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Women who challenge or defend the status quo: Ingroup identities as predictors of progressive and reactionary collective action

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Abstract

Collective action (CA) research looking at gender has focused predominantly on feminist activism, overlooking activism of women who reinforce gender inequalities and traditional gender roles (such as women supporting men's rights or anti-abortion protesters). Our research addresses this oversight, demonstrating the key role of identity content in predicting CA in support of progressive and reactionary social change among women. Using two large online samples of women from the US (Study 1: $N = 1825$) and the UK (Study 2: $N = 992$), we show that identification with 'women' is either weakly associated or unrelated to progressive and reactionary CA and is thus too broad to differentiate between support for CA with opposing goals. In contrast, subgroup identities matter: feminist identification is associated with support for progressive CA, while identification with traditional women is associated with support for reactionary CA. We discuss the implications of our findings for research on CA and gender inequalities.

KEYWORDS
collective action, gender identity, gender inequality, identity subtypes, social change

1 | INTRODUCTION

Social protest research looking at gender has focused predominantly on feminist activism and support for policies aimed at progressive social change (e.g., Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Liss et al., 2004; Reid & Purcell, 2004; van Breen et al., 2017; Yoder et al., 2011). Yet, not all women subscribe to the goals of the feminist movement, perceive women to be the disadvantaged group, nor share the same understanding of 'women's rights' (e.g., Schreiber, 2008). Indeed, many women have actively opposed policies aimed at legislating gender equality, calling for the preservation of the gender status quo instead. For example, conservative women groups in the past would counter the suffragist movement or equal rights amendment in the US (Bush, 2007; Rosenberg, 2008). Today, the most visible examples of such conservative and reactionary women movements worldwide include: (1) Advocacy of women's groups who perceive men to be the disadvantaged group and support men's rights and privileges, for example, 'Honey Badgers' or 'tradwives' (Freeman, 2020; Purtill, 2017). (2) Women who 'protect' men from sexual harassment and rape allegations. For example, in 2018 over 100 prominent French women signed an open letter denouncing the #MeToo campaign against sexual harassment as a 'puritanical witch-hunt against men'. In another open letter, 65 American women defended the US Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, against rape accusations (Peltz & Kunzelman, 2018; Safronova, 2018).

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(3) Women who follow radical right social movements that convey explicitly anti-feminist and misogynistic messages, for example, women in the alt-right movement and similar far-right groups in Europe (Bowman & Stuart, 2017; Love, 2020).

The current article aims to shed light on the motivations of women who engage in such conservative and reactionary CA. Specifically, we aim to explore to what extent the strength and content of gender identity shape women's efforts to maintain (vs. oppose) traditional gender roles and gender inequalities. While some of these actions can be perceived to be against the interest of women as a group and reinforcing their disadvantaged status, we aim to show that the strength of gender identity is positively associated with support for both progressive and reactionary CA, confirming that women who identify with their group can conceptualize women's rights and group interest differently. This is particularly important given that identification with 'women as a group' is often used as a predictor of CA among women. To address the limitation of this broad identity, we argue for the need to consider the content of gender identity when predicting support for reactionary (vs. progressive) social change among women. In the current article, we focus on two gender identity subtypes—feminist identity and traditional identity—which are aligned with the opposition to versus support for the gender status quo respectively and test their role in predicting support for progressive and reactionary CA.

2 | CA SUPPORTING PROGRESSIVE VERSUS REACTIONARY SOCIAL CHANGE

Collective action is commonly defined as any behaviour, typically political, undertaken by an individual as a representative of the social group to achieve group goals (Wright et al., 1990). Collective action can thus involve a broad range of behaviours, ranging from signing a petition, participating in a demonstration, to supporting specific parties and policies. According to the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008), collective action is more likely to happen when people identify with a social group (group identity), perceive that this group is unfairly disadvantaged (group-based injustice), and believe that they can achieve their goals through protest (group efficacy beliefs).

Group identity is the central predictor in SIMCA given that it has both a direct and indirect impact on CA. This happens because the salience of social identity is associated with the likelihood of acting on behalf of the ingroup, as well as with increased perceptions of group-based injustice and belief in the group's ability to address it. Moreover, politicized group identities (e.g., identities associated with social movements) are particularly strong predictors of CA to the extent that they encompass beliefs about unfair group disadvantage and action readiness to act upon it (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Relatedly, van Zomeren et al. (2018) recently proposed that the SIMCA model should be extended to incorporate the identity content, noting that identity content is often assumed in research, but not tested directly, limiting our understanding of its role in motivating CA.

Previous studies have usually implicitly assumed that CA aims at progressive social change, defined as social change advancing group equality. Only recently, social-psychological models have been extended to account for the instances of CA aimed at defending the status quo and promoting reactionary social change, that is, actions aimed at restoring previously existing societal arrangements and contesting the progressive movements (see Becker, 2020 for a review). These recent studies show that CA in support of the status quo and reactionary social change are often motivated by perceptions of threat to the current societal arrangements, social hierarchy, and traditional values (Choma et al., 2020; Jost et al., 2017; Osborne et al., 2019).

3 | PROGRESSIVE AND REACTIONARY CA AMONG WOMEN

Contrary to SIMCA's predictions, studies often find that identification with 'women as a group' is only weakly related to support for women's issues (e.g., Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; van Breen et al., 2017), indicating that this broad group identity is not relevant for predicting support for CA among women. This is perhaps not that surprising when considering the unique context of gender relations. Unlike most disadvantaged groups, women are not a minority in a numerical sense. Representing half of the population, women differ considerably in their socio-demographic backgrounds, personal experiences, values, and beliefs. This, in turn, affects how they define their womanhood, the roles women and men should be playing in society, and what they consider as fair gender relations. The category 'woman' is thus very broad and might carry different meanings to different women.

Indeed, women might identify with certain subgroups of women, rather than with women in general and, consequently, differently conceptualize group disadvantage, and the desired goals women as a group should advocate for (e.g., Becker, 2010; van Breen et al., 2017). For example, feminist identity is associated with increased perceptions of the prevalence of sexism, dissatisfaction with the status quo, and, subsequently, with higher support for CA on behalf of women than the broad gender identity (e.g., Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Liss et al., 2004; Reid & Purcell, 2004; van Breen et al., 2017; Yoder et al., 2011). Relatedly, women with stronger progressive gender identity (measured with their gender role preference) are less likely to endorse sexist beliefs and more willing to engage in CA addressing gender discrimination and supporting women's issues. Conversely, women with stronger traditional gender identity are more likely to endorse sexist beliefs and less likely to engage in CA on behalf of women (Becker & Wagner, 2009; Liss et al., 2004).

While support for progressive CA among women has been quite well researched in social psychological literature, no studies to our knowledge have systematically explored the identities of women engaging in CA aimed at reactionary social change. Previous work in this area has usually focused on single issues, such as anti-abortion/pro-life activism (e.g., Swank, 2020), or case studies of conservative women movements (e.g., Dworkin, 1983; Schreiber, 2008) and prominent

women in far-right movements such as alt-right (e.g., Mattheis, 2018). One related set of studies by Radke et al. (2018) distinguished between CA challenging gender inequality versus CA protecting women from male violence, that is, the *consequences* of gender inequality, showing that feminist identity was moderately associated with the former but only weakly associated with the latter (Study 3). Although protective CA can be considered as a type of CA upholding gender inequalities (to the extent that concentrating efforts on mitigating the impacts of gender inequality can 'distract' from pursuing social change), it is conceptually different from reactionary CA in which the current social arrangements are actively defended.

