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Stuck in the Middle: Men Experience Countervailing Reactions to Discussions About Misogyny and Violence Against Women

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethics Approval

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Participant Consent

All participants gave their informed consent to participate in the survey and to have their deidentified data used in any empirical publications resulting from this work.

Abstract

Across three pre-registered studies (total $N = 1344$), we sought to understand how men react to discussions about violence against women. Initially, we expected that highly identified men would react defensively. That is, exposure to anti-violence advocacy would lead highly identified men to engage in outgroup derogation (i.e., minimise the prevalence of violence against women, exaggerate women's gender-based privilege), ingroup favouritism (i.e., subtype perpetrators of violence, support men's rights activism); and reduce their willingness to engage in collection action to end violence against women. We further expected that these reactions would be explained by social identity threat over concerns that men were being unfairly derided and negatively stereotyped. However, the findings revealed a more complex pattern of responding. On the one hand, exposure to these discussions (versus a control message) elicited social identity threat which, in turn, predicted higher outgroup derogation and ingroup favouring responses (Studies 1-3) and lower action intentions (Studies 2 and 3). But exposure also elicited collective guilt (Studies 2 and 3) and perceived injustice regarding women's disadvantage (Study 3), which predicted lower outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism, and higher action intentions. These opposing reactions fully offset each other and were not moderated by ingroup identification. These findings uncover a paradox in the fight for gender parity by showing that, in the face of messages that highlight inequality, men exhibit countervailing motivations to both protect their group's interests and better women's treatment. We discuss the implications of these findings for involving men in gender equality efforts.

Public Significance Statement

How do men respond to public discourse about misogyny and violence against women? We find that men experience conflicting reactions when exposed to these discussions. On the one hand, they perceive these messages as threatening their ingroup's image, which predicts

greater resistance and a lower willingness to engage in actions to support gender equality. However, exposure to these messages also increases men's acknowledgement of the disadvantages women continue to face, which predicts more prosocial responses. These conflicting reactions 'cancelled each other out' and may help to explain men's inaction in championing gender equality.

Keywords: social identity threat, men's rights support, allyship, backlash, gender equality

Misogyny and violence affect women on a global scale. Men are the primary proponents of sexism (Masser & Abrams, 1999; Viki & Abrams, 2003) and primary perpetrators of sexual, physical, and emotional violence against women (VAW; World Health Organisation, 2021). Recent social movements (e.g., #MeToo) have drawn unprecedented attention to these issues, sparking public discussions about women's experiences and the role that men play in perpetrating misogyny and violence. This societal discourse regarding men's role as perpetrators, however, has elicited backlash among some men, who have responded by expressing hostility toward #MeToo and other anti-violence advocacy (Flood, 2019).

Men's resistance has been shown to manifest in various ways. Qualitative and observational evidence (e.g., social media posts) show that men may downplay the prevalence of VAW and exaggerate women's gender-based privileges (Gottell & Dutton, 2016; O'Donnell, 2022), eschew their own accountability in perpetuating inequality ('not all men' are violent; PettyJohn et al., 2019), and even support social movements which reinforce male supremacy (Van Valkenburgh, 2021). These disparate literatures show that when their role as perpetrators is made salient, men often react in ways that circumvent their own responsibility in achieving gender equality, and, in some instances, actively promote patriarchy.

Given the proliferation of anti-violence advocacy in the wake of #MeToo (Flood, 2019, Olson, 2016), it is important to understand why some men respond derisively. This dovetails with broader calls to examine people's evaluations of social movements and advocacy around specific issues, and the flow-on effects of these evaluations for their receptivity to and engagement with these causes (Thomas et al., 2009, Lizzio-Wilson et al., 2022a). In the present research, we offer and test a unifying framework to understand men's defensive reactions to anti-violence advocacy. From a social psychological perspective, we propose that these defensive reactions help men assuage their experience of *social identity*

threat (i.e., when an important identity is subjectively devalued, negatively stereotyped, or discriminated against; Major & O'Brien, 2005).

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) a person's self-concept ranges from being purely interpersonal to purely intergroup. On the one hand, 'who we are' consists of attitudes, memories, and behaviours that define us as idiosyncratic individuals, distinct from other people (a personal identity). On the other hand, self-concept is also defined by the social categories to which a person belongs (a social identity). People are generally motivated to maintain a positive self-concept, and the value and worth of their social identities are integral to achieving this goal. This means they are sensitive to information that may cast a negative light on the groups to which they belong and seek to defend against social identity threats to maintain a positive self-concept and collective identity (Hornsey, 2008; Lizzio-Wilson et al., 2022b). We propose that men may experience social identity threat (hereafter referred to as identity threat) when exposed to discussions about misogyny and violence and that this, in turn, may lead them to engage in a myriad of defensive strategies to protect and restore their ingroup's image.

Identity Threat Among Advantaged Groups

To date, a large corpus of work examining identity threat has focussed on the experiences of disadvantaged groups. However, members of advantaged groups can also experience identity threat when exposed to information that subjectively devalues their collective identity. Although there are multiple types of identity threat (see Branscombe et al., 1999a), much of this work has examined status-related threats. When advantaged group members' (including men) perceive that increasing the rights of disadvantaged groups threatens their group's power and privilege, this can reduce their support for progressive change and drive discriminatory intergroup attitudes and behaviours aimed at reinforcing inequality (Bagci et al., 2021, Craig & Richeson, 2014a, 2014b, Domen et al., 2022, Dover et

al., 2016, Jones et al., 2022; Maass et al., 2003; Rivera-Rodriguez et al., 2022, Wilkins et al., 2022; see also Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019 for a review). Thus, in some instances, derogatory responses to progressive social movements and advocacy are driven by a desire to preserve the advantaged group's privilege and power.

However, these social movements often operate not only to improve the rights of disadvantaged groups, but also to highlight the ways in which advantaged groups perpetrate and benefit from inequality (Barron et al., 2024, Kende et al., 2020). Indeed, #MeToo has been described as simultaneously promoting justice for women and increasing men's accountability for their role as perpetrators and beneficiaries of violence (Hill, 2021). Thus, anti-violence advocacy may be threatening because it calls men's morality into question. Thus, as we argue below, men's negative reactions to anti-violence advocacy may emanate from concerns that their gender is being negatively portrayed and unfairly derided, rather than (or not only) attempts to protect or restore their power and status.

Why Discussions About Misogyny and Violence Might Elicit Men's Identity Threat

In the context of discussions about misogyny and violence, men's identity threat may stem from the fact that conversations about misogyny and violence highlight their ingroup's immoral treatment of women. Members of advantaged groups often feel threatened when it is implied that the ingroup has been unfair or exploitative toward another group (Branscombe et al., 1999a) and engage in strategies to downplay their negative intergroup history. For example, White Americans reported higher modern racism scores when they were reminded of the unearned privileges they have obtained because of their race (Branscombe et al., 1999b). Similarly, Dutch participants downplayed the negative aspects of their nation's history when reminded of the Netherlands' colonial history in Indonesia (Doosje et al., 1998), suggesting that advantaged groups members are motivated to minimise information which threatens their group's moral image. In the context of gender, there is correlational evidence

that men are less likely to support #MeToo if they perceive that the campaign mars their group's moral reputation (Kende et al., 2020; see also Sullivan et al., 2012).

In highlighting their continuing mistreatment of women, men may also feel threatened because these discussions may be perceived to discriminate against and negatively stereotype their ingroup. Sentiment analyses of Twitter data suggests that some men oppose #MeToo because they perceive the movement as unfairly stereotyping and targeting them as sexual predators and perpetrators of violence (PettyJohn et al., 2019; Schneider & Carpenter, 2020). Similarly, correlational work has found that men (and women) perceive that #MeToo has contributed to a negative portrayal of men in society (Kessler et al., 2021). Thus, men may react defensively because they view discussions about misogyny and violence as a cue that their ingroup will be discriminated against or negatively stereotyped as 'predatory' and 'aggressive'.

