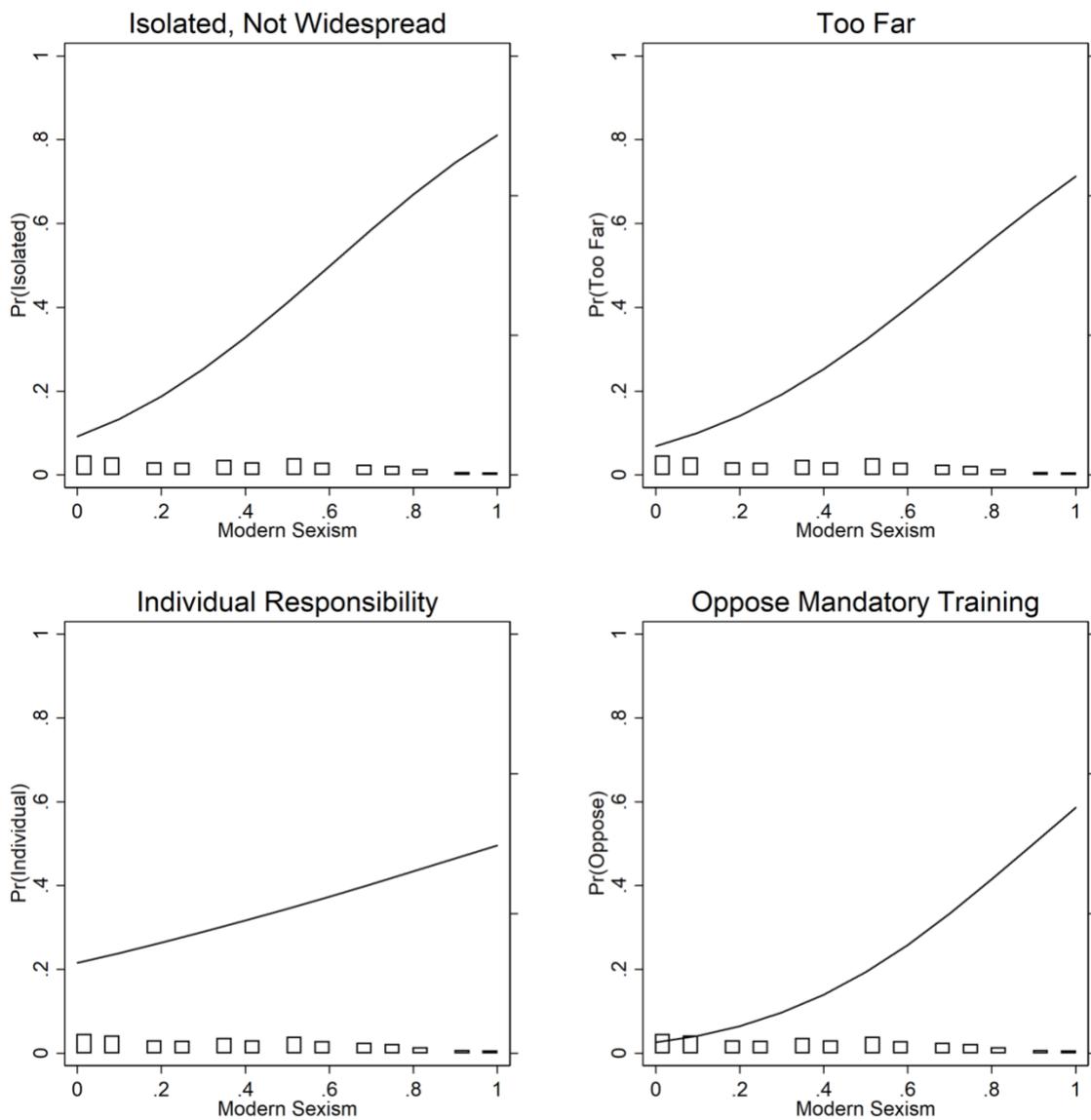
Predicted probabilities based on Table 4, holding characteristics to their modal values.

TABLES

Table 1. The Stability of Modern Sexism Across Three Waves, by Age Cohort

	Baseline		Post-Election		Follow-Up	
All panelists	0.37		0.38		0.37	
	(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)	
Age 19-30	0.36		0.38		0.36	
N=123	(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.03)	
Age 31-50	0.39		0.38		0.37	
N=409	(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.02)	
Age 51-65	0.37		0.37		0.36	
N=499	(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)	
Age >65	0.38		0.40		0.39	
N=240	(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.02)	
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**
Age 19-30	0.35	0.37	0.43	0.33	0.38	0.34
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Age 31-50	0.44	0.33	0.44	0.33	0.41	0.32
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Age 51-65	0.45	0.30	0.45	0.31	0.42	0.30
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age >65	0.45	0.31	0.45	0.35	0.43	0.36
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
	GOP	**DEM**	**GOP**	**DEM**	**GOP**	**DEM**
Age 19-30	0.61	0.24	0.61	0.24	0.57	0.24
	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Age 31-50	0.54	0.28	0.59	0.25	0.55	0.24
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Age 51-65	0.52	0.22	0.53	0.21	0.51	0.19
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Age >65	0.51	0.18	0.55	0.18	0.51	0.21
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)

Cell entries are weighted means with standard errors in parentheses. Analysis confined to

the 1,271 panelists who participated in all three waves. Partisanship measured in base.

