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### The path of most resistance

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# 2

“Why should I have to choose between being feminine or feminist?”

A multiple identity approach to gender

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*Note:* This chapter is based on van Breen, J.A., Spears, R., Kuppens, T., & de Lemus, S. (2017). A multiple identity approach to gender: Identification with women, identification with feminists, and their interaction.

## Abstract

Across four studies, we examine multiple identities in the context of gender. We propose that women's attitudes towards gender group membership are governed by two orthogonal gender identities: women's identity and feminist identity. We argue that women's identity reflects attitudes towards the *content* society gives to group membership: what does it mean to be a woman in terms of traits, characteristics, and values? Feminist identity, on the other hand, reflects attitudes towards the social position of the group: what does it mean to be a woman in terms of status, power and influence? This approach results in four theoretical subgroups, based on different combinations of identification with women and feminists. A woman can be identified (1) with neither women nor feminists (non-identifier), (2) with women but not feminists (traditional identifier), (3) with both women and feminists (dual identifier), or (4) with feminists but not women (distinctive feminist identifier). In four studies, we examine the utility of this multiple identity approach in predicting attitudes towards gender group membership. Study 2.1 shows that women's identification reflects attitudes towards group characteristics, such as femininity and self-stereotyping, while feminist identification reflects attitudes towards the group's social position, such as perceived sexism. The two identities are largely independent. Thus, endorsing femininity does not preclude strong identification with feminists. Moreover, Studies 2.2-2.4 show that specific combinations of women's and feminist identification predict attitudes towards collective action and gender stereotypes. Distinctive feminists endorse more radical collective action (Study 2.2) and find gender stereotypes more problematic (Studies 2.3-2.4) than do other groups of women. By considering women's and feminist identification as multiple identities we aim to offer a new perspective on gender identity, and show how the multiple identity approach predicts distinct attitudes to gender issues.

Since the 1980s there has been increasing attention for the complexities of gender identity, acknowledging that, like many other social identities, gender has a strong cultural component, and is not a straightforward biological fact (Marecek, Crawford, & Popp, 2004; Unger, 1979). Here we examine women's attitudes towards gender group membership, and argue that attitudes towards gender group membership are governed by multiple identities: women's identity and feminist identity. We contrast this multiple identity approach with other notable multicomponent approaches to gender identity and argue that the multiple identity approach is simple, while allowing for some new nuances in gender identity compared to previous models. Importantly, this approach helps us understand why being feminine and feminist are not mutually exclusive.

We do not consider here the personal, social and biological factors that determine an individual's gender identity, but rather study women's attitudes towards the socially shared component of gender group membership. What does it mean to be a member of the social category of women? An important aspect of the reasoning we present here is that an individual is not entirely free to construct the meaning of group membership as they please. Instead, the meaning of group membership is constructed at the societal level and to a large extent socially shared (Crocker, 1999; Moscovici, 1988). We are interested in how people respond to the social construction of a group to which they belong. We believe that considering women's identity and feminist identity as separable gender identities can offer interesting new perspectives on attitudes towards gender group membership.

The multidimensional nature of gender identity is incorporated into many different models (Becker & Wagner, 2009; Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; Condor, 1986; Egan & Perry, 2001), and an important question arising from such approaches is how the dimensions combine and interact. Many models (Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; Condor, 1986; Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994) discuss evidence that high women's identification can be combined with different gender ideologies (e.g. traditional, progressive, feminist). However, if the gender dimensions are seen as independent, then this means that it should also be possible for the same (feminist) ideology to be combined with both high and low women's identification. Yet, few models discuss this option.

One recent influential model that *has* explicitly conceptualised gender identity as composed of two independent dimensions is the Gender Identi-

ty Model (GIM, Becker & Wagner, 2009). The GIM aims to explain endorsement of sexism and support for collective action, and distinguishes between (1) identity *content*, a preference for traditional versus progressive gender roles, and (2) identity *strength*, measured as identification with women. That is, though the GIM postulates two independent dimensions, only one of these dimensions is a content dimension (traditional versus progressive), while the other, women's identification, reflects identity *strength*. In the current studies we propose that identification with women not only reflects identity strength but also has implications for the content of gender identity. That is, our approach allows content as well as strength for both women's identity and feminist identity.

We suggest that the content associated with women's identity centres on group attributes: what does it mean to be a woman in terms of traits, interests and values? For instance, key group attributes include being warm and caring (Chen, Chen, & Shaw, 2004; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Although identity content is socially shared to some degree, individuals can differ in the extent to which they accept or internalize society's view of the group, which is reflected in their degree of identification (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002). There is evidence that those who identify strongly with their group are more likely to self-stereotype, and consider themselves more typical of the group (Leach et al., 2008; Spears et al., 1997; Spears et al., 2001; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Chen, Chen, and Shaw (2004) showed that, when asked to list 5 traits that are most typical of women as a group, the traits listed by high and low women's identifiers' were identical, providing evidence that this perception was socially shared. However, high women's identifiers were more likely than low women's identifiers to say that (positive) traits that defined the group also defined *themselves* (Chen et al., 2004). Based on these findings, we argue that women's identity is socially constructed around *group attributes*. Those who are highly identified with women place high importance on traits and characteristics that society considers gender-typical, which we expect to translate to increased tendencies to self-stereotype, and increased perceptions of femininity, compared to low women's identifiers.

Alongside the characteristics associated with the group, the meaning of group membership also includes the place of the group within the larger social system (Livingstone, Spears, & Manstead, 2009). What does it mean to be a woman in terms of status, power and social (in)equality? We argue

that such (ideological) attitudes are reflected in *feminist identity*. Previous research supports the notion that feminist identity is a politicized identity that concerns itself with women's social position or status, and relations with other groups, notably men. For instance, feminist identity is related to increased perceptions of sexism in society (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994), discontent with current power distributions and the status quo (Reid & Purcell, 2004), and increased involvement in collective action (Liss, Crawford, & Popp, 2004; J. A. Nelson et al., 2008; Yoder, Tobias, & Snell, 2011). Thus, the content of feminist identity is socially constructed around disapproval of the disadvantaged social position of women as a group. An individual's degree of identification with feminists reflects their commitment to this identity. High feminist identifiers have internalized the values of feminism, reject the gender status quo, and consider women to be disadvantaged in comparison to men.

In this chapter, then, we propose that women's identity and feminist identity reflect attitudes towards different components of the social construction of gender. If we think of women's identity as relating to *what the group is*, then we can think of feminist identity as relating to *how the group is doing* in relation to other groups, notably men. Identification with each of these identities reflects the extent to which a person has accepted and internalized the content associated with that identity. In line with the notion that women's and feminist identity are separable gender identities, previous research has found that the correlation between them is very small (Roy, Weibust, & Miller, 2007).