Connecting Identity Threat to Novel Manifestations of Men's Defensive Responding

If men experience identity threat when exposed to discussions about misogyny and violence, this may help to explain the myriad of defensive reactions they exhibit in response to #MeToo and other anti-violence advocacy. Below, we outline five specific responses which reflect as yet unconsidered ways in which men might assuage identity threat. Thus, we aim to understand whether identity threat explains these reactions and, in doing so, provide further insight into the discrete identity restoration purposes they serve (see Table 1 for a summary).

Violence Minimisation and Exaggerating Female Privilege as Forms of Outgroup Derogation. According to SIT, people can restore a threatened group identity by discriminating against relevant outgroups (i.e., outgroup derogation; Riek et al., 2006). While a common conceptualisation of outgroup derogation is endorsing or engaging in discriminatory behaviours (e.g., sexual harassment; Maas et al., 2003), we argue that there

are two as yet overlooked forms of outgroup derogation which men have employed in response to discussions about misogyny and violence.

One common reaction is to minimise or question claims about the prevalence of sexism and VAW (Gottell & Dutton, 2016). By rejecting or discrediting information which paints their group in a negative light, violence minimisation subjectively limits people's ability to use this information to criticise or negatively stereotype men as a group (Abrams & Hogg, 1988). Similarly, during #MeToo, many men asserted that feminism had succeeded in making women a more 'privileged' group relative to men, particularly in the context of anti-violence advocacy and legislation (O'Donnell, 2022). Although it may seem counterintuitive to conceptualise this as a form of outgroup derogation, exaggerating women's gender-based privileges may help assuage men's threat by reducing the legitimacy of women's claims that they are a lower-status group deserving of reparatory measures (Branscombe et al., 1999b).

Subtyping and Support for Men's Rights Activism as Forms of Ingroup Favouritism. Another way in which people can restore a threatened group identity is endorsing attitudes or behaviours which bolster the ingroup's positive image or status (i.e., ingroup favouritism; Maass et al., 1996). In the context of discussions about violence and misogyny, there are two reactions men employ that might serve this function.

A common, perhaps notorious response to anti-violence advocacy (which was prevalent during #MeToo) is the proclamation that 'not all men' are sexist and violent (PettyJohn et al., 2019). In doing so, men subtype specific ingroup members as problematic while maintaining that most men are respectful of women. This response may assuage threat by asserting that negative stereotypes about men only apply to a smaller subgroup of group members, thereby maintaining a positive image of the superordinate ingroup (Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques et al., 1988).

Relatedly, identity threat may explain men's support for social movements which

advocate for men's rights. In the wake of #MeToo, there has been a marked increase in support for the men's rights movement (Dickel & Evolvi, 2022) which positions men as an oppressed group who need to reclaim their power by returning to patriarchal power structures (Rafail & Freitas, 2019; Van Valkenburgh, 2021). Given that a key aim of the men's right movement is addressing men's purported mistreatment in the context of anti-violence advocacy (Marwick & Caplan, 2018), men may support men's rights activism to combat perceived denigration and improve their collective reputation.

Collective Action Intentions. Finally, identity threat may lower men's willingness to engage in political and individual level actions to improve women's treatment (e.g., becoming a spokesperson to end VAW, learning how they can personally improve men's treatment of women; Sudkämper et al., 2020; Wiley et al., 2021). Men's solidarity and shared identity with women can spur solidarity-based actions (Subašić et al., 2018) suggesting that identity-related concerns influence their allyship. While men can be less inclined to support or engage in collective action because of status concerns (Lisnek et al., 2022; Rivera-Rodriguez et al., 2022), they may also report lower action intentions because they do not want to help outgroups (women) who they perceive as unfairly deriding their ingroup. It may also be that engaging in collective action would constitute an acknowledgement of men's immoral treatment of women, thereby exacerbating their experience of threat.

Perhaps Not All Men: The Moderating Role of Ingroup Identification

We further expect that the effects described above will be moderated by ingroup identification. As higher identifiers are more committed to the ingroup and invested in its success and wellbeing (Turner et al., 1987) they are also more sensitive to information that might devalue the group and engage in actions to restore the group's threatened identity. In the context of gender, highly identified men are more likely to experience intergroup threats (Rivera-Rodriguez et al., 2022) and respond in ways which serve to protect the ingroup's

image or standing (Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999, Maass et al., 2003, Barron et al., 2024). Thus, we expect that more highly identified men will be more likely to experience identity threat in response to discussions about misogyny and violence and, in turn, report greater outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism as well as lower collective action intentions.

The Present Research

Across three pre-registered studies, we examined whether highly-identified men experience identity threat when exposed to discussions about misogyny and VAW, and if this leads them to engage in a number of novel strategies to restore a positive ingroup identity. The methodology, sample size, hypotheses, and planned analyses for each study were preregistered (Study 1: https://osf.io/peqgt/?view_only=e99b7d68cb3d4636a0cfcf704da4039a; Study 2: https://osf.io/e3ah7/?view_only=e6e0b8a7383c4850b02b4a524d265241; Study 3: https://osf.io/kgruv/?view_only=d326331cff5a4361b89c1aa1b658c2b7). The verbatim survey materials and datasets for each study are available at: https://osf.io/uw597/?view_only=28a207cb3b034f30b99529a63c57324c. All studies received ethics approval from the first and second authors' institutions.

Deviations From Pre-Registration

As noted in the study pre-registrations, we measured other variables beyond those reported here. In this paper, we focus on novel outcomes of men's defensive responding which have been overlooked in the identity threat literature (as outlined above) to strengthen the contributions of our work. For transparency, we include descriptions of all auxiliary measures in the supplementary materials and surveys on OSF; and report all analyses involving these variables in the supplementary materials (see Tables S1-S11). Note that the pattern of findings for the auxiliary variables largely mirrors that of the primary variables

reported in the main text; we have not selectively reported variables here based on statistical significance or hypothesis confirmation.

Study 1

We hypothesised that men would express higher outgroup derogation (i.e., violence minimisation, exaggerating female privilege) and ingroup favouritism (i.e., subtyping, support for men's rights activism), and lower collective action intentions when exposed to discussions about VAW (exposure condition) compared to a control message (H1) and that these effects would be mediated by identity threat (H2). However, we further expected that these effects would only be evident among higher identifiers (H3).

Method

Participants

An a priori power analysis conducted using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) indicated that 395 participants would be needed to detect the hypothesised two-way interaction with a small effect size (f = .02) at 80% power and α = .05. We planned to recruit 450 participants via Prolific (an online crowdsourcing platform) to buffer against incomplete data. The platform allowed two additional people to participate. Thus, 452 male participants were initially recruited. Five participants were excluded because they did not identify as male. The final sample consisted of 447 North American men (M_{age} = 31.35, SD_{age} = 9.53; 62.90% White, 20.60% Asian, 6.30% Multiracial, 6.00% Hispanic/Latinx, 3.10% Black, 0.90% 'other', 0.20% unspecified).

Design

Study 1 employed a two-cell (exposure to discussions about VAW: exposure, control) between-subjects design, with ingroup identification as a measured moderator.