Another limitation of previous studies is that they often measured CA as a willingness to support 'women's rights' or 'women's issues' (e.g., Becker & Wagner, 2009; Liss et al., 2004), the notions which, as we argued above, are very broad and can be understood differently by different women. The current research seeks to fill these important gaps.

4 | THE PRESENT RESEARCH

In the present research, we seek to expand the CA research by empirically investigating the role of content of gender identity in motivating CA in support of progressive and reactionary social change among women. Specifically, we focus on two identities typically examined in CA research (broad identification with women and identification with feminists) and one identity that we expect to be associated with support for reactionary social change, that is, identification with traditional women.

Our studies build on recent developments in the CA literature (e.g., Jost et al., 2017; van Zomeren et al., 2018) and previous research using multiple identity approaches to the study of gender (e.g., Becker & Wagner, 2009; Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; van Breen et al., 2017, 2018). Specifically, we expand upon the Gender Identity Model (Becker & Wagner, 2009), which distinguishes between the strength of identification with women and its content (progressive vs. traditional gender role). In the present studies, we account not only for the strength of broad identification with women but also for the strength of identification with progressive and traditional women. Using a similar approach, van Breen et al. (2017) proposed that identification with women and identification with feminists are two independent dimensions of gender identity reflecting attitudes toward womanhood and the social position of women in society, respectively. Subsequently, they showed that identification with feminists but not identification with women, predicts support for CA aimed at 'reducing gender inequality'. While the inclusion of these two identities provides a robust framework for assessing progressive CA among women, we propose the inclusion of traditional identity as an important predictor of reactionary CA.

Traditional identifiers value romantic heterosexual relationships and endorse traditional gender roles (e.g., that of a wife or a homemaker; Cameron & Lalonde, 2001) and beliefs (e.g., benevolent sexism; Becker & Wagner, 2009). Previous studies indicate that traditional women do not perceive their gender as the disadvantaged group, but rather positively distinct from men (e.g., Condor, 1984). These beliefs, combined with the communal rather than agentic self-stereotype (e.g., Guimond et al., 2006), make it unlikely that traditional identifiers will support progressive CA, or that their behaviour will be motivated by injustice perceptions and efficacy beliefs as is the case with politicized identities associated with social movements (such as feminist identity). Instead, traditional identity can be considered as a type of opinion-based identity (McGarty et al., 2009), that is, group identity based on shared opinion about the roles women (and men) should play in society. While often considered as passive and content with the status quo (Condor, 1984)—and thus unlikely to engage in CA advancing gender equality (e.g., Becker & Wagner, 2009)—traditional identifiers might be motivated to support reactionary CA, particularly if they believe that traditional gender roles are threatened. Additionally, to the extent that traditional womanhood is linked to being warm, caring, and supporting others (e.g., Eckes, 2002), traditional identifiers might be willing to engage in CA on behalf of groups they consider to be vulnerable, such as (unborn) children or men needing protection from feminists who allegedly attack them.

Building on these observations, we predict that:

- ***H1****: Gender identity will be positively associated with support for both progressive and reactionary CA.* Previous research has established that identification with women is a positive albeit overall weak and inconsistent predictor of progressive CA (e.g., Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; van Breen et al., 2017). Given that women can identify with this broad group identity regardless of their gender role preference (e.g., Becker & Wagner, 2009), we predict that gender identity will be positively and weakly associated with progressive and reactionary CA.
- ***H2****: Feminist identity will be positively associated with support for progressive CA and negatively associated with support for reactionary CA.* Feminist identity is a politicized group identity built around a social movement aiming to reduce gender inequalities and previous research has indicated its strong associations with progressive CA (e.g., Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; van Breen et al., 2017). Since gender equality is of key importance for feminist identifiers, we expect that it will be positively associated with progressive CA and negatively associated with reactionary CA.
- ***H3****: Traditional identity will be positively associated with support for reactionary CA, and negatively associated or unrelated to support for progressive CA.* Previous research indicates that traditional identifiers are unlikely to see women as the disadvantaged group and engage in progressive CA supporting 'women's issues' (e.g., Becker & Wagner, 2009; Condor, 1984), thus we expect either a negative or no association between traditional identity and progressive CA. However, we expect traditional identifiers to support reactionary CA to the extent that it preserves their traditional worldview on gender roles.

We also explore to what extent the predicted associations between identification with gender subtypes and CA can be attributed to other two key predictors of CA: perceptions of group injustice and group effi-

cacy (van Zomeren et al., 2008). As indicated above, feminist identity is an activist identity, thus both ingroup injustice and efficacy should explain its association with support for progressive CA. Conversely, traditional identity is unlikely to be associated (or possibly even negatively associated) with perceptions of ingroup injustice (e.g., Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; Condor, 1984). Given that, to our knowledge, there is no prior research showing the association between traditional identity and group efficacy, we do not make any assumptions about the expected link.

5 | STUDY 1

5.1 | Method

5.1.1 | Participants

Data for the study was collected in November 2019 using Prolific, an online recruitment panel. We recruited 2118 heterosexual women living in the US. Only heterosexual women were invited given that the focus of a broader study was on exploring heterosexual interdependencies between women and men (all measures used in the study can be found in Supplemental materials). We removed 293 participants (14%) for one of the following reasons: had very short completion time (<median completion time/3~280 s), straight-lined the survey (indicated the same response to 15 or more items in a row), provided the same response to all collective action items (i.e., had no intra-individual response variability), and provided inconsistent responses to two abortion items (i.e., indicated support both for restricting and for improving legal access to abortion). This resulted in a final sample of 1825 participants ($M_{age} = 37.8$, $SD = 13.1$). The majority of the sample had a degree (20% postgraduate degree, 46% college degree, 25% some college but no degree, 10% high school or lower) and lived in suburban areas (53%; 29% urban, 18% rural). Power simulations using R Shiny app *pwrSEM* (Wang & Rhemtulla, 2021) indicated that this sample size provided 90% power ($\alpha = .001$) for detecting standardized regression effects as small as .20 in a structural equation model with seven independent variables and two dependent variables.[1]

5.1.2 | Measures

Unless stated otherwise all variables were measured using a seven-point Likert scale with higher numbers indicating higher values on a given measure.

In both studies, we operationalized group identification as the self-investment dimension from the multicomponent model of ingroup identification proposed by Leach et al. (2008; see, e.g., Postmes et al., 2013 for a similar approach). According to this model, group identification can be decomposed into three related elements: the centrality of a group to one's self-concept, satisfaction with being a group member, and solidarity with other ingroup members. To measure identification with gender subtypes we used single items 'I identify with [group name]', which have been validated against the self-investment scale in previous research (Postmes et al., 2013).