One benefit of allowing content for both identities is that different combinations of the identities allow for additional nuances in the resulting gender identity combinations. For instance, this perspective allows for high identification with the gender group, without assuming that this will necessarily lead to politicization. Relatedly, feminist identifiers may differ in their identification with women, which we expect to translate (*inter alia*) to differences in the importance they place on "femininity". Thus, our multiple identities approach explicitly allows for the possibility that femininity (related to women's identification) could co-exist with feminist identity. Such a distinction in the importance feminist identifiers place on femininity is supported by the gender literature and in the feminist movement: Some branches of feminism emphasize femininity as a domain of positive distinction from men (e.g. feminism of difference, Gilligan, 1977), while others downplay femininity (Butler,

2002). Thus, in this approach femininity and feminist identification are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Several theorists have found it helpful to discuss the possibility of gender identity “subgroups” (Becker & Wagner, 2009; Condor, 1986; Gurin & Markus, 1989) to clarify how multiple identities can combine. That is, these subgroups address the question “how do the identities relate to one another?” In our approach, the first subgroup is composed of those who do not identify with either women or feminists (“non-identifiers”). Non-identifiers navigate gender group membership by giving priority to social identities *outside* the gender context, as they dislike being viewed in terms of gender (Barreto et al., 2010). Secondly, there are those who identify strongly with women but not feminists (“traditional women”). Traditional women focus on women’s identity and value typically female gender roles, but they do not disavow feminist concerns about the social position of women. Moreover, there are two feminist subgroups: those who are highly identified with feminists *and* women (dual women-feminist identifiers, or “dual identifiers” for short), and those who are highly identified with feminism, *but not* women (distinctive feminist identifiers or “distinctive feminists” for short). Dual identifiers can be described as preferring integrative identity management strategies that unite their commitment to women as a group with their commitment to feminism. For instance, they may be willing to take on leadership positions, but prefer more feminine styles when they do so (Olsson & Walker, 2004). Distinctive feminists, on the other hand, navigate gender group membership by giving priority to feminist identity over women’s identity. For instance, they may disavow feminine beauty ideals because they perceive them as contributing to women’s objectification (Murnen & Smolak, 2009). It is important to note that even though “distinctive feminists” do not identify highly with women, this does not mean that they are “anti-women”. Rather, they disavow the (current) *social construction* of the group. Research has shown that radical members of social groups may come to experience a degree of dis-identification with their wider group, when they realise that their perception of the group is not shared by others. As a result, they may experience lower levels of group identification, while at the same time being strongly committed to the group’s interests (Becker, Tausch, Spears, & Christ, 2011; Cichocka, De Zavala, Kofta, & Rozum, 2013). In sum, the subgroups can be thought of as reflecting different strategies

for managing multiple gender identities. Some subgroups manage their multiple identities by prioritising one identity over the other (traditional women; distinctive feminists) while others seek to integrate the identities (dual identifiers).

A further consequence of considering women's and feminist identity as multiple gender identities is that they may interact in predicting attitudes towards certain gender issues. Such interactions are likely to occur when an issue relates to attitudes towards group characteristics *and* group relations. In such circumstances, feminist identity and women's identity may have opposing or conflicting effects. For instance, radical collective action aims to improve the social position of women, and should therefore be positively related to feminist identity. However, radical collective action may also be negatively related to women's identity, to the extent that it is considered gender-atypical behavior for women (Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Hercus, 1999). That is, feminist identification and women's identification may have opposing effects on collective action. Likewise, gender stereotypes reflect information on what is considered "gender-typical" behavior and differentiation from outgroups (Brewer, 1991; Mlicki & Ellemers, 1996), and their endorsement should therefore be positively related to women's identification. At the same time, however, gender stereotypes are often used to legitimise the intergroup status quo (Jost & Kay, 2005; Rudman & Glick, 2008), and as such stereotype endorsement may be negatively related to feminist identity.

In sum, in the current paper we propose a multiple identities approach to gender. Importantly, this approach allows both women's and feminist identity to reflect content, while keeping a simple 2-factor structure. In Study 1, we examine the hypothesis that identification with women and identification with feminists represent separable dimensions of gender identity. We expect that identification with women predicts attitudes towards group characteristics (e.g., femininity) and identification with feminists predicts attitudes towards the social position of the group (e.g., gender inequality). In Studies 2-4, we examine the utility of this multiple identities approach in predicting differences in gender attitudes. Specifically, we expect that identification with women and identification with feminists interact in predicting support for collective action and perceptions of gender stereotypes. All studies reported here were approved by the relevant ethical committees, and conducted in accordance with the Helsinki declaration.



## Study 2.1

In the first study we examine the central predictions of the multiple identities approach. We expect that feminist identity and women's identity will be relatively independent (i.e. not, or only weakly correlated). Secondly, we expect that identification with feminists will predict views regarding social relations, such as gender equality, and identification with women will predict views on group characteristics, such as perceived femininity.

## Method

**Participants.** Ninety-one female students from the University of Groningen participated in exchange for course credit. The mean age was 20.8 years, ranging from 18 to 48. The majority of participants were German (52.7%) or Dutch (33%). The remaining 13.2% indicated another nationality, with 2.2% indicating non-Western nationalities.

In this study, we wanted to be able to detect expected effects of a small-to-medium size. The stopping rule used during data collection was to continue collecting data until the sample was large enough to detect effects of the expected size. With this sample we are able to detect small-to-medium effect sizes ( $d=0.17$ ) at a power of  $1-\beta=0.80$  (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007).

**Measures.** Each of the questionnaires included in this study used 7-point Likert scales, ranging from “not at all” to “very much”, with the exception of the self-identification measure, which was categorical.

**Identification with women and feminists.** Women's identity was measured by identification with women as a group (4 items;  $\alpha=0.77$ ) adapted from Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears (1995; also see de Lemus, Bukowski, Spears, & Telga, 2015): I identify with this group; I have strong ties with this group; This group is an important part of my self-image; Being a member of this group is an important part of how I see myself. These items are easily cast in terms of feminism, allowing us to measure feminist identification and women's identification with the same items. Feminist identity was measured by identification with feminists. The scale consisted of the same items as the scale for women's identification, substituting the word “women” for “feminists” (4 items,  $\alpha=0.94$ ).

**Attitudes to group characteristics.** We included measures of perceived femininity of the self, and the Leach identification scale to measure attitudes towards group characteristics.

*Leach identification scale.* We included the Multidimensional Identifica-

tion measure (Leach et al., 2008,  $\alpha=0.888$ ), which is composed of five subscales: centrality of group membership, satisfaction with group membership, solidarity with the group, perceived homogeneity of the group and self-stereotyping. Some items of the centrality subscale were also present in the measure of women's identification. Those items were not repeated, and therefore the centrality subscale is not analysed separately. The subscale that is of central interest as a predictor of women's attitudes to group characteristics is self-stereotyping.

*Perceived femininity.* Two items measured perceived femininity of the self: "I am a feminine woman" and "I enjoy doing things that are considered typically feminine" (Leaper & Van, 2008,  $\alpha=0.69$ ).

*Attitudes to group position.* Attitudes towards the social position of women as a group were measured by perceived disadvantage faced by women, the Ambivalent Sexism scale, the Modern Sexism scale, and a scale of attitudes towards the feminist movement.

*Perceived Disadvantage.* Three items ( $\alpha=0.65$ , adapted from Cameron & Lalonde, 2001) were used to create a "perceived disadvantage" scale. These items were "I believe that women are disadvantaged compared to men in today's society", "If we do nothing, women will continue to be disadvantaged compared to men" and "I have experienced sexism in my daily life".

*Ambivalent sexism scale.* The ambivalent sexism scale (Glick & Fiske, 1996) consists of the subscales hostile sexism (11 items,  $\alpha=0.92$ ), and benevolent sexism (11 items,  $\alpha=0.89$ ).