Procedure, Materials, and Measures

Ingroup identification

Participants first completed a four-item measure of ingroup identification (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) assessing the extent to which being a man was core to their self-concept (e.g., “Being a man is an important reflection of who I am”). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Experimental manipulation

Participants were then randomly assigned to read one of two Twitter posts about the prevalence of men’s misogyny and VAW (exposure condition) or the impact of human activity on climate change (control condition). Both posts were written by a woman (Alexa). In the *exposure condition*, Alexa described her concerns about VAW and highlighted that men are the primary perpetrators. Her post was accompanied by five factual statements about VAW (e.g., “Women are much more likely to be killed by their partner or spouse”). In the *control condition*, Alexa described her concerns about climate change and identified human activity as the primary contributor. Her post was accompanied by five factual statements about the impacts of human activity on climate change (e.g., “Burning coal and gas for electricity generation are a key cause of carbon pollution”).

We used a control condition unrelated to VAW given that any mention of violence or misogyny could be threatening for men. For example, Barron et al. (2024) asked men to read a message in which a woman expressed concerns about men’s VAW (experimental condition) or concerns about VAW without mentioning men (control condition). They found no differences in men’s defensiveness toward the message and posit that this may be because any discussion of violence is threatening considering widespread public discourse about men’s role in violence perpetration. Thus, including a similar control condition here would not have provided an appropriate test of our hypotheses. The decision to use a control condition unrelated to VAW was also informed by other experimental research which has manipulated intergroup threat using a similar approach (e.g., reading about a changing

cultural climate in which Christians' influence is waning vs changing trends in geographical mobility; Wilkins et al., 2022) to prevent participant priming.

Dependent measures

Participants completed the dependent measures which were counterbalanced to control for order effects. All items were completed on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach's αs are reported in Table 2.

As three constructs were assessed without established scales (identity threat, subtyping, support for men's rights activism), we performed Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA) to check the factor structures of these purpose-built measures. Below, we briefly report the outcomes of these analyses for measures in which multiple factors were identified and/or low loading items were identified and subsequently removed (see the supplementary materials for exhaustive reporting).

Identity threat. Given that concerns about identity devaluation are central to the experience of identity threat (Steele et al., 2002), four purpose-built items were used to capture the extent to which participants felt that the Twitter post they read devalued men (e.g., "This Twitter post casts men in a negative light") and made them feel uncomfortable about their group membership (e.g., "This Twitter post makes me feel uncomfortable about my male identity").

Violence minimization. Two items (adapted from Gerger et al., 2007) assessed the extent to which participants minimised the impact and prevalence of VAW (i.e., "Many women exaggerate the prevalence of men's violence against women"; "A lot of women misinterpret harmless gestures as 'sexism'").

Exaggeration of female privilege. Two items (adapted from Powell et al., 2005) assessed the extent to which participants thought that women were more privileged than men (i.e., "Women have important advantages in life over men"; "In general, it is much easier to

be a woman in America than to be a man").

Subtyping. Four purpose-built items assessed the extent to which participants believed that 'not all men' perpetrate VAW, and only those men who do should be held responsible (e.g., "Not all men perpetrate violence against women, so not all men should be expected to care about this issue"; "Conversations about violence against women should be directed towards the men who are the problem, and not the ones who aren't"). Although we initially measured subtyping using six items, the EFA revealed that two of these items loaded onto a separate factor reflecting the belief that only a small number of men perpetrate violence, rather than the belief that only men who perpetrate violence should be held responsible. Thus, these items were omitted from the final scale.

Support for men's rights activism. Five purpose-built items assessed the extent to which participants supported men's rights activism (e.g., "I understand the need for groups that protect and fight for men's rights"; "I understand the need for groups that promote equal rights and create a level playing field for all men").

Political and personal collective action intentions. Ten items (taken from Becker & Wright, 2011) assessed participants collective action intentions on behalf of women's rights. Seven items assessed intentions to engage in political actions (e.g., "Participate in a demonstration"); and 3 items assessed intentions to engage in personal actions to prevent and combat violence (e.g., "I am interested in learning more about how I can improve men's attitudes toward and treatment of women").

Results

Associations Between Established and Purpose-Built Measures

We examined the pattern of correlations between the established and purpose-built scales (identity threat, subtyping, support for men's rights activism) to provide preliminary evidence of their validity (see Table 2 for descriptive statistics and correlations). The identity

threat scale was weakly positively correlated with defensive responses which protect the ingroup from criticism (violence minimization, exaggeration of female privilege) and unrelated to ingroup identification and political and personal actions that benefit women, who are the source of their identity threat. Further, subtyping and support for men's rights activism were both positively moderately associated with the other defensive responses (violence minimisation, exaggeration of female privilege) and negatively related to personal and political action intentions. Importantly, the three novel measures were not strongly related with each other or the other variables (all *r*s < .70) suggesting that they are distinct manifestations of men's defensive responding and capture unique responses to the experimental stimuli separate to the other established measures.

The Direct and Interactive Effects of Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition

A series of Moderated Multiple Regressions were conducted on each dependent variable and identity threat. Ingroup identification was mean centred prior to analyses. Higher and lower identification scores were calculated at 1SD above and below the mean. Experimental condition was effect-coded: 1 = exposure condition, -1 = control condition. The direct effects of ingroup identification and condition were entered at Step 1, and the two-way interaction was entered at Step 2. Tables 2 and 3 summarise the regression coefficients for the dependent variables and identity threat, respectively.

Dependent variables. Contrary to H1, while men in the exposure (versus control) condition reported lower political action intentions, no other direct effects of the experimental manipulation were observed. Contrary to H2, although significant and theoretically consistent direct effects of identification emerged on all measures, no identification x condition interactions were observed (see Table 3).

Identity threat. Significant main effects of experimental condition and ingroup

identification were observed for identity threat: higher identifiers reported greater identity threat, and men reported higher identity threat when exposed to discussions about VAW (versus the control condition). No significant ingroup identification x condition interaction emerged (see Table 4).

Indirect Effects via Identity Threat

Although H1 and H2 were not supported, we still tested whether there was partial support for H3 by examining the mediating role of identity threat. As the effect of experimental condition on identity threat was not qualified by ingroup identification, simple mediation (rather than moderated mediation) analyses were conducted using Hayes' (2019) PROCESS computational model (using Model 4) with 10,000 bootstrapped samples (see Table 5 for unstandardised *b*s, standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals).

Consistent with H3, men exposed to a message about VAW reported greater identity threat than men in the control group. This, in turn, predicted stronger violence minimisation, exaggeration of female privilege, subtyping, and support for men's rights activism. There were no indirect effects via identity threat on political or personal action intentions.

Evidence for Suppression by Identity Threat

One possible explanation for the absence of an overall effect of the experimental manipulation on the dependent variables is that men had countervailing responses to discussions about misogyny and violence. Although they may have experienced identity threat, which predicted more negative reactions, they may have also simultaneously experienced an unaccounted-for, opposing reaction that *lowered* these responses, thereby yielding a non-significant net direct effect.

Support for this explanation was observed when testing the indirect effects above: when controlling for identity threat as a mediator, significant direct effects of the experimental condition emerged, such that men in the exposure (versus control) condition

reported *lower* violence minimisation, exaggeration of female privilege, subtyping, and support for men's right activism (see Table 5). Thus, controlling for identity threat illuminated a potential competing (statistically suppressed) pathway linking exposure to discussions about violence to *less* defensive responding.

Discussion

Contrary to expectations, almost no differences emerged between the exposure and control conditions, and no effects were moderated by identification. On face value, these findings suggest that men do not react defensively to discussions about violence. However, mediation analyses revealed a more complex story: men in the exposure (versus control) condition reported higher identity threat, which, in turn, predicted stronger violence minimisation, exaggeration of female privilege, subtyping, and support for men's right activism (though there were no indirect effects on action intentions). Interestingly, when controlling for identity threat as a potential suppressor variable, significant direct effects emerged, such that men in the experimental (versus control) condition reported *lower* endorsement of these derogatory and ingroup favouring responses. This suggests that rather than only experiencing threat, men are likely experiencing countervailing responses to discussions about VAW.