Gender identification

Gender identification was measured with five items (two items from the satisfaction and solidarity subscales each and one item from the centrality subscale; We removed the second item from centrality subscale ['I often think about the fact that I am a woman'] due to low factor loading and large residual correlation with one of the solidarity items) from the group-investment scale adapted from Leach et al. (2008), for instance, 'I feel a bond with women' ($\alpha = .84$).

Identification with women's subtypes

Respondents were presented with a list of 13 women's subtypes. The list included subtypes identified in previous research on gender: 'feminist', 'career-oriented woman', 'family-oriented woman', 'traditional woman', 'non-traditional woman', 'homemaker', 'feminine woman' (e.g., Becker, 2010; Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; Six & Eckes, 1991; Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010). We also added items created for this study ('progressive woman', 'liberal woman', 'independent woman', 'antifeminist', 'conservative feminist') and three filler items unrelated to the main hypotheses referring to gender identities based on respondent's age, race and relationship status respectively (e.g., 'black woman', 'woman of your age', 'married woman'). Participants were asked to indicate how much they identified with each of the subtypes (1—not at all, 7—a great deal). To create the ID subtype scales we used an Exploratory Structural Equation Model (ESEM), which allows comparing the fit of models with a different number of factors without imposing an a priori factor structure (see e.g., Marsh et al., 2014 for an overview). An initial exploration of the factor structure pointed to either three or four factors (as indicated by minimum average partial [MAP] test and parallel analysis, respectively). We therefore compared the models with 1–4 factors. While the four-factor model showed the best fit (as indicated by ΔRMSEA > .015 and ΔCFI > .010), two factors in that model included only one 'good' item (as indicated by main factor loading > .50 and cross-loadings < .30). Similarly, the three-factor model, which had the second-best fit, included one factor with only one 'good' item.[2] We, therefore, chose a two-factor model , and removed items not meeting the 'good' item criterion across two iterations. In the last iteration, we additionally removed the 'antifeminist' item due to its negative main loading (given that a low identification with antifeminists does not necessarily imply high identification with feminists and vice versa). This resulted in two scales, with three items each, measuring feminist and traditional identities, respectively (results of the final CFA models in both studies can be found in Table 1). Feminist identity was measured with items 'feminist', 'progressive woman', 'liberal woman' (Note that Study 1 was conducted in the US, where the term 'liberal' is associated

[1] Assuming that all latent variables will be measured with 3 three items with factor loadings loadings = .70 and covariance between all independent variables and error covariance between dependent variables variables = .30.

[2] These items were: 'independent woman' (both in the 3-factor and the 4-factor model) and 'conservative woman' (in the 4-factor model).

TABLE 1 Standardized factor loadings with 95% CI for identification subtypes items (Study 1 and Study 2)

	Study 1 (US sample)		Study 2 (UK sample)	
	Feministidentity	Traditional identity	Feministidentity	Traditional identity
Feminist(s)	.78 [.75, .81]		.73 [.67, .78]	
Progressive woman/women	.78 [.75, .81]		.67 [.62, .73]	
Liberal woman/women	.84 [.81, .87]		.74 [.68, .79]	
Traditional woman/women	−.25 [−.30, −.20]	.59 [.54, .64]	−.21 [−.27, −.14]	.62 [.57, .68]
Homemaker(s)		.75 [.72, .79]		.88 [.84, .93]
Family-oriented woman/women		.67 [.64, .71]		.72 [.67, .77]

Note: Both in the US and in the UK 'liberal' is associated with the left-wing ideology. Model fit in Study 1: $\chi^2_{(7)} = 32.334$, $p < .001$; CFI = .991; RMSEA = .045 [.031, .059], $p = .712$; SRMR = .022. Model fit in Study 2: $\chi^2_{(7)} = 10.887$, $p = .144$; CFI = .996; RMSEA = .024 [.000, .047], $p = .971$; SRMR = .022. Based on modification indices ($\Delta\chi^2 = 100.093$ in Study 1 and $\Delta\chi^2 = 46.636$ in Study 2), one item (traditional women/women) was allowed to load freely on both factors to improve the overall model fit. Nested model comparisons confirmed that a two-factor model had a better fit to the data than a one-factor model with all items loading on one scale: $\Delta\chi^2 = -616.69$, $p < .001$; ΔCFI = .212; ΔRMSEA = −.148 in Study 1 and $\Delta\chi^2 = -765.638$, $p < .001$; ΔCFI = .497; ΔRMSEA = −.236 in Study 2.

with the left-wing ideology; $\alpha = .84$). Traditional identity was measured with items 'traditional woman', 'homemaker', 'family-oriented woman' ($\alpha = .74$).

Collective action intentions

Respondents were presented with a list of 32 gender issues and causes, of which 19 were related to the hypotheses of the current study, and asked about their willingness to support them 'through political behaviour such as signing a petition, attending a demonstration or a rally, or donating money' (1—definitely unwilling, 7—definitely willing). We used a fairly broad range of actions to account for the fact that typical street protest is often a left-wing phenomenon (Torcal et al., 2016). A full list of items used in the study can be found in Supplemental materials). Items for subscales were selected using a similar ESEM procedure as the one used to create identity subscales. We chose a two-factor model after considering models with 1–4 factors and balancing their model fit with conceptual relevance (i.e., a two-factor model had a better fit than a one-factor model and both factors included at least three items meeting our criteria of a 'good' item). After removing items not meeting our criteria, and one item with a negative main loading ('Improving legal access to abortion'), we confirmed the final factor structure using standard confirmatory factor analysis and retained items with factor loadings > .60 in the final model (detailed results can be found in Table S3 in Supplemental materials). Progressive CA subscale included five items: 'Education programs aimed at combatting 'toxic' masculinity', 'Reducing gender pay gap', 'Mentoring programs for women in leadership positions', 'Support for female candidates in politics', and 'Increasing women's wages so they can support their families' ($\alpha = .84$). Reactionary CA subscale included four items: 'Promoting traditional family values', 'Defending traditional marriage', 'Allowing women to be women and men to be men', and 'Restricting legal access to abortion' ($\alpha = .86$).

Group-based injustice and efficacy

Group-based injustice and efficacy were measured with a single item each: 'Do you think that women are disadvantaged in the US?' (1—not at all, 7—very much so) and 'I believe that, as a woman, I can help improve things for other women' (1—definitely disagree, 7—definitely agree).

5.1.3 | Political ideology

Political ideology was measured with three items: 'Please indicate your general political views (1—liberal, 7—conservative)'; 'In terms of social issues, how would you describe your political attitudes and beliefs? (1—very progressive, 7—very conservative)'; 'In terms of economic issues, how would you describe your political attitudes and beliefs? (1—I support the welfare state, 7—I support free-market economy)'; ($\alpha = .89$).

5.1.4 | Demographic variables

We measured participant's age, level of education (0—less than high school/high school diploma/some college, but no degree, 1—college/postgraduate degree), and religiosity ('How important is religion in your life? 1—definitely unimportant, 7—definitely important).

