

#MeToo, #MenToo: When do women's claims of victimization elicit defensiveness from men?

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Engaging men in action to promote gender equality is challenging due to their need to defend their group's moral image

Online social movements from disadvantaged groups (e.g. #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter) have been met with counter-campaigns from some advantaged group members (e.g. #MenToo, #AllLivesMatter). We drew on the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) to explore whether counter-claims (e.g. #MenToo) from advantaged group members arise due to concerns about their group's moral image.

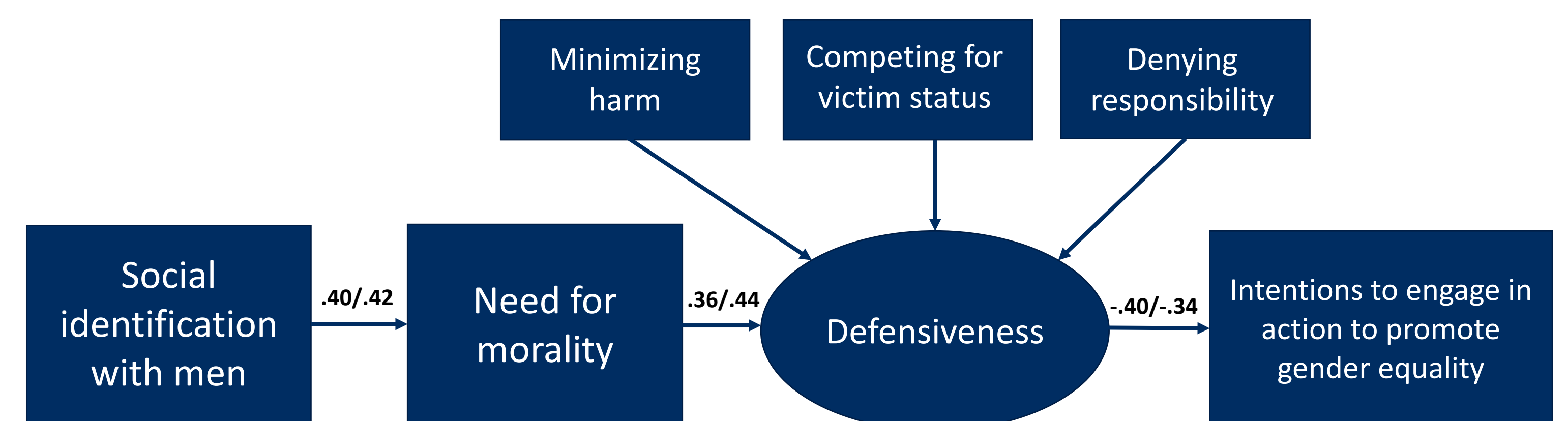
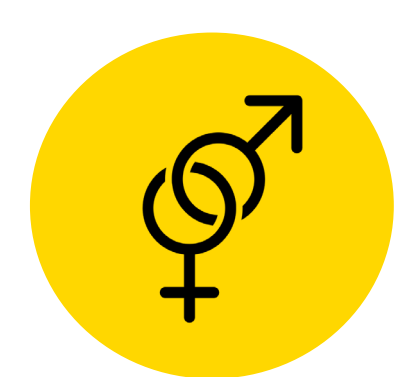


Figure 1. Indirect effect of social identification on reduced intentions to engage in action to promote gender equality via need for morality and defensiveness. Values to the left of the slash represent the standardized estimates for **Study 1**, values to the right of the slash represent the standardized estimates for **Study 2**. All paths are significant at $p < .001$. **No evidence of moderation:** $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 1.15$, $p < .05$ (S1), $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 0.82$, $p < .05$ (S2). **Model fit:** CFI = .97, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06 (S1; acceptable model fit), CFI = .98, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .04 (S2; good model fit).



Two online experiments



Context: gender inequality between men and women



Male participants

S1

Participants ($N = 198$) viewed a fabricated tweet that either directly accused men of sexual harassment **or** did not accuse men.

Measures: Social identification with men, need for morality, defensive strategies (minimizing harm, competing with women for victim status, denying responsibility), intentions to engage in action to promote gender equality.

S2

Participants ($N = 296$) viewed the same accusatory tweet used in S1. Some men were then presented with a news article about men's efforts to address sexual harassment (information designed to affirm their group's morality and reduce the threat to their moral image). Measures were the same as S1.



Two studies found that social identification as a man reduced men's willingness to engage in actions to promote gender equality via their need for morality and defensiveness. This process occurred even when men were presented with information designed to satisfy their need for morality.



Limitations: Correlational study (both manipulations failed to produce a difference in men's need for morality – why?)

Future directions: Reducing both social identification with men *and* men's need for morality.