Given that a large body of work has found direct effects of identity-related threats on men's discriminatory reactions, we could not have anticipated a priori that the men in our sample would demonstrate countervailing responses. However, as our exploratory analyses illuminated a potential competing pathway, we conducted a follow-up study to replicate and extend these findings by testing a mechanism that may account for men's countervailing responses: collective guilt.

Study 2

Collective guilt reflects a sense of discomfort experienced by group members for the harm done to another group due to historical and/or ongoing inequality (Wohl et al., 2006). People are more likely to experience collective guilt when they are categorised as a member of a group that is perceived to be responsible for harming another group, even if the personal self was uninvolved (Doosje et al., 1998). Importantly, collective guilt has positive effects for intergroup relationships, and has been linked to lower outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism (Bahns & Branscombe, 2011) and greater solidarity-based collective action (Calcagno, 2016).

Though men are motivated to guard against threats to their group's image, they can also experience collective guilt for their group's role in the maintenance of gender inequality (Miron et al., 2006). Thus, highlighting men's role in the perpetration of misogyny and violence may lead them to experience two opposing reactions. On the one hand, exposure heightens identity threat because these discussions convey uncomfortable truths about men's treatment of women which they are motivated to protect against. However, exposure may also increase collective guilt, because men simultaneously acknowledge that their group has perpetuated harm against women which, in turn, may motivate them to repair intergroup relations.

There is preliminary evidence for such opposing reactions. Hässler et al. (2019) found that men reported stronger image shame (i.e., concerns that the ingroup's social image has been marred) *and* moral shame (i.e., a desire to amend for the ingroup's immoral behaviour) when presented with information about gender inequality (see Allpress et al., 2014 for a cognate finding in the context of the Iraq War), though the authors did not examine the flow-on effects of these different reactions on relevant outcomes. Thus, men may feel 'stuck' between two competing motivations (protecting the ingroup's image and acknowledging their negative intergroup history with women) which may explain the absence of direct effects in

Study 1.

Levtov et al. (2014) provide indirect support for these conflicting reactions, finding that many men simultaneously supported and opposed legislative changes regarding VAW. The authors posit that these legal changes are successfully reducing the acceptability of violence, while also creating worry about the impact of these changes for men (Dworkin et al., 2012). Thus, in Study 2, we examined whether men simultaneously experienced identity threat and collective guilt in response to discussions about VAW, and whether these variables, in turn, had countervailing effects on outgroup derogation, ingroup favouritism, and collective action intentions.

Hypotheses

We tested a model in which exposure to discussions about men's VAW (versus the control condition) would simultaneously: increase identity threat which, in turn, would predict higher outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism, and lower action intentions (H1a); and increase collective guilt, which, in turn, would predict lower outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism, and higher action intentions (H1b). We did not have firm predictions as to whether both paths would fully offset each other. We retained identification to determine whether the null interactive effects observed in Study 1 were spurious, though we made no predictions as to whether identification would moderate these paths.

Method

Participants

Using the same power calculation procedure as Study 1, we planned to recruit 450 participants. Of an initial sample of 451 participants, three were excluded because they did not identify as male, leaving a final sample of 448 North American men (M_{age} = 33.87, SD_{age} = 12.07; 64.1% White, 18.30% Asian, 6.90% Hispanic/Latinx, 6.70% Black, 3.60% Multiracial, 0.20% 'other', 0.20% unspecified). One participant did not provide their age.

Design, Procedure, Materials, and Measures

Study 2 employed the same design, procedure, materials, and measures as Study 1, bar the inclusion of collective guilt. Cronbach's αs are reported in Table 6.

Collective guilt. Four items (adapted from Schmitt et al., 2008) assessed the extent to which men felt guilty about their negative intergroup history with women (e.g., "When reading the Twitter post, I felt guilty about men's harmful actions toward women"). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Results

Associations Between Established and Purpose-Built Measures

Once again, the pattern of correlations suggested that the three purpose-built measures captured unique manifestations of defensive responding. Mirroring Study 1, these scales were weakly or moderately positively associated with the other defensive responses (violence minimisation, exaggeration of female privilege) and negatively associated or unrelated to personal and political action intentions (see Table 6 for descriptive statistics and correlations). The purpose-built scales were also unrelated or weakly positively related to ingroup identification and were not strongly related with each other or the other dependent variables (all *r*s < .70).

The Direct and Interactive Effects of Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition

A series of Moderated Multiple Regressions were conducted on each dependent variable and the mediators following the same coding procedure and order of entry as Study 1 (see Tables 7 and 8 for the regression coefficients for the dependent measures and mediators, respectively). Mirroring Study 1, while direct effects of identification emerged on almost all dependent measures (see Table 7) no direct effects of the manipulation or identification x condition interactions were found.

Testing Opposing Pathways: The Mediating Effects of Identity Threat and Collective Guilt

As we replicated the null direct and interactive effects observed in Study 1, we next examined whether men simultaneously reported greater identity threat *and* collective guilt when exposed to discussions about violence and misogyny. Providing initial support for H1a and H1b, significant direct effects of experimental condition were observed for both mediators, such that men reported greater identity threat and collective guilt in the exposure condition (versus the control condition; see Table 8). No significant main effects of identification or two-way interactions emerged.

We then performed a parallel mediation analysis to test the proposed model. As identity threat and collective guilt only varied as a function of experimental condition (and were not moderated by identification), simple parallel mediation analyses were conducted using Hayes' (2019) PROCESS computational model (Model 4) with 10,000 bootstrapped samples (see Table 9 for unstandardised *b*s, standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals).

Overall, results provided partial support for the proposed suppression model. Men in the exposure (versus control) condition experienced greater identity threat which, in turn, predicted *higher* violence minimisation, exaggeration of female privilege, subtyping, support for men's rights activism, and *lower* personal (but not political) action intentions (H1a). However, men in the exposure (versus control) condition also experienced higher collective guilt which, in turn, predicted *higher* political and personal action intentions (H1b). No other indirect effects via collective guilt were observed.

Interestingly, significant direct effects of the manipulation still emerged on each dependent variable when controlling for both mediators. These effects largely mirrored the pattern observed in Study 1 when controlling for identity threat (see Table 9) suggesting that collective guilt does not entirely account for men's opposing responses. Although some of the

residual direct effects were indicative of derogatory and ingroup-favouring responses (i.e., men reported lower political action intentions), this is likely because no indirect effects of identity threat were observed on these variables. Thus, controlling for collective guilt revealed men's negative responses. [1]

Discussion

Study 2 provided partial support for the proposed model. Once again, there were no direct effects of the manipulation, and these effects were not moderated by identification. However, we found evidence that this could be partly explained by two competing reactions men experienced. Consistent with Study 1, exposure to these messages (versus a control message) elicited higher identity threat, which, in turn, predicted higher outgroup derogation, ingroup favouritism, and lower personal (but not political) action intentions. These messages also elicited collective guilt, which, in turn, predicted higher political and personal action intentions (though no other indirect effects were observed). These results partially support the proposition that men experience countervailing reactions to discussions about VAW: they experience identity threat and wish to restore their group's image; while also feeling guilty regarding their negative intergroup history with women, which motivates them to repair intergroup relations.