*Modern Sexism scale.* The extent to which people perceive sexism in society was measured by the modern sexism scale (Swim et al., 1995) consisting of 8 items ( $\alpha=0.82$ ).

*Attitudes to the feminist movement.* The Attitudes to the Feminist movement Scale (Fassinger, 1994) assesses attitudes towards feminism with items such as "Feminist principles should be adopted everywhere". The scale consists of 10 items ( $\alpha=0.74$ ).

*Self-identification.* The final question asked participants to self-identify as a non-traditional woman, a traditional woman, a feminist or "I don't know" (Cameron & Lalonde, 2001; Gurin & Markus, 1989). This measure was included to distinguish issues related to labelling as a feminist, from issues related to the content of attitudes (Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010).

**Procedure.** This study was conducted using Qualtrics. At the start of the questionnaire, participants provided informed consent and reported demo-

graphic information (including gender). Scales were presented in the order described above, items within scales were randomized. It took participants an average of 20 minutes to complete the study. At the end of the study, participants read a debriefing, and were thanked for their participation.

**Analysis.** The data were analysed with ANOVA models in which women's identification, feminist identification, and their interaction were entered simultaneously. Correlation tables can be found in the supplementary materials.

## Results

**Identification with women and feminists.** On average women identified strongly with women ( $M=5.71$ ,  $SD=0.76$ ; 7-point scale), while identification with feminism was substantially lower ( $M=3.39$ ,  $SD=1.39$ ; 7-point scale). The correlation between women's identification and feminist identification was small ( $r=0.18$ ,  $p=0.1$ ), indicating that feminist identity and women's identity are interpreted as distinct identities.

Having established that women's identification and feminist identification represent distinct identities, we examine the meaning of these identities in more detail.

**Attitudes predicted by women's identification.** Women's identification was expected to predict attitudes towards group characteristics. As expected, then, women's identification predicted perceived femininity of the self ( $\beta=0.64$ ,  $F(1,88)=54.74$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), such that those who identified highly with women felt more feminine. Women's identification also predicted the self-stereotyping and satisfaction subscales of the Leach et al. (2008) identification scale. Those who identified more strongly with women were more likely to self-stereotype ( $\beta=0.47$ ,  $F(1,88)=23.13$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and more satisfied with group membership ( $\beta=0.55$ ,  $F(1,88)=34.67$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

**Attitudes predicted by feminist identification.** Feminist identification was expected to predict attitudes related to the group's social position. Indeed, feminist identification predicted modern sexism ( $\beta=0.32$ ,  $F(1,88)=8.741$ ,  $p=0.004$ ), so that higher feminist identification was related to increased perceptions of sexism in society. Likewise, perceived disadvantage of women was predicted by feminist identification ( $\beta=0.43$ ,  $F(1,88)=18.79$ ,  $p<0.001$ ): higher feminist identifiers perceived more disadvantage for women. Hostile sexism, but not benevolent sexism, was predicted by feminist identification, ( $\beta=-0.240$ ,  $F(1,88)=4.92$ ,  $p=0.029$ ), such that higher feminist identifiers endorsed less hostile sexism. Finally, as would be expected, feminist identification

predicted more positive attitudes to feminism,  $\beta=0.48$ ,  $F(1,88)=25.24$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

**Interactions and additive effects.** Solidarity with the group was predicted by both feminist identification ( $\beta=0.29$ ,  $F(1,88)=12.11$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and women's identification ( $\beta=0.55$ ,  $F(1,88)=44.22$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). These additive effects show that solidarity with women as a group is highest amongst the dual identifiers. There was no evidence for interactive effects of women's and feminist identification ( $F<1$ ).

**Additional measures.** The measure of self-report identification showed that half of the participants identified themselves as non-traditional women, 18.2% indicated that they thought of themselves as traditional women, only a very small percentage (4.5%) identified as feminists, and 27.3% indicated that they did not know. Thus, more than a quarter of women could not or would not classify themselves. Although the percentage of women explicitly identifying as feminists was very small (4.5%), feminist identification distinguished those who self-labelled as feminists from those who did not ( $\chi^2(3)=13.52$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). Importantly, attitudes towards gender issues (disadvantage faced by women, modern sexism, and hostile and benevolent sexism) could not reliably predict whether an individual labelled themselves as feminist or not (Wald's Z-values $<1.38$ ,  $ps>0.24$ ). That is, correspondence between categorical self-identification and attitudes towards gender issues is limited, confirming the discrepancy noted by previous work (Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010).

## Discussion

In this study, feminist identification and women's identification showed only a small correlation (consistent with Roy et al., 2007). Moreover, there was evidence that women's identification correlates with attitudes towards group characteristics, and feminist identification correlates with attitudes to the group's social position. These findings support predictions of the multiple identities approach which permits content for both identities. The difference between them is the type of content they incorporate.

Results of this study confirmed the relative independence of the two identities, suggesting that femininity and feminist identity can exist alongside one another, a pattern represented in the subgroup of dual identifiers. The data presented here suggest that this group is characterized by a perception of women's disadvantage and inequality, while at the same time they feel quite feminine and are satisfied with what it typically means to be a woman. Of the four subgroups, the dual identifiers also showed the highest solidarity with

women. At first sight, the combination between satisfaction with femininity and perceptions of disadvantage may seem contradictory. However, these concerns may be reconciled by a desire to accord more status and value to typically feminine attributes, tasks and interests: maintaining a focus on femininity, while at the same time resolving disadvantage. In fact, it could be argued that if feminism implies defending the notion that femininity is not inferior to masculinity, then feminism does not undermine femininity, but rather affirms it.

It is worth noting that in this study, only a very small number of women (4%) self-labelled as feminists. That is, as previous research demonstrated, participants were reluctant to label themselves as feminists (Aronson, 2003; Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010). Importantly, these findings indicate that, in this study, continuous identification with women and feminists are better predictors of attitudes to gender issues than categorical self-identification.

Results of Study 2.1 suggested a relatively clear-cut division of attitudes as either relating to group characteristics *or* the group's social position. However, many gender issues are more complex than this, and have implications for group characteristics as well as the group's social position. In such a case, we may expect both identification with women and identification with feminists to play a role in determining attitudes to such an issue, through additive or interactive effects. Studies 2-4 further explore the utility of the multiple identities approach in predicting attitudes to gender issues that may relate to concern for group characteristics as well as concern for the group's social position.

## **Study 2.2**

In Study 2.2, we examine the utility of the multiple identity approach in predicting attitudes to gender issues that have a bearing both on concern for group characteristics and the group's social position, focusing specifically on collective action. Collective action is aimed at confronting disadvantage and producing social change (Van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009), and in the current study we distinguish between radical and moderate forms of collective action (Tausch et al., 2011). In the context of gender, it has been shown that feminist identification has a positive relationship with collective action (Liss et al., 2004; J. A. Nelson et al., 2008; Yoder et al., 2011). As feminist identifiers perceive that women are disadvantaged in society, they wish to change the status quo. However, as the multiple identities approach distinguishes differ-

ent “types” of feminist identifiers (depending on identification with women), it is worthwhile to consider effects of women’s identification in addition to effects of feminist identification.