Table 2. Correlates of Modern Sexism in Base Interview

	Modern Sexism in Base
Party Identification	0.18
(0=Str. Dem to 1=Str. Rep)	0.00
Ideology	0.37
(0=Very Lib. to 1=Very Cons.)	0.00
Female	-0.11
	0.00
Black	0.05
	0.20
Hispanic	0.07
	0.05
Education	-0.11
(0=<HS to 1=Post BA)	0.01
Income Quartile 1	-0.04
	0.22
Income Quartile 2	-0.02
	0.51
Income Quartile 3	-0.01
	0.81
Income Refused	0.02
	0.54
Age 31-50	-0.01
	0.89
Age 51-65	-0.06
	0.10
Age >65	-0.07
	0.06
Intercept	0.24
	0.00
σ	0.24
	0.00
Total N	1,197
Uncensored	1,015
Left-censored	164
Right-censored	18
p>F	0.00

Weighted tobit results. Cell entries are coefficients with two-tailed p-values below. All variables measured in base and range from 0-1. The suppressed baseline for income is quartile 4. Analysis confined to panelists who participated in all three waves.

Table 3. Predicting Modern Sexism Across Time

	Predicting Modern Sexism in Post-Election with Purged Modern Sexism from Base Interview	Predicting Modern Sexism in April 2018 with Purged Modern Sexism from Base Interview
	(1)	(2)
Predicted Modern Sexism	1.09	0.95
(Base)	0.12	0.34
Intercept	-0.03	0.01
	0.23	0.66
p>F	0.00	0.00
N	1,197	1,197

Weighted tobit results. Cell entries are coefficients with two-tailed p-values below. The reported p-value for *Predicted Modern Sexism* represents a two-tailed adjusted Wald test of whether the coefficient differs significantly from 1. Analysis confined to panelists who participated in all three waves.

Table 4. Modern Sexism and Public Opinion on #MeToo, Harassment, and Training

	Isolated Events (1)	Movement: Too Far (2)	Responsibility of Individuals (3)	Oppose Training (4)
Modern Sexism	2.21	2.05	0.78	2.17
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Party Identification	0.50	0.60	0.14	0.22
(0=Str. Dem to 1=Str. Rep)	0.00	0.00	0.32	0.08
Ideology	0.00	0.66	0.38	0.31
(0=Very Lib. To 1=Very Cons.)	0.98	0.00	0.02	0.06
Female	-0.33	0.01	-0.18	-0.23
	0.00	0.89	0.01	0.00
Black	0.16	-0.10	-0.31	-0.03
	0.28	0.33	0.00	0.78
Hispanic	-0.00	-0.18	-0.08	-0.11
	0.98	0.15	0.51	0.39
Education	0.06	-0.14	0.15	-0.11
(0=<HS to 1=Post BA)	0.75	0.34	0.27	0.45
Income Quartile 1	-0.02	-0.24	0.13	0.21
	0.87	0.03	0.20	0.03
Income Quartile 2	-0.18	-0.08	0.23	-0.13
	0.18	0.46	0.02	0.25
Income Quartile 3	-0.06	-0.03	0.29	0.16
	0.61	0.76	0.00	0.06
Income Refused	-0.07	0.12	0.14	0.16
	0.59	0.24	0.14	0.12
Age 31-50	0.06	0.43	-0.07	0.03
	0.70	0.00	0.50	0.78
Age 51-65	0.16	0.31	-0.18	-0.18
	0.29	0.02	0.10	0.10
Over 65	0.01	0.49	-0.05	-0.02
	0.96	0.00	0.65	0.87
τ_1	1.32	0.25	-0.72	0.52
	0.00	0.15	0.00	0.00
τ_2		2.25	0.53	1.49
		0.00	0.00	0.00
τ_3			1.01	2.18
			0.00	0.00
τ_4			2.22	2.89
			0.00	0.00
p>F	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
N	1962	1963	1963	1963

Weighted ordered probit results. Cell entries are coefficients with two-tailed p-values below. All variables measured in 2018 and range from 0-1. The suppressed baseline for income is quartile 4. Analysis uses 2018 CCAP re-interview plus fresh cross-section.