Though the men in our sample experienced collective guilt (relative to the control group), guilt may have had less consistent flow-on effects because men were still motivated to protect their ingroup's image in the face of information about their mistreatment of women. That is, men may have experienced collective guilt regarding their negative intergroup history with women, while simultaneously feeling threatened by this admission,

[1]Although significant indirect effects via collective guilt emerged on some auxiliary variables (see Table S6 in the supplementary materials), there were still significant residual direct effects of the manipulation. Thus, collective guilt did not fully account for men's countervailing reactions even when significant indirect effects were observed.

potentially leading them to guard against this threat by not engaging in certain reparatory behaviours. This is consistent with work showing that although collective guilt can facilitate intergroup reconciliation, it is also an aversive emotion which can motivate people to engage in elaborate psychological strategies to avoid it (Miron et al., 2010). Given that identity threat and collective guilt were strongly correlated (see Table 6), this suggests that men's guilt regarding their negative intergroup history with women was also inherently threatening to their group image.

Further, no indirect effects via collective guilt were observed on outcome variables which serve to minimise the extent to which men have benefitted from inequality (i.e., support for men's rights activism, subtyping, exaggeration of female privilege) or minimise the prevalence and impact of VAW. This suggests that collective guilt enables men to engage in reparatory strategies (i.e., collective action) but does not impact their willingness to abdicate strategies which further their group-based interests. This is not to say that collective guilt does not have important implications or positive effects for intergroup relations, but collective guilt may be too aversive to reliably predict prosocial responses in this context.

Study 3

In Study 3, we examined an alternative mechanism that might more consistently predict men's prosocial responses to discussions about VAW: evaluating women's disadvantage as unjust. Perceiving inequality as illegitimate has positive effects for intergroup relations among members of historically advantaged groups, including lower prejudice toward disadvantaged groups (Outten et al., 2018), less favourable evaluations of the advantaged ingroup (Levin et al., 2002), and stronger engagement in solidarity-based collective action (Iyer & Ryan, 2009). Importantly, evaluating women's disadvantage as unjust may have more consistent flow-on effects than collective guilt. This is because acknowledging the existence of discrimination against women, in and of itself, may not pose

a threat to the ingroup's image, which might facilitate more prosocial responses (Branscombe et al., 1999b; Lowery et al., 2007).

Hypotheses

We tested a model whereby exposure to discussions about men's VAW (versus the control) would: increase identity threat which, in turn, would predict higher outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism, and lower action intentions (H1a); and increase injustice perceptions about gender inequality, which, in turn, would predict lower outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism, and higher action intentions (H1b). Although not included in the pre-registration, we also retained collective guilt in the model to test whether it had a similarly inconsistent indirect effect on men's reactions (though we made no predictions as to whether this would be the case). As in Study 2, we made no firm predictions as to whether the indirect effects would be moderated by identification, or if direct and interactive effects of condition and identification would emerge on the dependent measures.

Method

Participants

Per Studies 1 and 2, we planned to recruit 450 participants. Out of an initial sample of 452, two participants were excluded because they did not identify as male, and one participant declined to take part after reading the information sheet. The final sample consisted of 449 North American men (M_{age} = 32.49, SD_{age} = 11.94; 60.10% White, 19.60% Asian, 8.20% Hispanic/Latinx, 7.30% Multiracial, 2.90% Black, 1.30% unspecified, and 0.40% 'other').

Design, Procedure, Materials, and Measures

The design, procedure, materials, and measures were identical to Study 2 with the addition of injustice. Cronbach's αs are reported in Table 10.

Injustice. Four items (adapted from Iyer & Ryan, 2009) assessed the extent to which

participants felt a sense of injustice about gender inequality (e.g., “The disadvantages women face are unfair”). Responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Results

Associations Between Established and Purpose-Built Measures

The pattern of correlations between the three purpose-built measures and established scales was virtually identical to Study 2 (see Table 10 for descriptive statistics and correlations) further suggesting that that they are distinct manifestations of men’s defensive responding and capture unique responses to the experimental stimuli separate to the other established measures.

The Direct and Interactive Effects of Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition

A series of Moderated Multiple Regressions were conducted on the dependent variables and mediators following the same coding procedure and order of entry as Studies 1 and 2 (see Tables 11 and 12 for the regression coefficients for the dependent measures and mediators, respectively).

Consistent with our previous findings, while direct effects of identification emerged on all dependent measures (see Table 11) there were no identification x condition interactions. Contrary to Studies 1 and 2, there were two direct effects of the manipulation, such that participants in the exposure (versus control) condition reported higher support for men’s rights activism and lower personal action intentions.

Testing Opposing Paths: The Mediating Role of Identity Threat, Collective Guilt, and Injustice

Providing initial support for H1a and H1b, men reported greater identity threat, collective guilt, and injustice when exposed to discussions about VAW (versus the control

condition; see Table 12). Ingroup identification was also negatively associated with guilt and injustice but did not moderate any effects. As the preliminary analyses indicated that all mediators varied as a function of the experimental manipulation (and were not moderated by identification), we performed a simple parallel mediation analysis using Hayes' (2019) PROCESS computational model (Model 4) with 10,000 bootstrapped samples. All three mediators were entered simultaneously into the model (see Table 13 for unstandardised *b*s, standard errors, and 95% confidence intervals).

The mediation analyses provided strong support for the proposed model. Per Studies 1 and 2, men in the exposure (versus control) condition reported stronger identity threat, which, in turn, predicted *higher* violence minimisation, exaggeration of female privilege, subtyping, and support for men's rights activism; and *lower* personal (but not political) action intentions.

However, in support of the proposed prosocial pathway, men in the exposure (versus control) condition also reported greater injustice and guilt. Both variables, in turn, predicted *lower* violence minimisation, exaggeration of female privilege, and subtyping; and *higher* personal and political action intentions. There was also a significant negative indirect effect on support for men's rights activism via injustice, but not collective guilt. Few residual direct effects were evident when controlling for the mediators (see Table 13) suggesting that accounting for men's experience of identity threat, collective guilt, and injustice largely explains their countervailing reactions to discussions about misogyny and violence.[2]

Discussion

Study 3 provided strong support for the proposition that men experience opposing reactions to discussions about VAW. Once again, there were largely no direct or interactive effects on the dependent measures. However, consistent with Studies 1 and 2, men exposed to

[2]The pattern of effects remained largely the same when we re-ran the mediation analyses with only identity threat and injustice; and identity threat and collective guilt in the model, respectively (see Tables S10-S11 in the supplementary materials).

discussions about VAW (versus the control condition) reported greater identity threat which, in turn, predicted *higher* outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism; and *lower* personal (but not political) action intentions. Exposure to these discussions also elicited greater perceived injustice, which, in turn, predicted *lower* outgroup derogation and ingroup favouritism; and *higher* action intentions. Contrary to Study 2, consistent indirect effects of collective guilt emerged which largely mirrored the effects of injustice.

General Discussion

Across 3 studies, we sought to understand how men react to discussions about misogyny and VAW. The findings revealed a more complex pattern of responding than initially anticipated.

Men Experience Countervailing Reactions to Discussions About Misogyny and Violence

Contrary to our predictions, men experienced countervailing reactions to discussions about misogyny and violence (see Table 14 for a summary of effects). On the one hand, men experienced greater identity threat in the exposure (vs control) condition which, in turn, predicted higher outgroup derogation and ingroup favouring responses (Studies 1-3); and lower personal (but not political) action intentions (Studies 2 and 3). On the other hand, two follow-up studies revealed that men simultaneously reported higher collective guilt (Studies 2 and 3) and injustice about women's disadvantage (Study 3), which, in turn, predicted more prosocial responding. These results suggest that the lack of direct effects in each study can be explained by men's conflicting reactions; whereby their competing motivations to protect their ingroup's image and better women's treatment 'cancelled each other out', and were only evident when probing these effects indirectly.