When considering women’s identification, there is reason to expect that identification with women will not have a strong relationship with collective action, as collective action does not relate directly to group characteristics. Thus, we expect that high women’s identification does not necessarily lead to increased support for collective action (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994). When considering radical collective action, we may even expect that women’s identification will have a *negative* effect on support for this type of action. Radical collective action is often defined as collective actions that involve some degree of aggression, anger, or even violence (Tausch et al., 2011), traits that are oppositional to social definitions of femininity (Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Fiske et al., 2002; Hercus, 1999).

In addition to these additive effects, we might also expect an interaction between women’s identification and feminist identification when considering radical collective action.

Specifically, when considering radical collective action, dual identifiers’ attachment to femininity and tendency to self-stereotype may weaken the effect that feminist identification has on their support for radical action. Amongst distinctive feminists, on the other hand, the effect of feminist identification on support for radical action may be *reinforced* by low women’s identification. In short, support for radical collective action may be affected by an interaction between women’s and feminist identification, such that support for radical collective action is higher amongst distinctive feminists than amongst other women. Study 2.2 examines this possibility.

## Method

**Participants.** Female participants (N=121) were recruited amongst students of the University of Granada, Spain. Age ranged from 18 years old to 50 years old, with an average of 19.75. Participants took part in exchange for course credit.

We expected effects of a small-to-medium size, and with this sample we are able to detect such small-to-medium effect sizes ( $d \approx 0.13$ ) at a power of  $1-\beta = 0.80$  (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The stopping rule used during data collection was to continue collecting data until the sample was large enough to detect effects of the expected size.

**Design.** Data for this study were collected as part of a larger experiment (de Lemus et al., 2017) with a 2 x 2 between-participants design. The salience of (counter)stereotypical gender roles was manipulated through pictures showing men and women in (counter)stereotypical contexts, such as a kitchen and an office setting.

**Measures.** A complete list of the dependent variables included during data collection can be found in the supplementary materials. Below we describe only the measures of interest for this study.

**Women's and feminist identification.** Women's and feminist identification (were measured in the same way as in Study 2.1 (4 items each;  $\alpha=0.79$  and  $\alpha=0.95$  respectively).

**Support for collective action.** Support for moderate collective action was measured by 6 items ( $\alpha=0.68$ ), focusing on actions like signing a petition, joining a peaceful public demonstration, or lobbying for women's rights. Support for radical collective action was measured with 5 items ( $\alpha=0.77$ ), focusing on actions like attacks on sexist institutions, blackmailing, or hacking into e-mail accounts (Becker et al., 2012). Support for each action was rated on an 11-point scale from not at all to very much. All items referred to the action being taken in order to "reduce gender inequality". Thus, it was clear that the objective of both types of action was the same, only the form differed.

**Perceived efficacy.** Perceived efficacy of women as a group was measured with three items ( $\alpha=0.87$ ) adapted from van Zomeren, Spears, and Leach (2008). This was used as a control variable in the analyses.

**Procedure.** Participants provided informed consent, were assigned to one of four conditions, and completed the manipulation. Participants then completed a paper-and-pencil questionnaire, with the measures of central interest, feminist identification, women's identification and support for collective action at the end. After completing all measures, participants read a funnelled debriefing and were thanked for their participation.

**Preliminary analyses.** Moderate and radical collective action were weakly but significantly related ( $r=0.19$ ,  $p=0.021$ ). Support for moderate action was higher ( $M = 8.280$ ) than support for radical action ( $M = 2.46$ ). Because the measures were taken after a manipulation we examined the effect of the manipulations on women's identification, feminist identification and collective action intentions, but no effects were found ( $F_s < 1$ ,  $p_s > 0.1$ ). Both women's identification ( $F(1,123)=11.80$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and feminist identification

( $F(1,123)=14.51, p<0.001$ ) were related to perceived efficacy of the group. Perceived efficacy of the group in turn was related to intentions towards moderate collective action ( $F(1,123)=31.36, p<0.001$ ). Therefore, it is controlled for in the analyses presented below. Further predictors were women's identification, feminist identification, and their interaction. The correlation table can be found in the supplementary materials.

## Results

**Identification with women and feminists.** As in Study 2.1, participants identified strongly with women as a group ( $M=5.86; SD=0.88$ ), and less with feminists ( $M=3.63; SD=1.59$ ). Again, feminist identification and women's identification were not significantly correlated ( $r=0.12, p=0.19$ ).

**Collective action.** Feminist identification predicted support for moderate action ( $\beta=0.21, F(1,123)=7.44, p=0.007$ ): those who identified more strongly with feminists were more likely to support moderate collective action.

Radical collective action showed additive effects of women's and feminist identification. Feminist identification positively predicted support for radical collective action ( $\beta=0.35, F(1,123)=16.12, p<0.001$ ), while women's identification *negatively* predicted support for radical action ( $\beta=-0.34, F(1,120)=4.83, p=0.030$ ). The interaction between women's identification and feminist identification was not significant ( $F<1.35, p>0.21$ ). Taken together, these effects illustrate that support for radical collective action is highest amongst the distinctive feminists, who are highly identified with feminists, but not with women. However, this pattern was the result of additive effects rather than an interaction.

## Discussion

This study replicates findings from Study 2.1 that women's identity and feminist identity constitute separable gender identities. Additionally, results from this study show that those who identify more strongly with feminists are more likely to support both moderate and radical collective action strategies aimed at increasing equality between the groups. This is in line with results from Study 2.1, which suggests that feminist identification is related to attitudes towards the group's social position (relative status, inequality, sexism). Women's identification on the other hand did not predict support for moderate collective action, and *negatively* predicted support for radical collective action. This shows that high women's identification does not auto-



matically translate to increased support for collective action.

If we think of these results in terms of the different subgroups of gender identifiers, we see that the distinctive feminists behave as we would expect feminist identifiers to behave: they show high support for moderate collective action, and also show the highest degree of support for radical collective action. Dual identifiers on the other hand, support moderate action, but not radical action. That is, even though they are high feminist identifiers, they do not support all kinds of collective action.

Taken together, the results of Study 2.2 shows that support for moderate collective action increases with feminist identification, but is not related to women's identification. Support for radical collective action is highest amongst distinctive feminists, due to additive effects of women's and feminist identification. As such, these findings provide a first indication that the multiple identity approach can predict differences in women's gender attitudes.

### **Study 2.3**

Study 2.3 examines another domain expected to relate to both women's identification and feminist identification: gender stereotypes. Stereotypes are often used to legitimise the gender hierarchy (Jost & Kay, 2005; Rudman & Glick, 2008), and therefore it is likely that feminist identifiers find gender stereotypes more problematic than low feminist identifiers do. At the same time, gender stereotypes provide information about which behaviours are considered typical and appropriate for the group (Prentice & Carranza, 2002), and provide a basis for differentiation from out-groups (Spears et al., 1997), in this case, men. Therefore it is likely that high women's identifiers find gender stereotypes *less* problematic than low women's identifiers do. Thus, in line with the results of Study 2.2, we may expect additive effects of women's and feminist identification on perceptions of gender stereotypes.

However, we may also expect women's and feminist identification to interact. For instance, dual identifiers' attachment to femininity and tendency to self-stereotype may weaken the effect of feminist identification on their disapproval of stereotypes. Amongst distinctive feminists, on the other hand, the low attachment to femininity and reduced tendencies to self-stereotype associated with low identification with women, may strengthen the effect of feminist identification on their disapproval of stereotypes.