5.1.5 | Additional variables

We also included several variables to test the convergent and divergent validity of our identity measures: participant's gendered self-stereotyping in terms of agency (using two items: self-reliant, independent; $r = .77$) and communality (four items: sensitive to the needs of others, compassionate, understanding, sympathetic; $\alpha = .90$; assessed on a scale 1—not at all, 7—very much so), endorsement of benevolent sexism (using two items from the protective paternalism subscale: 'Women should be cherished and protected by men', 'Men should be responsible for providing financially for the women in their lives'; $r = .62$), hostile sexism (using two items: 'Women seek to gain power by getting control over men', 'Once a woman gets a man to

commit to her she usually tries to put him on a tight leash'; $r = .63$), and perceptions of threat to traditional gender roles (using four items created for the study inspired by the symbolic threat scale (Stephan et al., 2000): 'Women nowadays are trying to act too masculine', 'Men are becoming too feminine nowadays', 'Women these days want too much independence in relationships', and 'Society is too quick to minimize essential differences between women and men' ($\alpha = .83$).

5.1.6 | Analytical strategy

All analyses were conducted in R v. 4.0.5. Before investigating the hypotheses, we used additional variables to validate our gender identity measures. We then examined H1 that gender identity (measured as identification with women) will be positively associated with both types of CA by fitting a structural equation model (SEM) regressing both types of CA onto gender identity. Subsequently, we examined H2 and H3 by fitting a SEM model regressing both types of CA onto gender identity, feminist identity, and traditional identity.[3] Finally, we fitted a mediation model regressing both types of CA on three identities, group-based injustice, and group efficacy to explore to what extent support for different types of CA can be attributed to two key predictors of (progressive) CA. Given that support for many issues covered by our CA measures is highly politicized and could be attributed to a broader conservative worldview, in all models, we controlled for political ideology, religiosity and two key socio-demographic variables (age, education).

Before the analyses, we screened the data for skews, kurtosis, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity (all VIF values were below four indicating no issues with multicollinearity). Since the homoscedasticity assumption was violated for some variables, we used bootstrapping for the estimation of test statistics and standard errors. To assess the precision of our estimates, we calculated 95% confidence intervals (CIs) drawing 5000 bootstrap samples with replacement. All SEM models were estimated using the maximum likelihood estimator in R *lavaan* package (Rosseel, 2012).

5.2 | Results

5.2.1 | Convergent and discriminant validity

Both feminist identity and traditional identity were positively but weakly associated with the broad gender identity measure and were negatively associated with each other, confirming their discriminant validity (see Table S1 in Supplemental materials). Gender identity and feminist identity, but not traditional identity, had a weak positive association with the agentic self-stereotype and a moderate positive association with perceptions of group efficacy. As a politicized group identity, feminist identity had also a strong positive association with perceptions of ingroup injustice. This association was weak for gender identity and *negative* for traditional identity, suggesting that traditional identifiers might not see women as the disadvantaged group. Traditional identity had moderate positive associations with conservative political ideology, benevolent and hostile sexism, and perceptions of threat to traditional gender roles. Conversely, feminist identity had moderate negative associations with sexism and perception of threat to traditional gender roles and a strong positive association with left-wing political ideology. For the broad gender identity, associations with ideological variables were either weak or not significant.

5.2.2 | Correlations

Table 2 includes descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between the main variables in Study 1. Progressive CA had a weak negative bivariate correlation with reactionary CA, confirming their discriminant validity. Gender identity had a moderate positive bivariate correlation with progressive CA and a very weak (<.10) positive bivariate correlation with reactionary CA. Feminist identity had a moderate positive bivariate correlation with progressive CA and a moderate negative bivariate correlation with reactionary CA. Traditional identity had a moderate positive bivariate correlation with reactionary CA and a weak negative bivariate correlation with progressive CA.

5.2.3 | Predicting support for progressive and reactionary CA

We first computed a SEM regressing both types of CA onto gender identity to test H1. Based on the residual correlation matrix, in this model and all consecutive models in Study 1, we introduced two error covariances between one of the reactionary CA items ('Restricting legal access to abortion'), religiosity and political ideology, given that, among religious and conservative respondents, attitudes toward abortion might also include other considerations than those related to women's rights (see e.g., Mikołajczak & Bilewicz, 2015). The model fitted the data well: $\chi^2_{(145)} = 1097.832$, $p < .001$; CFI = .953; RMSEA = .060, [.057, .063], $p < .001$; SRMR = .065.[4] Consistent with our first hypothesis, gender identity had a moderate positive association with progressive CA ($\beta = .347$, SE = .027, $p < .001$; $b = 0.401$, 95% CI [0.336, 0.471]) and a weak positive association with reactionary CA ($\beta = .144$, SE = .020, $p < .001$; $b = 0.262$, 95% CI [0.188, 0.342]).

Table 3 shows the effects of a SEM model testing our predictions for different identity subtypes (H2 & H3). The model fitted the data well: $\chi^2_{(258)} = 2074.306$, $p < .001$; CFI = .934; RMSEA = .062 [.060, .065],

[3] We also explored whether the observed pattern of relationships changes if gender identity is not included in the model and found only one minor inconsistency which we mention in the text (see Table S5 in Supplemental Materials for detailed results).

[4] In all models, the two solidarity items ('I feel committed to other women' and 'I feel a bond with other women') had high correlation residuals ($r > .10$) with all our key variables (identity subtypes, CA subscales and political ideology), indicating that the solidarity subscale shared some unexplained variance with our variables of interest (that was not covered by the broader gender identity). Given that the single-item identity measures used in our study were previously validated against the full self-investment subscale, we did not introduce any further modifications to our models.

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations (Study 1)

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender identity	5.1	1.2										
2. Feminist identity	4.7	1.6	.25**									
			[.20, .29]									
3. Traditional identity	4.1	1.6	.22**	−.36**								
			[.18, .26]	[−.40, −.32]								
4. Progressive CA	5.7	1.2	.31**	.62**	−.18**							
			[.27, .35]	[.59, .65]	[−.22, −.13]							
5. Reactionary CA	3.4	1.7	.08**	−.60**	.57**	−.27**						
			[.03, .12]	[−.62, −.57]	[.54, .60]	[−.31, −.23]						
6. Group-based injustice	4.7	1.6	.15**	.53**	−.22**	.57**	−.36**					
			[.10, .19]	[.50, .56]	[−.26, −.18]	[.54, .60]	[−.40, −.32]					
7. Group efficacy	5.6	1.4	.44**	.40**	−.03	.44**	−.11**	.25**				
			[.41, .48]	[.36, .44]	[−.07, .02]	[.41, .48]	[−.15, −.06]	[.20, .29]				
8. Political ideology	3.3	1.5	−.06*	−.75**	.45**	−.52**	.69**	−.47**	−.25**			
			[−.10, −.01]	[−.77, −.73]	[.41, .48]	[−.55, −.48]	[.67, .72]	[−.50, −.43]	[−.29, −.20]			
9. Age	37.8	13.1	.07**	−.09**	.21**	−.08**	.14**	−.02	−.11**	.15**		
			[.02, .11]	[−.13, −.04]	[.17, .26]	[−.12, −.03]	[.10, .19]	[−.07, .02]	[−.15, −.06]	[.10, .19]		
10. Education	0.7	0.5	.09**	.19**	−.11**	.08**	−.16**	.09**	.11**	−.12**	.07**	
			[.04, .13]	[.15, .24]	[−.16, −.07]	[.03, .13]	[−.21, −.12]	[.05, .14]	[.07, .16]	[−.17, −.08]	[.03, .12]	
11. Religiosity	3.4	2.3	.15**	−.36**	.44**	−.16**	.59**	−.20**	.02	.47**	.17**	−.03
			[.10, .19]	[−.40, −.32]	[.41, .48]	[−.20, −.11]	[.56, .62]	[−.24, −.15]	[−.03, .06]	[.43, .50]	[.13, .21]	[−.08, .01]

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$; Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. Political ideology (1—liberal; 7—conservative); education (1—university degree, 0—no degree).