Although prior work has documented men's vitriolic responses to #MeToo and broader discussions about misogyny and violence (Flood, 2019; Gottell & Dutton, 2016; O'Donnell, 2022; PettyJohn et al., 2019) and observed direct effects of threat on highly-

identified men's derogatory and ingroup serving responses (Dall'Ara & Maass, 1999; Maass et al., 2003; Rivera-Rodriguez et al., 2022), the present findings suggest that men can also experience countervailing reactions to discussions about VAW. Although men are motivated to protect their ingroup, they also acknowledge their negative intergroup history and are motivated to improve intergroup relations with women. While some research has examined how men and members of advantaged groups can simultaneously experience a need to protect the ingroup's image and amend for past wrongdoings (Allpress et al., 2014; Hässler et al., 2019), our work is the first to demonstrate the flow-on effects of these opposing motivations on men's reactions to discussions about misogyny and violence, and the ways that they might reinforce or challenge inequality.

Unexpectedly, none of the indirect effects were moderated by ingroup identification (see Table 14). Because public discussions about misogyny and violence have become more commonplace, men's ingroup identity may be chronically accessible or salient (Turner et al., 1987). Thus, both higher and lower identifiers may be more inclined to appraise situations for possible ingroup threats (Kuppens et al., 2013) and recognise that their ingroup is the agent of wrongdoing (Doosje et al., 1998; Iyer & Leach, 2008) when these discussions are made salient.

Connecting Identity Threat, Collective Guilt, and Injustice to Novel Manifestations of Men's Defensive Responding

While recent work has largely focussed on the factors influencing men's attitudinal support for and willingness to join #MeToo and other feminist social movements (e.g., Kende et al., 2020; Kunst et al., 2019; Menegatti et al., 2022; Roden, 2022), our investigation examines other real-world manifestations of men's derogatory and ingroup-serving responses which overtly reinforce patriarchy and inequality. In doing so, we provide novel insight into the potential identity restoration functions these reactions serve. Specifically, that concerns

about the devaluation of an important social identity can lead men to: circumvent the source of threat by discrediting information about the prevalence of violence and women's lower status in society (Gotell & Dutton, 2016; O'Donnell, 2022); 'mentally exclude' perpetrators of sexism and violence (PettyJohn et al., 2019), and support men's rights activism as a means to combat men's perceived denigration and illegitimate treatment (Dickel & Evolvi, 2022; Rafail & Freitas, 2019; Van Valkenburgh, 2021). Our findings are also the first to connect men's identity threat with reduced personal action intentions, suggesting that men are less willing to implement or enact the principles of gender equality in their everyday lives because they perceive discussions about misogyny and violence as unfairly devaluing their ingroup. However, identity threat may not have predicted political action intentions because other forms of threat are more relevant to understanding men's resistance to broader political changes surrounding women's rights (e.g., status threat; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019).

Importantly, injustice and, to a lesser extent, collective guilt predicted lower endorsement of these derogatory and ingroup-serving responses, and higher action intentions (see Table 14). Perhaps encouraging men to acknowledge the inequalities that women continue to face is key to enhancing their engagement in and receptivity toward gender equality efforts. Collective guilt had inconsistent flow-on effects between Studies 2 and 3, and residual direct effects of the manipulation were still evident when only collective guilt was included in the model (see Tables 9 and S11). Thus, it may be that reactions which allow men to experience injustice about and acknowledge the existence of gender inequality are less threatening to their group's image than mechanisms which explicitly implicate them as beneficiaries of inequality (Branscombe et al., 1999b; Lowery et al., 2007).

Limitations and Future Directions

Causal relationships between the mediator variables and other outcome variables cannot be inferred given that the mediators were measured and their links with the outcome

variables were tested correlationally. To address this, future research should evidence these causal relationships using "manipulation-of-mediator" designs (see Bullock et al., 2010).

Three constructs were measured using purpose-built scales (identity threat, subtyping, support for men's rights activism) because we examined several novel manifestations of men's defensive responding that did not have validated scales. Although full psychometric validation was beyond our scope, these novel scales were predictably related to other relevant variables across Studies 1-3 (see Tables 2, 6, 10) and were not strongly related with each other. The main findings involving these measures were theoretically consistent and replicated across each study. However, future research should assess the psychometric properties of these scales and, where relevant, employ improved measures to determine the robustness of our findings.

Although ingroup identification did not qualify the effects in Studies 1-3, other factors may moderate men's responses (e.g., system justification, Hässler et al., 2019). However, other work has found that members of advantaged groups can experience threat and collective guilt regardless of identification or personal endorsement of prejudice (Dover et al., 2016; Iyer et al., 2003) and that men can simultaneously hold positive and negative attitudes toward gender equality (Dworkin et al., 2012; Levtov et al., 2014). Thus, it is equally plausible that men's countervailing reactions are robust to individual differences in identity and group-related attitudes (see Clarke et al., 2022, Lizzio-Wilson et al., 2023, Thai et al., 2021). However, future research could explore whether other factors (e.g., hostile sexism, Glick & Fiske, 1996, Lizzio-Wilson et al., 2021; conservatism, religiosity; Off, 2023) moderate men's responses to provide more definitive evidence.

There are aspects of our methodology which may constrain the generality of the findings. First, our sample consisted primarily of men who held other advantaged identities (i.e., White men). However, men who also hold disadvantaged identities (e.g., in terms of

race/ethnicity or sexuality) may be less likely to experience such conflicting reactions owing to a sense of intra-minority solidarity with women (Cortland et al., 2017) and may respond prosocially when exposed to messages about VAW. Second, our studies include data from Prolific. While these data sources allow for well powered and relatively diverse samples, particularly compared to university subject pools and other crowdsourcing platforms (Peer et al., 2017), they are likely not representative of the general population and thus should be used thoughtfully by researchers.

Conclusion

The present research provides a more nuanced understanding of men's reactions to discussions about misogyny and VAW. Rather than only experiencing threat, men simultaneously experience guilt and acknowledge the injustices women continue to face. These findings uncover a paradox in the fight for gender parity by showing that, in the face of messages that highlight inequality, men exhibit countervailing motivations to both protect their group's interests and better women's treatment. These competing reactions may leave men feeling 'stuck in the middle' and stifle their engagement with a gender-egalitarian agenda.

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Table 1

Summary of the Specific Manifestations, Operationalisations, and Identity Restorative Functions of Men's Defensive Responding in the Context of Discussions About Misogyny and Violence Against Women.

	Operationalisation	Identity Restorative Function
Outgroup Derogation		
Violence minimisation	Minimising or questioning claims about the prevalence of sexism and violence against women.	Rejecting or discrediting information that paints men in a negative light.
Exaggeration of female privilege	Claiming that women have gender-based privileges and status over men.	Reduces the legitimacy of women's claims that they are a lower-status group deserving of reparatory measures.
Ingroup Favouritism		
Subtyping	Claiming that 'not all men' are sexist and violent.	Maintaining a positive image of the superordinate group by asserting that men's immoral behaviour only applies to a smaller subgroup of men.
Support for men's rights activism	Supporting social movements that advocate for and want to protect men's rights.	These groups help to combat men's subjectively illegitimate treatment.
Collective Action		
Political action intentions	Lower willingness to engage in political actions to combat violence against women (e.g., signing a petition, attending a rally)	Supporting or engaging in collective action would involve acknowledging men's immoral treatment of women (thereby exacerbating their experience of threat).
Personal action intentions	Lower willingness to engage in personal actions to combat violence against women (e.g., learning how they can personally improve men's attitudes toward and treatment of women).	

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Measured Variables (Study 1).