In sum, distinctive feminists are expected to object to stereotypes more than other groups of women do, either as a result of additive or interactive effects.

## Method

**Participants.** A community sample of 197 female participants was recruited through ProlificAcademic. Of these, 59% were from the United Kingdom, 36% were from the United States, and 5% had other nationalities. Age ranged from 16 years old to 68 years old, with a mean age of 30.6 (SD=10.758 years). Eight participants were excluded because their completion times exceeded the mean completion time by more than 3 SD, indicating that they had not completed the study in one sitting. Three participants were excluded because they failed the attention check. Two further participants indicated that they had trouble understanding the questions, and were also excluded. The final sample included 184 participants.

The stopping rule used during data collection was a practical one: the number of participants that could be recruited within a 3-week period, or until the sample was large enough to detect effects of small size. With this sample we are able to detect small effect sizes ( $d=0.1$ ) at a power of  $1-\beta=0.85$  (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007).

**Independent variables.** Independent variables in this study were women's identification, feminist identification, and a within-participants manipulation designed to assess attitudes towards gender stereotypes.

**Women's and feminist identification.** Women's and feminist identification were measured in the same way as the previous studies ( $\alpha=0.88$  and  $\alpha=0.97$ , respectively).

**Manipulation.** We created a within-participants manipulation to examine women's views on gender stereotyping. Participants were presented with a conversation between two women about gender issues. Views on gender stereotyping are examined through agreement with and liking of two speakers who either criticize or endorse stereotypes. Each speaker made 2 arguments. The anti-stereotype speaker argues that stereotypes are problematic because they legitimise and exacerbate disadvantage faced by women. The pro-stereotype speaker argues that it is women's disadvantage that is problematic, but that stereotypes in themselves are not always negative. Thus, we created a within-participants manipulation with 2 levels (anti-stereotype vs pro-stereotype).

**Dependent variables.** The central dependent variables were two measures reflecting attitudes towards gender stereotypes.

**Ratings of speakers and their arguments.** After reading the manipulation, participants rated the speakers on how much they agreed with

them, how considerate, friendly and intelligent they found them, and how much they liked them. Participants also rated each of the arguments made by the speakers on agreement, eloquence, and persuasiveness. Ratings of how considerate and friendly the speakers were, were highly correlated ( $r=0.805$ ) and taken together to create a measure of perceived warmth. As the anti-stereotype speaker was more critical of stereotypes than the pro-stereotype speaker, we expected that 1) higher feminist identification would lead to higher ratings for the anti-stereotype speaker than the pro-stereotype speaker, whereas 2) high women's identification would lead to *lower* ratings for the anti-stereotype speaker than the pro-stereotype speaker.

**Perceptions of stereotypes.** As a second measure of perceptions of stereotypes, participants saw a list of statements reflecting stereotypes of women, including positive and negative, prescriptive and descriptive stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rudman, 1998). Examples included “women have better social skills than men” (positive descriptive), and “women should not be as ambitious as men” (negative prescriptive). For each of these items, participants rated how problematic they found the statement. We expected that distinctive feminists find stereotypes more problematic than other groups of women do.

Finally, we also included measures to replicate findings of Study 2.1. These were perceived femininity of the self ( $\alpha=0.87$ ), perceived disadvantage for women ( $\alpha=0.93$ ), Modern Sexism ( $\alpha=0.78$ ), hostile sexism ( $\alpha=0.94$ ) and benevolent sexism ( $\alpha=0.92$ ). These measures were identical to the ones used in Study 2.1.

**Procedure.** Data was collected through Qualtrics. Participants accessed the study through the ProlificAcademic website. At the start of the study, participants provided informed consent, completed demographic information (including gender), as well as the measures of feminist identification and women's identification, and the replication measures. They then read the manipulation text and rated the speakers and arguments, followed by the measures of attitudes towards stereotypes and attitude strength. At the end of the study, participants read a debriefing and were thanked for their participation.

**Analysis.** Predictors in the analyses presented below were women's identification, feminist identification, and their interaction. Thus, the results described below control for the influence of the other identity and the interaction.

## Results

**Identification with women and feminists.** Women's identification was above the mid-point of the scale ( $M=4.90$ ,  $SD=0.97$ ; 7-point scale), while identification with feminists was below the mid-point of the scale<sup>1</sup> ( $M=3.41$ ,  $SD=1.54$ ; 7-point scale). The correlation between women's identification and feminist identification was somewhat higher than in previous studies,  $r=0.25$ , and this correlation was significant ( $p=0.001$ ).

**Attitudes predicted by women's identification.** As in Study 2.1, higher women's identifiers saw themselves as more feminine than low women's identifiers,  $\beta=0.52$ ,  $F(1,185)=63.56$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

**Attitudes predicted by feminist identification.** As in Study 2.1, high feminist identifiers perceived more sexism in society ( $\beta=0.68$ ,  $F(1, 185)=135.99$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), perceived more disadvantage for women,  $\beta=0.41$ ,  $F(1, 192)=37.31$ ,  $p<0.001$ , and endorsed less hostile sexism,  $\beta=-0.53$ ,  $F(1,184)=62.05$ ,  $p<0.001$ .

## Interactions and additive effects.

**Benevolent sexism.** Benevolent sexism was predicted by additive effects of women's identification and feminist identification. Higher feminist identifiers endorsed less benevolent sexism,  $\beta=-0.16$ ,  $F(1,185)=11.06$ ,  $p=0.001$ , while higher women's identifiers endorsed more benevolent sexism ( $\beta=0.49$ ,  $F(1,185)=34.82$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

**Perceptions of stereotypes.** Participants indicated how problematic they found positive and negative, prescriptive and descriptive stereotypes of women. Results are depicted in Figure 2a. For prescriptive stereotypes, negative items were perceived as more problematic by higher feminist identifiers,  $\beta=0.21$ ,  $F(1, 184)=9.89$ ,  $p<0.002$ ,  $\eta^2_p = 0.05$ . Higher women's identifiers saw these stereotypes as less problematic, but this effect did not reach significance ( $\beta=-0.17$ ,  $F(1, 184)=2.21$ ,  $p=0.14$ ). For positive items there were additive effects of feminist and women's identification: higher feminist identifiers rated positive prescriptive stereotypes as more problematic ( $\beta=0.34$ ,  $F(1, 184)=21.48$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2_p =0.11$ ), while higher women's identifiers rated them as less problematic ( $\beta=-0.39$ ,  $F(1, 184)=10.08$ ,  $p=0.002$ ,  $\eta^2_p =0.05$ ). That is, (positive) prescriptive stereotypes are perceived as more problematic as feminist

<sup>1</sup> As the mean score on gender identification in this sample was somewhat lower than in previous studies, when examining simple effects, we use the means based on previous studies. This is done to ensure that the same groups are compared in all studies. If not, two participants with the same scores may fall into different subgroups due to the difference in means of the sample they are part of.

identification goes up and women's identification goes down.