TABLE 3 Effects of identification with women and identification subtypes on progressive and reactionary CA (Study 1)

	Progressive CA				Reactionary CA			
	β	(SE)	*B*	95% CI	*β*	(SE)	*B*	95% CI
Feminist identity	**.905*****	**(.158)**	**0.687**	**(0.520, 0.976)**	−.278***	(.105)	−0.331	(−0.612, −0.147)
Traditional identity	.006	(.042)	0.006	(−0.077, 0.091)	**.356*****	**(.035)**	**0.573**	**(0.475, 0.683)**
Gender identity	**.172*****	**(.050)**	0.201	(0.075, 0.290)	.081*	(.034)	0.149	(0.040, 0.279)

Note: All estimates are calculated controlling for political ideology, religiosity, age, and education. Effects significant at $p < .001$ are indicated in bold.
*$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

$p < .001$; SRMR = .066. Consistent with our second hypothesis, feminist identity had a strong positive association with progressive CA and a weak negative association with reactionary CA. Consistent with our third hypothesis, traditional identity had a moderate positive association with reactionary CA and was unrelated to support for progressive CA.[5]

Feminist identity proved to be the strongest predictor of progressive CA (explaining 13.8% of the variance), while traditional identity proved to be the strongest predictor of reactionary CA (explaining 6.9% of the variance). Interestingly, gender identity was positively associated with progressive CA even when feminist (and traditional) identity was accounted for (explaining 2.2% of the variance), indicating that women might engage in progressive CA for other motives than the feminist ones.

5.2.4 | Associations with group injustice and efficacy

Finally, we computed a SEM testing indirect effects via group injustice and efficacy (Detailed results can be found in Table S6 in the Supplemental materials). As expected, feminist identity had an indirect positive association with progressive CA via both group-based injustice and group efficacy. Gender identity had an indirect positive association with progressive CA via group efficacy, but not via group-based injustice. None of the indirect effects was significant for traditional identity, indicating that women sharing this identity are likely to be motivated to engage in reactionary CA by other psychological variables.

5.3 | Discussion

Study 1 provided the first empirical test of our hypotheses. Gender identity had a positive association with both progressive and reactionary CA (although the latter was very weak), confirming our prediction that 'identification with women' is too broad to distinguish between support for different types of CA among women. Study 1 also confirmed our predictions that progressive CA would be positively associated with the feminist identity and reactionary CA would be positively associated with the traditional identity and negatively (although weakly) associated with the feminist identity.

We also found that support for progressive CA among feminist identifiers could be partially attributed to the perceptions of group injustice: feminist identifiers were more likely to support progressive CA to the extent that they considered women to be the disadvantaged group. Both feminist identifiers and women identifying with the broader ingroup were also motivated to support progressive CA via group efficacy beliefs, that is, to the extent that they believed they could improve things for other women.

None of the indirect effects via group-based injustice and group efficacy was significant for reactionary CA. While we tried to tap into the motivations to preserve traditional gender values as well as gender hierarchy when designing items for our CA subscales, the final reactionary CA subscale in Study 1 did not include items referring explicitly to the preservation of male privilege (which could have been linked to perceptions of group injustice). Items designed to tap into this notion (e.g., 'Support for male candidates in politics' and 'Increasing men's wages so they can support their families') were excluded from the final scale based on low factor loadings and low support overall, implying that, while these sentiments appear in the postulates of conservative women groups, they are less likely to be endorsed by women more broadly. To address this limitation, in Study 2 we distinguished between reactionary CA preserving male privilege—focusing on 'protecting' men from sexual harassment allegations by women—and reactionary CA preserving traditional gender roles (as assessed in Study 1). We also distinguished between corresponding progressive motives: advocating for female empowerment (as assessed in Study 1) and progressive gender roles. We also included non-heterosexual women in the sample and changed the wording of the identity items from 'I identify as a… [feminist//traditional woman, etc.]' to 'I identify with … [feminists/traditional women, etc.]', to ensure that we are assessing group identities rather than self-categorization.

6 | STUDY 2

The aim of Study 2 was to replicate the results of Study 1 using more nuanced measures of CA in a new sample and cultural context (UK). Specifically, we distinguish between two forms of reactionary CA: CA preserving male privilege versus CA preserving traditional values; and

[5] We found a weak positive association between traditional identity and progressive CA when gender identity was not included in the model (see Table S5 in Supplemental materials for detailed results).

two forms of progressive CA: female empowerment CA versus progressive values CA. We have the same broad predictions as in Study 1. Although the US and the UK gender contexts are similar in many ways, some contested issues and proposed policy solutions vary, for example, the anti-abortion movement is much more prominent in the US than in the UK, and unlike the UK the US does not have statutory paid maternity or parental leave.

6.1 | Method

6.1.1 | Participants

Data for the study was collected in September 2020 using Prolific. We recruited 1106 women living in the UK. We removed 115 participants (10%) for one of the following reasons: failed at least one (out of two) attention checks, had very short completion time (<median completion time/3~5 min), provided the same response to all collective action items (i.e., had no intra-individual response variability), and provided inconsistent responses to two abortion items (i.e., indicated support both for restricting and improving legal access to abortion). This resulted in a final sample of 992 participants (M_{age} = 39.5, SD = 14.5, range 18–81). This sample size provided 90% power (α = .001) for detecting standardized regression effects as small as .20 in a structural equation model with seven independent variables and four dependent variables.[6] The majority of the sample identified as heterosexual (88%; 3% homosexual/lesbian, 7% bisexual, 2% other/prefer not to say), had a degree (18% post- or graduate degree, 40% undergraduate degree, 10% technical degree/community college, 21% high school diploma/A-levels, 10% secondary education or lower) and lived in suburban areas (49%; 26% urban, 24% rural).

6.1.2 | Measures

All response scales ranged between 1 and 7 with higher numbers indicating higher values on a given variable, unless indicated otherwise. The same items as in Study 1 were used to measure: gender identity (α = .84), group-based injustice, group efficacy, agentic self-stereotype (r = .76), benevolent sexism (r = .55), hostile sexism (r = .60) and perceptions of threat to traditional gender roles (α = .81; One item—'Society is too quick to minimize essential differences between women and men'—was removed due to a low factor loading). Subgroup identities were measured with the plural versions of items from Study 1 (e.g., 'feminists' instead of 'feminist'; α = .75 for feminist identity; α = .79 for traditional identity). Political ideology was measured using the 'left-right' response anchors, which is a more common way of assessing political ideology in the UK than the 'liberal-conservative' anchors used in the US context (α = 0.87). Communal self-stereotype was shortened to two items ('compassionate', 'sympathetic'; r = .83).