Variables	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Ingroup Identification	4.25 (1.40)	(.86)							
2. Identity threat	2.94 (1.89)	.04	(.93)						
3. Violence Minimisation	3.22 (1.62)	.34***	.15**	(.89)					
4. Subtyping	3.03 (1.35)	.26***	.16***	.62***	(.77)				
5. Exaggeration of Female Privilege	3.16 (1.37)	.26***	.20***	.52***	.47***	(.74)			
6. Support for Men's Rights Activism	3.68 (1.59)	.26***	.10*	.49***	.40***	.43***	(.92)		
7. Political Action Intentions	3.11 (1.47)	-.12**	-.09	-.21***	-.31***	-.24***	.01	(.91)	
8. Personal Action Intentions	4.90 (1.55)	-.19***	-.01	-.36***	-.48***	-.30***	-.10*	.62***	(.94)

Note. *p <.05 **p < .01 ***p < .001. All variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Reliability statistics are recorded along the diagonal in parentheses.

Table 3

Moderated Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Interaction Models for Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition on the Dependent Measures (Study 1).

	Violence Minimisation				**Exaggeration of Female Privilege**				**Subtyping**				**Support for Men's Rights Activism**				**Political Action Intentions**				**Personal Action Intentions**			
	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2
Step 1	.12***				.08***				.07***				.07***				.03**				.04***			
Ingroup identification		.34***	[.29, .50]	.12		.27***	[.18, .35]	.07		.27***	[.17, .34]	.07		.26***	[.19, .40]	.07		-.13**	[-.23, -.04]	.02		-.19***	[-.31, -.11]	.04
Experimental condition		-.01	[-16, .13]	<.01		.08	[-.02 .23]	.01		.05	[-.05, .19]	<.01		-.01	[-.17, .12]	<.01		-.11*	[-.29, -.02]	.01		<.01	[-.14, .14]	<.01
Step 2	<.01				<.01				.01				<.01				<.01				<.01			
Ingroup identification x Experimental condition		-.02	[-.13, .08]	<.01		.05	[-.04, .14]	<.01		.08	[-.01, .16]	.01		-.02	[-.12, .08]	<.01		-.08	[-.17, .02]	.01		-.01	[-.11, .09]	<.01

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 4

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Interaction Models for Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition on Identity Threat (Study 1).

	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2
Step 1	.61***			
Ingroup Identification		.10***	[.0, .21]	.01
Experimental Condition		.78***	[1.37, 1.59]	.61
Step 2	<.01			
Ingroup Identification x Experimental Condition		.05	[-.02, .14]	<.01

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 5.

Summary of Indirect Effects of Identity Threat (Study 1).

	Violence Minimisation	Exaggeration of Female Privilege	Subtyping	Support for Men's Rights Activism	Political Action Intentions	Personal Action Intentions
bc path	**.38 (.06) [.26, .50]**	**.28 (.05) [.18, .38]**	**.25 (.05) [.14, .35]**	**.26 (.06) [.13, .38]**	-.03 (.06) [-.15, .08]	-.04 (.06) [-.16, .08]
Indirect Effects	**.55 (.09) [.38, .72]**	**.41 (.09) [.23, .58]**	**.36 (.08) [.21, .52]**	**.38 (.09) [.19, .56]**	-.05 (.09) [-.22, .12]	-.06 (.08) [-.22, .09]
Direct Effects (controlling for identity threat)	**-.60 (.12) [-.84, -.38]**	**-.33 (.10) [-.53, -.13]**	**-.32 (.10) [-.51, -.12]**	**-.43 (.12) [-.66, -.20]**	-.09 (.11) [-.31, .12]	.09 (.11) [-.14, .32]

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses; 95% confidence intervals are in brackets; significant effects are in bold.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Measured Variables (Study 2).

Variables	*M* (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Ingroup Identification	4.32 (1.43)	(.83)								
2. Identity threat	3.22 (1.93)	.03	(.91)							
3. Collective Guilt	2.94 (1.96)	.05	.67***	(.97)						
4. Violence Minimisation	3.57 (1.67)	.28***	.19***	.07	(.87)					
5. Subtyping	3.35 (1.35)	.20***	.19**	.06	.60***	(.71)				
6. Exaggeration of Female Privilege	3.63 (1.56)	.23***	.21***	.12*	.64***	.58***	(.83)			
7. Support for Men's Rights Activism	3.84 (1.63)	.16**	.23***	.24***	.38***	.38***	.51***	(.92)		
8. Political Action Intentions	3.25 (1.68)	-.07	.19***	.47***	-.03	-.13**	<.01	.14**	(.93)	
9. Personal Action Intentions	4.66 (1.77)	-.13**	.03	.36***	-.24***	-.38***	-.23***	.05	.69**	(.96)

Note. *p <.05 **p < .01 ***p < .001. All variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Reliability statistics are recorded in parentheses along the diagonal. No reliability statistics are provided for distrust of the message because this was a single item measure.

Table 7.

Moderated Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Interaction Models for Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition on the Dependent Measures (Study 2).

	Violence Minimisation				**Exaggeration of Female Privilege**				**Subtyping**				**Support for Men's Rights Activism**				**Political Action Intentions**				**Personal Action Intentions**			
	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2
Step 1	.08***				.05***				.04***				.03***				.01				.02**			
Ingroup identification		.28***	[.22, .43]	.08		.23***	[.15, .35]	.05		.20***	[.10, .28]	.04		.16***	[.08, .29]	.03		-.07	[-.19, .03]	<.01		-.13**	[-.27, -.04]	.02
Experimental condition		.01	[-.14, .16]	<.01		-.02	[-.17, .12]	<.01		.03	[-.08, .17]	<.01		.07	[-.04, .26]	.07		<.01	[-.15, .16]	<.01		-.07	[-.28, .04]	<.01
Step 2	.01				<.01				<.01				<.01				<.01				<.01			
Ingroup identification x Experimental condition		-.08	[-.20, .01]	.01		-.06	[-.17, .03]	<.01		-.01	[-.10, .08]	<.01		-.06	[-.17, .04]	<.01		.01	[-.09, .13]	<.01		.03	[-.08, .15]	<.01

Note. * p <.05 ** p <.01 *** p <.001

Table 8.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Interaction Models for Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition on the Mediators (Study 2).

	Identity threat				**Collective Guilt**			
	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2
Step 1	.55***				.22***			
Ingroup Identification		.04	[-.03, .14]	<.01		.05	[-.05, .18]	<.01
Experimental Condition		.74***	[1.31, 1.55]	.55		.47***	[.75, 1.07]	.22
Step 2	<.01				<.01			
Ingroup Identification x Experimental Condition		-.02	[-.11, .06]	<.01		.05	[-.04, .18]	<.01

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 9.

Summary of Indirect Effects of Identity Threat and Collective Guilt (Study 2).

	Violence Minimisation	Exaggeration of Female Privilege	Subtyping	Support for Men's Rights Activism	Political Action Intentions	Personal Action Intentions
Identity Threat						
bc path	**.43** **(.07)** **[.30, .57]**	**.43** **(.06)** **[.31, .56]**	**.33** **(.06)** **[.22, .44]**	**.26** **(.07)** **[.12, .39]**	-.01 (.06) [-.14, .11]	**-.26** **(.07)** **[-.40, -.13]**
Indirect Effects	**.62** **(.10)** **[.43, .82]**	**.62** **(.11)** **[.41, .83]**	**.47** **(.09)** **[.30, .64]**	**.37** **(.11)** **[.16, .60]**	-.02 (.10) [-.21, .17]	**-.38** **(.09)** **[-.57, -.20]**
Collective Guilt						
bc path	**-.10** **(.05)** **[-.21, -.00]**	-.06 (.05) [-.15, .04]	**-.09** **(.04)** **[-.18, -.01]**	**.11** **(.05)** **[.01, .21]**	**.52** **(.05)** **[.43, .61]**	**.57** **(.05)** **[.46, .67]**
Indirect Effects	-.09 (.05) [-.20, .01]	-.05 (.05) [-.16, .05]	-.09 (.05) [-.18, .00]	.10 (.05) [-.00, .21]	**.47** **(.06)** **[.36, .60]**	**.51** **(.07)** **[.39, .65]**
Direct Effects (controlling for the mediators)						
	-.53 **(.11)** **[-.75, -.30]**	**-.60** **(.10)** **[-.80, -.39]**	**-.34** **(.09)** **[-.52, -.16]**	**-.37** **(.11)** **[-.58, -.15]**	**-.45** **(.10)** **[-.65, -.25]**	**-.26** **(.11)** **[-.47, -.04]**

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses; 95% confidence intervals are in brackets; significant effects are in bold.

Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Measured Variables (Study 3).

Variables	*M* (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Ingroup Identification	4.32 (1.43)	(.87)									
2. Identity threat	3.01 (1.83)	< -.01	(.92)								
3. Injustice	4.83 (1.49)	-.17***	.28***	(.83)							
4. Collective guilt	3.43 (1.54)	-.11*	.55***	.38***	(.97)						
5. Violence Minimisation	3.25 (1.64)	.24***	.14**	-.31***	-.13**	(.88)					
6. Subtyping	3.12 (1.31)	.20***	.16***	-.32***	-.10*	.66**	(.74)				
7. Exaggeration of Female Privilege	3.31 (1.41)	.23***	.08	-.27***	-.13**	.51***	.47***	(.79)			
8. Support for Men's Rights Activism	3.56 (1.49)	.28***	.14**	-.11*	< -.01	.43***	.30***	.45***	(.91)		
9. Political Action Intentions	3.19 (1.66)	-.14**	< .01	.25***	.29***	-.29***	-.35***	-.18***	.04	(.94)	
10. Personal Action Intentions	4.79 (1.67)	-.21***	-.08	.32***	.24***	-.49***	-.53***	-.33***	-.05	.68***	(.96)

Note. *p<.05 **p< .01 ***p< .001. All variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Reliability statistics are recorded in parentheses along the diagonal. No reliability statistics are provided for distrust of the message because this was a single item measure.

Table 11.

Moderated Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Interaction Models for Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition on the Dependent Measures (Study 3).

	Violence Minimisation				**Exaggeration of Female Privilege**				**Subtyping**				**Support for Men's Rights Activism**				**Political Action Intentions**				**Personal Action Intentions**			
	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2
Step 1	.06***				.05***				.04***				.09***				.02**				.05***			
Ingroup identification		.24***	[.17, .38]	.06		.23***	[.13, .31]	.05		.21***	[.01, .27]	.04		.28***	[.20, .39]	.08		-.14**	[-.27, -.06]	.02		-.22***	[-.36, -.15]	.05
Experimental condition		.03	[-.10, .19]	<.01		-.03	[-.17, .09]	<.01		.04	[-.07, .17]	<.01		.09*	[.00, .27]	<.01		-.02	[-.18, .12]	<.01		-.09*	[-.31, -.01]	<.01
Step 2	<.01				<.01				<.01				<.01				<.01				<.01			
Ingroup identification x Experimental condition		<.01	[-.10, .11]	<.01		-.04	[-.13, .05]	<.01		.03	[-.06, .11]	<.01		-.03	[-.13, .06]	<.01		.07	[-.03, .19]	<.01		-.03	[-.14, .07]	<.01

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 12.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Testing Interaction Models for Ingroup Identification and Experimental Condition on the Mediators (Study 3).

	Identity Threat				**Collective Guilt**				**Injustice**			
	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	95% CI	sr^2
Step 1	.59***				.29***				.14***			
Ingroup Identification		.04	[-.03, .12]	<.01		-.09*	[-.22, -.01]	<.01		-.16***	[-.25, -.07]	.02
Experimental Condition		.77***	[1.31, 1.52]	.59		.53***	[.85, 1.15]	.28		.33***	[.36, .62]	.11
Step 2	<.01				<.01				<.01			
Ingroup Identification x Experimental Condition		.01	[-.06, .09]	<.01		-.05	[-.18, .04]	<.01		.04	[-.06, .13]	<.01

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 13.

Summary of Indirect Effects of Identity Threat, Collective Guilt, and Injustice (Study 3).

	Violence Minimization	Exaggeration of Female Privilege	Subtyping	Support for Men's Rights Activism	Political Action Intentions	Personal Action Intentions
Identity Threat						
bc path	**.34 (.06) [.22, .47]**	**.25 (.06) [.14, .36]**	**.29 (.05) [.19, .39]**	**.19 (.06) [.07, .31]**	-.10 (.06) [-.22, .03]	**-.16 (.06) [-.28, -.04]**
Indirect Effects	**.49 (.10) [.29, .69]**	**.35 (.10) [.16, .53]**	**.40 (.07) [.27, .55]**	**.26 (.10) [.07, .46]**	-.14 (.10) [-.33, .06]	**-.23 (.09) [-.41, -.05]**
Collective Guilt						
bc path	**-.15 (.05) [-.24, -.06]**	**-.10 (.04) [-.18, -.02]**	**-.09 (.04) [-.17, -.02]**	-.05 (.05) [-.14, .04]	**.33 (.05) [.23, .42]**	**.30 (.05) [.21, .39]**
Indirect Effects	**-.15 (.05) [-.25, -.05]**	**-.10 (.05) [-.20, -.01]**	**-.10 (.04) [-.17, -.02]**	-.05 (.05) [-.15, .04]	**.33 (.06) [.22, .44]**	**.31 (.06) [.20, .42]**
Injustice						
bc path	**-.36 (.05) [-.46, -.26]**	**-.25 (.05) [-.34, -.16]**	**-.30 (.04) [-.38, -.22]**	**-.14 (.05) [-.24, -.04]**	**.22 (.05) [.11, .32]**	**.35 (.05) [.24, .45]**
Indirect effects	**-.18 (.03) [-.25, -.12]**	**-.12 (.03) [-.18, -.07]**	**-.15 (.03) [-.20, -.10]**	**-.07 (.03) [-.13, -.02]**	**.11 (.03) [.05, .17]**	**.17 (.03) [.11, .24]**
Direct Effects (controlling for the mediators)						
	-.13 (.11) [-.35, .10]	-.18 (.10) [-.37, .02]	-.12 (.09) [-.30, .06]	-.03 (.11) [-.25, .18]	**-.32 (.12) [-.55, -.09]**	**-.39 (.11) [-.61, -.17]**

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses; 95% confidence intervals are in brackets; significant effects are in bold.

Table 14.

Pattern of Direct and Indirect Effects Across Studies 1-3.

	Violence Minimisation			Exaggeration of Female Privilege			Subtyping			Support for Men's Rights Activism			Political Action Intentions			Personal Action Intentions		
Study	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3	S1	S2	S3
Direct Effects																		
Ingroup identification	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	−		−	−	−	−
Experimental condition (1 = exposure, -1 = control)												+	−					−
Ingroup identification x Experimental condition																		
Indirect Effects																		
Experimental condition->Identity threat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					−	−
Experimental condition->Collective guilt	n/a		−	n/a		−	n/a		−	n/a			n/a	+	+	n/a	+	+
Experimental condition->Injustice	n/a	n/a	−	n/a	n/a	−	n/a	n/a	−	n/a	n/a	−	n/a	n/a	+	n/a	n/a	+

Note. '—' denotes a significant negative effect; '+' denotes a significant positive effect. N/A denotes that this relationship was not assessed in a particular study.