For descriptive stereotypes, negative items were affected by additive main effects of identification: higher women's identification rated these stereotypes as less problematic ( $\beta=-0.33$ ,  $F(1, 184)=7.72$ ,  $p=0.006$ ,  $\eta_p^2=0.04$ ), while higher feminist identifiers rated them as more problematic ( $\beta=0.41$ ,  $F(1, 184)=32.49$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2=0.15$ ). Importantly, for positive descriptive stereotypes feminist identification and women's identification interacted,  $F(1,184)=6.16$ ,  $p=0.014$ . Decomposition of the interaction showed that distinctive feminists find positive descriptive stereotypes significantly more problematic than dual identifiers,  $\beta=-0.57$ ,  $F(1,184)=13.92$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2=0.07$ , and non-identifiers,  $\beta=0.46$ ,  $F(1, 184)=19.88$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2=0.1$ .

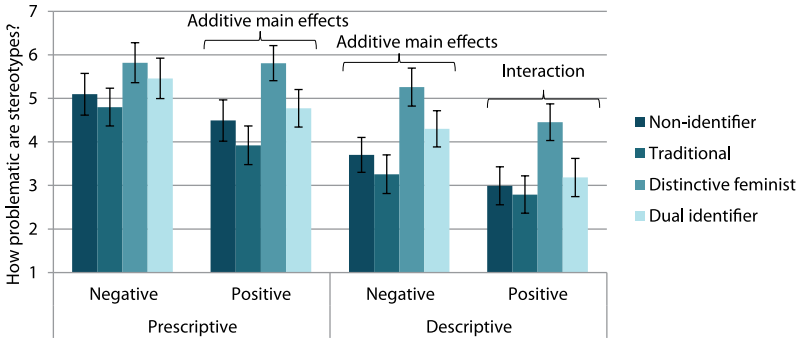
These findings support the hypothesis that distinctive feminists find stereotypes more problematic than other groups of women; this pattern was particularly pronounced for positive descriptive stereotypes.

**Effects of the manipulation.** The manipulation exposed participants to two speakers who each put forward two anti- or pro-stereotype arguments. In general the pro-stereotype speaker was given more positive ratings than the anti-stereotype speaker ( $F(1, 182)=55.90$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2=0.24$ ). An interaction between the speaker and the dimension on which they were rated ( $F(1,182)=41.12$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) showed that this was particularly true for ratings of agreement: participants agreed more with the pro-stereotype speaker than the anti-stereotype speaker. Moreover, the preference for the pro-stereotype speaker over the anti-stereotype speaker was marginally stronger amongst high women's identifiers,  $F(1, 182)=3.41$ ,  $p=0.067$ ,  $\eta_p^2=0.022$ . Thus, the hypothesis that high women's identifiers would rate the pro-stereotype speaker more positively than the anti-stereotype speaker was supported. However, the hypothesis that high feminist identifiers would rate the anti-stereotype speaker more positively than the pro-stereotype speaker was not supported.

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<sup>2</sup> Aside from the differences between the speakers, there were main effects of both identification variables (women's identification  $F(1,182)=19.826$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2=0.098$ ; feminist identification,  $F(1,182)=11.840$ ,  $p=0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2=0.061$ ): higher feminist identification and higher women's identification lead to more positive ratings. Finally, there was a marginal interaction between women's identification and feminist identification ( $F(1, 182)=3.902$ ,  $p=0.050$ ), such that non-identifiers gave lowest ratings overall.

**Figure 2a:** Perceptions of stereotypes in Study 2.3.



NB: Error bars represent 1 standard error. The identity subgroups are created by plotting low and high identification with women and feminists at  $\pm 1$  standard deviation from the mean.

## Discussion

Study 2.3 replicated results from Study 2.1 in a community sample. Identification with feminists was related to attitudes regarding the group’s position, while identification with women was related to attitudes towards group characteristics. These findings support the multiple identities approach in showing that identification with women and identification with feminists are distinguishable components of gender identity.

Aside from replicating earlier studies, this study also showed some novel findings, namely that both identification with women and identification with feminists affect attitudes towards issues that have a bearing on both group characteristics and the social standing of the group. Specifically, in line with our hypothesis, results showed that women find gender stereotypes more problematic as identification with feminists goes up, and identification with women goes down. This pattern appeared as a result of additive effects for prescriptive stereotypes, and as an interaction for descriptive stereotypes. Moreover, a similar pattern appeared for the endorsement of benevolent sexism.

These findings illustrate that, in line with the multiple identities reasoning, different combinations of the two identities can lead to distinct gender attitudes. Interestingly, several other recent studies have also found evidence for interactive effects of identification with women and feminists on gender



attitudes (e.g. in this issue Leicht, Gocłowska, van Breen, de Lemus, & Randsley de Moura, 2017; van Breen, Spears, Kuppens, & de Lemus, 2017). One way of conceptualizing how the two identities may be combined, is by thinking of the different combinations as reflecting theoretical “identity types” or identity profiles. In such a taxonomy, the first group includes women who are not strongly identified with either women or feminists (“non-identifiers”). Secondly, there are those who identify strongly with women but not feminists (“traditional women”; see Condor 1986). In addition, there are two feminist profiles: those who are highly identified with feminists and women (whom we might call “dual identifiers”, see in this issue Leicht et al., 2017), and those who identify strongly with feminists, but less strongly with women (whom we refer to here as “distinctive feminists”). These different identification “profiles” are not necessarily fixed or absolute categories, but rather should be seen as a way of conceptualizing different approaches to integrating the identities. We return to this conceptualization in more detail in the General Discussion.

It is worth noting that the fact that some women do not object to (some forms of) stereotypes need not mean that they accept the lower status implications associated with gender stereotypes. They may support the notion of “typically female” activities and interests, but still object to the idea that these imply lower status. For instance, they may argue that typically female traits such as warmth should be valued more.

One limitation of the current study is that the measure of perceptions of stereotypes asked only about how problematic participants found the statements. Participants might find certain statements problematic for different reasons. For instance, they may find stereotypes problematic because they are untrue, but they may also consider stereotypes problematic precisely because they are true. Additionally, it is worth noting that the manipulation of perceptions of stereotypes did not produce the expected effects. Study 2.4 examines these issues in more detail.

## **Study 2.4**

This study aimed, firstly, to replicate the findings of Study 2.3, and to refine the measure of perceptions of stereotypes. While Study 2.3 asked only how problematic participants found the statement presented, the current study also asked how true participants found the statements, and to what extent they thought other people considered the statement to be true. This

last question was designed to assess perceptions of the stereotypical nature of the statement with making explicit reference to stereotypes. In all other respects the design and measures of Study 2.4 were identical to those of Study 2.3. Based on Study 2.3 results, we expect that distinctive feminists will find gender stereotypes more problematic than other groups of women do, as a result of interactive effects of women's and feminist identification in the case of positive descriptive stereotypes, and as a result of additive effects in the case of positive prescriptive and negative descriptive stereotypes.

## Method

**Participants.** Participants were 200 female students at the University of Groningen. Age ranged from 17 years old to 31 years old, with a mean age of 19.7 (SD=2.081). Four participants were excluded because their completion times exceeded the mean completion time by more than 3 SD. Six participants were excluded because they failed the attention checks. Three participants had to be excluded because they completed the study twice. The final sample included 187 participants.

The stopping rule used during data collection was a practical one: the number of participants that could be recruited within a 3-week period, or until the sample was large enough to detect effects of small size. With this sample we are able to detect small effect sizes ( $d=0.1$ ) at a power of  $1-\beta=0.85$  (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007).