6.1.3 | Collective action intentions

Respondents were presented with a list of 33 gender issues and causes and asked about their willingness to support them 'through political behaviour such as signing a petition, attending a demonstration or a rally, or donating money' (1—definitely unwilling, 7—definitely willing). As in Study 1, the list included some filler items unrelated to the main hypotheses of this study, and items for each subscale were selected based on results of a confirmatory factor model (three items with FL < .60 were removed from the final model; full list of items used in the study and detailed results of the CFA can be found in Table S4 in Supplemental materials). The female empowerment CA subscale included five items: 'Support for female candidates in politics', 'Mentoring programs for women in leadership positions', 'Reducing gender pay gap', and 'Increasing women's wages' and 'Increasing wages in female-dominated industries' (α = .87). Progressive gender values CA included three items: 'Introduction of gender-neutral school programs', 'Gay and lesbian family rights', 'Introduction of gender-neutral toilets in public institutions' (α = .83). Male privilege CA subscale included four items: 'Protecting men from being punished just for being men', 'Stop treating all men as perpetrators of violence', 'Protecting men from sexual harassment allegations', and 'Stop talking about men as if they are the problem' (α = .84). Traditional gender values CA subscale included three items: 'Promoting traditional family values', 'Defending traditional marriage', and 'Allowing women to be women and men to be men' (α = .83).

6.1.4 | Analytical strategy

We used the same analytical approach as in Study 1. In all models, we regressed two progressive and two reactionary types of CA on: (1) Gender identity; (2) Gender identity together with feminist and traditional identities;[7] (3) All three identities together with group-based injustice and group efficacy to test for indirect effects.

6.2 | Results

6.2.1 | Convergent and discriminant validity

As in Study 1, we used additional variables to assess the validity of our gender identity measures. We found a very similar pattern of associations for all identities as in Study 1 (see Table S2 in Supplemental materials).

6.2.2 | Correlations

Table 4 includes descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations between the main variables in Study 2. Female empowerment CA had

[6] Assuming that all latent variables will be measured with three items with factor loadings = .70 and covariance between all independent variables and error covariance between dependent variables = .25.

[7] As in Study 1, we also explored whether the observed pattern of relationships changes if gender identity is not included in the model: the overall pattern of results was the same (see Table S7 in Supplemental materials).

TABLE 4 Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations (Study 2)

Variable	*M*	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender identity	5.0	1.2												
2. Feminist identity	4.4	1.3	.34**											
			[.29, .40]											
3. Traditional identity	4.4	1.4	.28**	−.15**										
			[.22, .33]	[−.21, −.09]										
4. Female emp. CA	5.6	1.1	.31**	.51**	−.05									
			[.25, .36]	[.46, .55]	[−.11, .02]									
5. Progressive values CA	4.0	1.7	.13**	.54**	−.23**	.45**								
			[.07, .19]	[.49, .58]	[−.29, -.17]	[.40, .50]								
6. Male privilege CA	4.7	1.4	.08*	−.20**	.26**	.13**	−.00							
			[.02, .14]	[−.26, −.14]	[.20, .31]	[.07, .19]	[−.06, .06]							
7. Traditional values CA	4.4	1.5	.12**	−.41**	.52**	−.08*	−.37**	.52**						
			[.06, .18]	[−.46, −.35]	[.47, .56]	[−.14, −.02]	[−.43, −.32]	[.47, .56]						
8. Group-based injustice	4.2	1.5	.11**	.39**	−.14**	.46**	.28**	−.21**	−.28**					
			[.05, .17]	[.34, .44]	[−.20, −.08]	[.41, .51]	[.23, .34]	[−.27, −.15]	[−.34, −.23]					
9. Group efficacy	5.1	1.5	.38**	.44**	−.01	.48**	.32**	.06*	−.06*	.27**				
			[.33, .44]	[.39, .49]	[−.07, .06]	[.43, .53]	[.26, .37]	[.00, .12]	[−.12, −.00]	[.21, .33]				
10. Political ideology	4.1	1.5	−.05	−.56**	.27**	−.34**	−.55**	.24**	.51**	−.37**	−.21**			
			[−.11, .01]	[−.60, -.51]	[.21, .32]	[−.39, −.28]	[−.60, −.51]	[.18, .30]	[.47, .56]	[−.43, −.32]	[−.27, −.15]			
11. Age	39.5	14.5	−.07*	−.30**	.18**	−.33**	−.42**	−.01	.22**	−.10**	−.24**	.32**		
			[−.13, −.01]	[−.35, −.24]	[.12, .24]	[−.39, −.28]	[−.47, −.36]	[−.07, .05]	[.16, .28]	[−.16, −.04]	[−.30, −.18]	[.26, .37]		
12. Education	0.7	0.5	.05	.13**	−.12**	.09**	−.01	−.10**	−.10**	.07*	.07*	−.09**	−.00	
			[−.02, .11]	[.07, .19]	[−.18, −.06]	[.02, .15]	[−.07, .06]	[−.16, −.03]	[−.16, −.04]	[.01, .13]	[.01, .14]	[−.15, −.03]	[−.06, .06]	
13. Religiosity	2.5	12.0	.11**	−.12**	.28**	−.03	−.23**	.16**	.33**	−.06	.07*	.16**	.10**	.05
			[.05, .17]	[−.18, -.06]	[.22, .34]	[−.09, .03]	[−.29, -.17]	[.09, .22]	[.27, .38]	[−.12, .00]	[.01, .13]	[.09, .22]	[.04, .16]	[−.01, .11]

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$; Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. Political ideology (1—liberal; 7—conservative); education (1—university degree, 0—no degree).

a moderate positive bivariate correlation with the progressive values CA and weak correlations with the two reactionary subscales (positive with male privilege and negative with traditional values CA). Male privilege CA had a moderate positive bivariate correlation with the traditional values CA and was unrelated to progressive values CA. Progressive and traditional values CA subscales had a moderate negative bivariate correlation.[8]

Gender identity had a moderate positive bivariate correlation with the female empowerment subscale and a weak positive correlation both with the remaining CA subscales. Feminist identity had a moderate positive bivariate correlation with the progressive subscales and a somewhat weaker negative bivariate correlation with the reactionary CA subscales. Finally, traditional identity had a moderate positive bivariate correlation with the traditional values CA, a weak positive bivariate correlation with male privilege CA, a weak negative bivariate correlation with the progressive values CA, and it was unrelated to female empowerment CA.