**Independent variables.** The independent variables were the same as in Study 2.3: women's identification, feminist identification and the within-participants manipulation.

**Dependent variables.** The dependent variables in this study were largely the same as in Study 2.3. Only those measures that were added or adapted are described below.

**Perceptions of stereotypes.** As in Study 2.3, participants indicated how problematic they found statements reflecting stereotypes of women. We also asked participants how true they found these stereotypes.

**Gender differentiation.** We included 2 items examining women's views on gender differentiation, to examine the idea that support for stereotypes may be driven by a desire for gender differentiation. Items were "the fact that women are different from men should be a point of pride", and "women should try to disprove the idea that women are different from men" (reverse coded) ( $\alpha=0.53$ ).



**Exploratory items.** Finally, we included five exploratory items to examine how participants perceive women who behave stereotypically. Examples include “women who use their femininity to get ahead are only putting themselves down in the long run (reverse coded)”, and “women who use their femininity to get by are only making the best of difficult circumstances” ( $\alpha=0.62$ ).

**Procedure.** Data was collected through Qualtrics®. Participants accessed the study through the University of Groningen website. Participants first provided informed consent and subsequently completed the measures in the same order as in Study 2.3. The new measure of gender differentiation and the exploratory items were completed at the end of the study. After completing all tasks, participants read a debriefing and were thanked.

**Analysis.** The analysis of the data was identical to the analysis in Study 2.3, except that in the analysis of ratings of the problematic nature of stereotypes, we control for their perceived truth, a measure that was not present in Study 2.3. The correlation table can be found in the supplementary materials.

## Results

**Identification with women and feminism.** On average women identified strongly with their gender in-group ( $M=5.43$ ,  $SD=0.99$ ; 7-point scale), while identification with feminism was substantially lower ( $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=1.50$ ; 7-point scale). The correlation between identification with women and feminism was similar to that in previous studies at  $r=0.26$  ( $p<0.001$ ).

**Attitudes predicted by women’s identification.** Ratings of one’s own femininity were affected by women’s identification,  $\beta=0.64$ ,  $F(1,185)=64.58$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.28$ , such that higher women’s identification lead to higher perceptions of femininity.

**Attitudes predicted by feminist identification.** As in previous studies, those who identified with feminism perceived more sexism in society ( $\beta=0.27$ ,  $F(1,184)=43.83$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.21$ ), endorsed less hostile sexism,  $\beta=-0.29$ ,  $F(1,184)=42.586$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.20$ , and less benevolent sexism  $\beta=-0.21$ ,  $F(1,184)=17.11$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.09$ .

### Interactions and additive effects.

**Perceptions of stereotypes.** For prescriptive stereotypes, those who perceived the stereotypes as more true, perceived them as less problematic, both for negative items ( $\beta=-0.64$ ,  $F(1,185)=43.17$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.19$ ) and positive items ( $\beta=-0.69$ ,  $F(1,185)=49.16$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.22$ ). Moreover, there was an effect of feminist identification for negative items ( $\beta=0.12$ ,  $F(1,185)=4.09$ ,

$p=0.045$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.02$ ), such that higher feminist identifiers tended to find negative prescriptive stereotypes more problematic than low feminist identifiers.

For descriptive stereotypes, negative items were also rated as more problematic as feminist identification goes up ( $\beta=0.18$ ,  $F(1,185)=7.50$ ,  $p=0.007$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.04$ ) and women's identification goes down ( $\beta=-0.25$ ,  $F(1,185)=6.46$ ,  $p=0.012$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.04$ ), but ratings were not affected by adding perceived truth of the items as a covariate ( $F<1$ ). For positive items the effect of perceived truth did reach significance,  $\beta=-0.48$ ,  $F(1,185)=41.52$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.19$ , those who perceived the stereotypes as more true saw them as less problematic. Moreover, as in Study 2.3, positive descriptive stereotypes were affected by an interaction between feminist and women's identification ( $F(1,185)=5.20$ ,  $p=0.024$ ): distinctive feminists found positive descriptive stereotypes more problematic than dual identifiers ( $\beta=-0.35$ ,  $F(1,185)=6.57$ ,  $p=0.011$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.04$ ) and non-identifiers ( $\beta=0.21$ ,  $F(1,185)=4.63$ ,  $p=0.033$ ,  $\eta^2_p=0.03$ ). These results are depicted in Figure 2b.

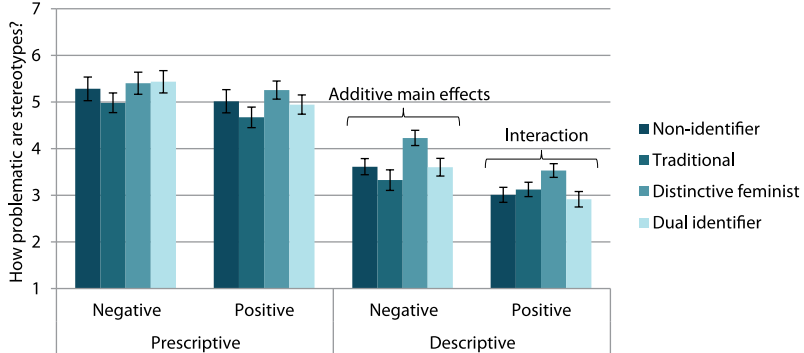
In sum, results confirmed our hypothesis, and replicated results of Study 2.3, showing that distinctive feminists consider (positive) descriptive stereotypes more problematic than dual identifiers do. Importantly, these patterns appear while controlling for the perceived truth of the stereotype. That is, the difference between the distinctive feminists and other groups of women is not due to the fact that they consider stereotypes of women more or less true.

**Gender differentiation.** Overall, low women's identifiers reported lower endorsement of gender differentiation ( $\beta=0.22$ ,  $F(1,185)=5.87$ ,  $p=0.016$ ). Moreover, there was a marginal interaction between feminist identification and women's identification ( $F(1,185)=3.54$ ,  $p=0.061$ ), showing that support for differentiation was lower amongst distinctive feminists than amongst non-identifiers ( $\beta=-0.25$ ,  $F(1,185)=5.95$ ,  $p=0.016$ ) and dual identifiers ( $\beta=0.42$ ,  $F(1,185)=9.37$ ,  $p=0.003$ ).

**Effects of the manipulation.** As before, the manipulation of a pro-stereotype and anti-stereotype speaker produced no theoretically interesting effects, which confirms findings from Study 2.3. Details of the results of this measure can be found in the supplementary materials.

**Additional measures.** Results showed no significant effects of women's identification, feminist identification or their interaction on judgments of stereotypical behavior by other women ( $Fs<1.21$ ,  $ps>0.27$ ).

**Figure 2b:** Perceptions of stereotypes in Study 2.4.



NB: Error bars represent 1 standard error. The identity subgroups are created by plotting low and high identification with women and feminists at  $\pm 1$  standard deviation from the mean.

## Discussion

Overall, the results of Study 2.4 correspond largely to those of Studies 2.1-2.3. As in Studies 2.1 and 2.2, identification with feminists reflected attitudes towards group relations, while identification with women reflected attitudes towards group characteristics. Moreover, we replicated the interaction from Study 2.3, which showed that women who are more strongly identified with feminists are more critical of gender stereotypes, and this effect of feminist identification is stronger amongst lower women’s identifiers.