6.2.3 | Predicting support for progressive and reactionary CA

We first computed a SEM regressing all four types of CA onto gender identity to test H1. The model fitted the data well: $\chi^2_{(262)} = 820.011$, $p < .001$; CFI = .955; RMSEA = .046, [.043, .050], $p = .953$; SRMR = .059. Consistent with our first hypothesis, gender identity had a positive association with both progressive CA subscales (moderate for female empowerment CA: $\beta = .298$, SE = .037, $p < .001$; $b = 0.417$, 95% CI [0.308, 0.538]; and weak for progressive values CA: $\beta = .120$, SE = .036, $p = .001$; $b = 0.200$, 95% CI [0.085, 0.319] for progressive values CA) and weak positive association with both reactionary CA subscales (CA: $\beta = .146$, SE = .032, $p < .001$; $b = 0.257$, 95% CI [0.149, 0.373] for traditional values CA; $\beta = .103$, SE = .043, $p = .016$; $b = 0.149$, 95% CI [0.028, 0.277] for male empowerment CA).

Table 5 shows the effects of a SEM model testing our predictions for different identity subtypes (H2 & H3). The model fitted the data well: $\chi^2_{(407)} = 1248.897$, $p < .001$; CFI = .946; RMSEA = .046, [.043, .049], $p = .993$; SRMR = .058. Consistent with our second hypothesis, feminist identity had a moderate positive association with both progressive CA subscales and a moderate negative association with reactionary CA operationalized as traditional values (the association with male privilege was weak and significant only at $p < .05$). Consistent with our third hypothesis, traditional identity had a moderate association with both reactionary CA subscales (moderate with traditional values CA and weak with male privilege CA) and was unrelated to support for both progressive CA subscales.

Overall, feminist identity proved to be the strongest predictor of female empowerment and progressive values CA (explaining 15.7% and 9.6% of the variance, respectively), while traditional identity proved to be the strongest predictor of traditional values and male privilege CA (explaining 11.9% and 2.8% of the variance, respectively). It needs to be acknowledged, however, that the overall variance explained in support for male privilege CA was relatively low compared to other CA subscales (17% vs. 46% for female empowerment CA, 62% for traditional values CA and 65% for progressive values CA).

6.2.4 | Associations with group injustice and efficacy

Finally, we computed a SEM testing indirect effects via group injustice and efficacy (detailed results can be found in Table S8 in the Supplemental materials). As in Study 1, feminist identity had an indirect positive association with progressive CA (operationalized as female empowerment CA but not as progressive values CA) via group-based injustice. It also had a somewhat weaker (and significant only at $p < .01$) indirect negative association via injustice with reactionary CA (operationalized as male empowerment CA but not as traditional values CA). Somehow surprisingly, feminist identity had a positive indirect association via group efficacy with female empowerment CA and both reactionary CA subscales (however direct effects with both reactionary CA subscales were negative). As in Study 1, gender identity had an indirect positive association via group efficacy with progressive CA (operationalized as female empowerment CA, but the effect was only significant at $p < .01$). Similar to feminist identity, it also had an indirect positive association with reactionary CA (operationalized as male empowerment CA, but this effect was also only significant at $p < .01$ and the direct effect was not significant at $p < .05$). As in Study 1, none of the indirect effects was significant for traditional identity.

6.3 | Discussion

Study 2 confirmed most of our hypotheses using more refined measures of progressive and reactionary CA. Gender identity had either a positive or no association with all CA subscales. This association was moderate for female empowerment CA and weak for both value-based CA subscales. Feminist identity had a positive association with progressive CA operationalized both as support for female empowerment and progressive gender values, and negative association with reactionary CA operationalized both as support for traditional gender roles and as support for male privilege. Traditional identity had a positive association with both reactionary CA subscales and was unrelated to both progressive CA subscales.

As in Study 1, we found that feminist identifiers were willing to support progressive CA (operationalized as support for female empowerment, but not as support for progressive gender roles) to the extent that they considered women to be the disadvantaged group. Additionally, we found that feminist identifiers were *less likely* to support reactionary CA (operationalized as support for the male privilege but not as support for traditional gender roles) to the extent that they perceived

[8] Model comparison indicated that a model with four-factors (treating traditional and progressive values CA as separate subscales) had a better fit to the data than a model with three-factors (with all value CA items collapsed into one subscale), $\Delta\chi^2 = -1209.06$, $p < .001$; ΔCFI = .18; ΔRMSEA = −.073.

TABLE 5 Effects of identification with women and identification subtypes on progressive and reactionary CA (Study 2)

	Progressive CA							
	Female empowerment				Progressive values			
	B	(SE)	*B*	95% CI	*β*	(SE)	*B*	95% CI
Feminist identity	**.664*** **	**(.071)**	**0.593**	**(0.471, 0.743)**	**.515*** **	**(.071)**	**0.553**	**(0.403, 0.727)**
Traditional identity	.029	(.044)	0.038	(−0.069, 0.130)	−.007	(.040)	−0.010	(−0.117, 0.100)
Gender identity	.060	(.053)	0.081	− 0.066, 0.219)	−.058	(.048)	−0.094	(−0.254, 0.051)
	Reactionary CA							
	Male privilege				Traditional values			
	B	(SE)	*B*	95% CI	*β*	(SE)	*B*	95% CI
Feminist identity	−.229*	(.044)	−0.211	(−0.372, −0.052)	**−.366*** **	**(.063)**	**−0.414**	**(−0.579, −0.279)**
Traditional identity	**.201*** **	**(.050)**	**0.235**	**(0.113, 0.365)**	**.407*** **	**(.040)**	**0.592**	**(0.484, 0.709)**
Gender identity	.106	(.061)	0.149	(−0.019, 0.321)	.123**	(.044)	0.212	(0.073, 0.369)

Note: All estimates are calculated controlling for political ideology, religiosity, age, and education. Effects significant at $p < .001$ are indicated in bold.
*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.

women as the disadvantaged group. Again, however, we found no indirect effects via group injustice for traditional identifiers.

7 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

In the current research, we aimed to test the role of different gender identities in predicting support for progressive and reactionary CA among women. Across two studies we show that gender identity, operationalized as identification with women, is too broad to differentiate between support for these different types of CA. Instead, we show that the content of gender identity matters. Feminist identity, typically associated with progressive women movements, is linked to higher support for progressive CA—operationalized both as support for female empowerment (Studies 1 and 2) and progressive gender values (Study 2). Conversely, traditional identity is linked to higher support for reactionary CA—operationalized both as preserving male privilege (Study 2) and support for traditional gender roles (Studies 1 and 2).

8 | IMPLICATIONS FOR CA MODELS

Our results add to the growing body of literature showing that not all social protests lead to a reduction of social inequalities (e.g., Becker, 2020; Jost et al., 2017; Mikołajczak & Becker, 2019; Osborne et al., 2019). They also point to the importance of incorporating the content of group identity into the analysis of social protest as proposed recently in the extended SIMCA model (van Zomeren et al., 2018). Importantly, we show that not only politicized identities (as proposed in the extended SIMCA), but also opinion-based identities (McGarty et al., 2009), can play an important role in explaining CA among women. Support for reactionary CA among traditional identifiers is particularly interesting given that the traditional worldview is usually associated with support for the status quo and inaction. In our studies, traditional identifiers were more likely to engage in actions defending men and their narrow understanding of family rights (which did not extend to the family rights for gays and lesbians), rather than support the rights of women.

Given that traditional identifiers in our studies were more willing to support men rather than other women, they provide an interesting example of intergroup dynamics in which members of a disadvantaged group are willing to act in solidarity with the advantaged group. To our knowledge, this is an unexplored area of research in CA literature, with the majority of CA studies focusing on progressive CA among the disadvantaged group members. Some recent studies have looked at the solidarity-based CA (SBCA) of the advantaged for the disadvantaged (e.g., Becker & Wright, 2021; Iyer & Ryan, 2009; Kutlaca et al., 2020; Mallett et al, 2008; Uluğ & Tropp, 2021), SBCA among allied minorities (e.g., Dixon et al., 2015), bystanders (e.g., Saab et al., 2015) and SBCA among third groups (i.e., groups that are not directly involved but are likely to become disadvantaged; Klavina & van Zomeren, 2020). Future studies could examine whether predictors of SBCA observed in previous studies extend also to this context.

While the context of gender is unique in many ways, our results can be also relevant for other intergroup contexts, in which broad group identities of disadvantaged groups can encompass heterogeneous values and beliefs expressed in support for reactionary rather than progressive CA, such as conservative sexual minority men who oppose same-sex marriage (e.g., Thai & Dellers, 2020) or established ethnic minority groups who oppose uptake of new immigrants or refugees (e.g., Meeusen et al., 2019).

One interesting observation from our studies is that perceptions of group injustice and group efficacy, typically motivating progressive

social protests (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2004, 2008), were not associated with support for reactionary CA among traditional identifiers. An exploratory analysis using additional variables validating our identity subtypes indicated that traditional identifiers might be motivated to engage in social protest by perceptions of symbolic threat to traditional gender roles (see Choma et al., 2020 for a similar link observed for individuals high in RWA).[9] Contrary to our intuitions however, we did not find support for the assumption that traditional identifiers are motivated to engage in social protest by empathy concerns (as assessed by our communal self-stereotype measure, which included traits such as 'compassionate' and 'sympathetic').

Similarly, among feminist identifiers perceptions of group disadvantage were associated with support for progressive CA operationalized as female empowerment, but not as progressive gender roles. For the latter, we found instead a positive indirect effect via (low) perceptions of symbolic threat in our exploratory analysis, which could be interpreted as the endorsement of progressive gender stereotypes.

9 | IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ON GENDER INEQUALITIES

Previous studies have focused on why women are reluctant to challenge gender discrimination despite its prevalence and harmfulness (e.g., Becker & Wright, 2011). Our studies advance existing knowledge by showing why some women are likely to actively oppose gender equality and policies aimed to promote it. Importantly, we show that some women might seemingly act against their group interest even if they identify strongly with their group.

Although traditional identity is usually associated with domesticity, being passive and thus unwilling to engage in protest in general, our studies point to the key role of traditional identity in supporting gender hierarchy. Importantly, traditional identifiers are willing to do so not only by defending traditional gender values but also by protecting male privilege, although we acknowledge that the latter effect was somewhat weaker in our study. We also do not claim that traditional identifiers are purposefully acting against the best interest of women as a group; rather, that their motivation to protect men could be stronger than their motivation to empower other women.

Our results add to existing multiple identity approaches to the study of gender (e.g., Becker & Wagner, 2009; Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; van Breen et al., 2017). Notably, van Breen et al. (2017) showed the usefulness of including both identifications with women and feminists when predicting support for progressive CA and argued that, by considering different combinations of the strength of these two identities, it is possible to identify distinct identity 'types'. Relatedly, they posited that women identifying strongly with women and weakly with feminists can be considered 'traditional identifiers', a label that bears a clear resemblance to the identity explored in our studies. However, based on an additional analysis of our data, we found only partial support for this proposition:[10] in Study 1, high gender–low feminist identifiers were almost equally likely to support reactionary *and* progressive CA. In Study 2, high gender–low feminist identifiers were willing to support traditional gender roles and male privilege CA (and were either unwilling to support or indifferent towards progressive CA). Yet, gender identification was positively associated with support for both reactionary CA subscales regardless of the strength of feminist identification.

Considering this mixed evidence, and the amount of variance explained by traditional identity, our results indicate that the inclusion of only gender and feminist identity might not be optimal for predicting reactionary CA among women. Indeed, among the three identities included in our studies, traditional identity proved to be the strongest predictor of reactionary CA, operationalized both as support for traditional gender roles and as support for male privilege . Therefore, we encourage researchers interested in studying this phenomenon to consider adding traditional identity as a robust predictor of reactionary CA.

Finally, our studies indicate that support for progressive and reactionary CA among women is associated with subgroup identities independently of broader conservative worldview as indicated by political ideology and religiosity. While feminist identity was moderately linked to left-wing ideology and traditional identity was moderately linked to right-wing ideology, our results suggest that the specific content of those identities rather than political ideology more generally was driving the observed effects.

10 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Although we found a consistent pattern of results in two large samples of women from two countries, we acknowledge several limitations of our studies. One limitation concerns our CA measures, which were somehow asymmetrical in both studies. While the progressive CA scales covered a range of issues related to the economic and political empowerment of women (and, in Study 2, support for progressive gender roles), the reactionary CA scales assessed male privilege only in Study 2 and only in the context of sexual harassment and domestic violence allegations. Although these sentiments are the most prominent in the wider societal debate initiated by the #metoo movement in many countries, fewer women advocate openly for the economic empowerment of men. Instead, we believe that support for male privilege is often disguised, for example as a concern for the wellbeing of children and families. We also intentionally asked about a broad range of actions to account for the fact that typical forms of social protests (such as demonstrations or rallies) are more likely to attract left-wing individuals (Torcal et al., 2016). Future studies could explore specific forms of action within progressive and reactionary CA that feminist and traditional identifiers are willing to support.

[9] Detailed results can be found in Tables S9 and S10 in Supplemental materials.

[10] Detailed results of this analysis can be found in Tables S11–S12 in Supplemental Materials, noting that the items used to measure both identities were somewhat different in our studies than the measures used by van Breen et al. (2017).

Another limitation concerns the cross-sectional design of our studies. While the causal link from identity to CA implied in our studies has been confirmed in experimental studies (see e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2008), future studies should test empirically the role of different gender identities in support for different types of protest among women, and include behavioural measures.

Future studies could also explore the role of perceived closeness to men in reactionary CA among women. Most women have positive contact with men through close psychological relationships. The intensity of this intergroup contact, and the resulting psychological interdependency, can lead many women to see gender relations through their connection to men rather than through their connection to other women, especially those with opposing worldviews.

11 | CONCLUSION

The present research is the first to establish that women might seemingly act against their group interest by supporting reactionary social change, even if they identify with their group. We show that this paradoxical effect can be explained by the content of gender identity. Feminist identification is associated with support for progressive CA, while identification with traditional women is associated with support for reactionary CA. These findings confirm that women are not a homogenous group sharing the same understanding of 'women's rights'. Indeed, traditional identifiers are more likely to protect men and traditionally defined family values rather than support other women.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Materials, data, analysis code and codebooks can be found at https://osf.io/yjdvk/?view_only=69b078d4ca91435a8320addbbd279abe

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

ETHICS APPROVAL

The study received ethical approval from the University of Melbourne Faculty of Arts Human Ethics Advisory Group (ethics ID: 1955752.1).

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