Study 2.4 also revealed some novel findings. Firstly, perceptions of the problematic nature of gender stereotypes could not be explained by differences in the perceived truth of gender stereotypes. Moreover, alongside an increased perception that gender stereotypes are problematic, Study 2.4 showed that women who are strongly identified with feminists, but not women, were less likely to support gender differentiation. These findings are in line with other recent work from our lab, which has examined responses to *implicit* gender stereotypes (van Breen et al., 2017). Results in that line of studies show that stronger identification with feminists and *lower* identification with women as a group leads women to *resist* exposure to implicit gender stereotypes, for instance through persistence in counter-stereotypical performance domains.

Although those who are highly identified with feminists, *but not* with women (“distinctive feminists”) are most conspicuous in the results, theoretically speaking the dual identifiers (who are strongly identified on both dimensions) are also interesting. Dual identifiers are feminists, but do not object to stereotypes to the same extent that distinctive feminists do. This finding may be due to the fact that stereotypes can provide differentiation from the out-group (i.e. men, see Brewer, 1991; Mlicki & Ellemers, 1996) which may lessen the objections of the dual identifiers, bringing their responses in line with those of low feminist identifiers.

It is worth noting that, as in Study 2.3, the manipulation did not produce the expected effects. Overall, participants agreed more with the arguments of the pro-stereotype speaker than the arguments of the anti-stereotype speaker. It may be the case that the anti-stereotype speaker was perceived as “too radical”. The anti-stereotype arguments were phrased quite prohibitively, such as “women should not behave stereotypically, as it reinforces the disadvantage women face.” Participants may have disliked this, and therefore favoured the pro-stereotype speaker. An additional limitation of the manipulation was that both speakers expressed disapproval of women’s low status position, and as such both speakers could be said to be feminists. Indeed, there is some evidence that lower feminist identification was associated with lower agreement with the speakers overall (see supplementary materials). The disapproval of the low status position of women was kept constant, rather than varied, because the measure was designed to focus on perceptions of *stereotypes* as harmful or not. If we had also varied speakers’ views on women’s disadvantage, the conversation would have become very complex. Already there was some evidence that participants found it difficult to remember details of the conversation, and as such we considered it undesirable to further complicate the manipulation.

## General Discussion

The studies presented here provide insight into how women’s and feminist identity predict different attitudes towards gender as a social category. We now review the results of the studies in the light of the multiple identities approach, and evaluate its utility in predicting attitudes towards gender issues.

**The multiple identities approach.** The multiple identities approach proposes that attitudes towards gender as a social category are determined

by two distinct dimensions of gender identity: women's identity, reflecting attitudes towards the characteristics associated with the group, and feminist identity, reflecting attitudes towards the social position of the group. This Central prediction of the model is confirmed across the four studies reported here, in student samples as well as a community sample. That is, the studies confirm that women's identity and feminist identity represent distinguishable aspects of gender identity, and as such, that gender identity is not unitary (Becker & Wagner, 2009; Condor, 1986; Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994). Moreover, results show that women's identity is related to attitudes towards group characteristics, such as femininity and self-stereotyping. These "group characteristics" need not be thought of as essentialist traits, but rather as part of a culturally shared understanding of women as a social category (Devine, 1989; Rudman & Glick, 2008). Identification with feminists, by contrast, is related to attitudes towards the group's social position, such as support for collective action and perceptions of sexism.

**Combining identification with women and feminists.** If we consider gender identity in the light of the multiple identities approach, this gives rise to the question of how the dimensions may be combined. The multiple identities approach suggests that, when a certain issue has a bearing on both group characteristics and the group's social position, attitudes towards such an issue will be affected by both identification with women and identification with feminists. Indeed, studies 2-4 showed that issues such as support for radical collective action and perceptions of gender stereotypes are affected by both identification with women *and* identification with feminists, manifested as additive or interactive effects. The finding that particular combinations of identification with women and feminists lead to differences in attitudes towards gender issues is not only in line with the multiple identities approach, but also corresponds to other recent work from our lab (van Breen et al, 2017), as well as the findings of Leicht et al. (2017, this issue).

The combinations of different gender identities can be thought of in terms of different conceptual groups or "prototypical types" of gender identifiers. In fact, several theorists have found it helpful to discuss the possibility of gender identity "subgroups" to address the question how different aspects of gender identity relate to one another (Becker & Wagner, 2009; Condor, 1986; Gurin & Markus, 1989). In our approach, the first possible combination includes those whose identification with both women and feminists is relatively low ("non-identifiers"). Non-identifiers navigate gender group membership by

giving priority to social identities *outside* the gender context, as they dislike being viewed in terms of gender (Barreto, Ellemers, Scholten, & Smith, 2010). Secondly, there are those who identify strongly with women but not feminists (“traditional women”). Traditional women focus on women’s identity and value typically female gender roles (Condor, 1986), but they disavow feminist concerns about the social position of women. There are two feminist subgroups: those who are highly identified with feminists *and* women (“dual identifiers”; see Leicht et al., 2017 in this issue), and those who are highly identified with feminism, *but not* women (whom we have called “distinctive feminists”). Dual identifiers can be described as preferring integrative identity management strategies that unite their commitment to women as a group with their commitment to feminism. For instance, they may be willing to take on leadership positions (Leicht et al., 2017; this issue), but prefer more feminine styles when they do so (Olsson & Walker, 2004). Distinctive feminists, on the other hand, navigate gender group membership by giving priority to feminist identity over women’s identity. For instance, they may disavow feminine beauty ideals because they perceive them as contributing to women’s objectification (Murnen & Smolak, 2009). It is important to note that even though “distinctive feminists” do not identify highly with women, this does not mean that they are “anti-women” (see Becker, Tausch, Spears, & Christ, 2011; Cichocka, De Zavala, Kofta, & Rozum, 2013). Rather, they disavow the (current) *social construction* of the group.

Importantly, this taxonomy does not represent fixed or absolute categories, but rather a way of conceptualizing different approaches to integrating the identities. Indeed, we see gender identity as dynamic and context-dependent. Given that the social construction of identity plays a large part in our approach, arguably the most important contextual factor is the nature of the social construction. Different cultures may construct gender differently, and this may in turn affect attitudes to specific gender issues. Additionally, an individual’s commitment to the different identities may develop over time, for instance through personal experience. Likewise, research on social influence has shown that making salient an intergroup context can shift individuals’ attitudes towards those of more radical minorities within the in-group (David & Turner, 1999). As we used cross-sectional data we did not examine this dynamic component of multiple identities in the current study, but we believe this is a fruitful area for future research.

In sum, the different combinations of high versus low identification with

women and feminists can be thought of as reflecting different strategies for managing multiple gender identities. Some women prioritize one dimension over the other (traditional women; distinctive feminists) while others seek to integrate them (dual identifiers).

**Advantages of the multiple identities approach.** The multiple identities approach has several advantages that are worth highlighting. Firstly, the fact that women's identity and feminist identity represent separable components of gender identity allows for different kinds of identity content, which is crucial when attempting to model something as diverse as attitudes towards gender group membership. One consequence of this is that feminist identity and femininity are not mutually exclusive: a woman may embrace both femininity and feminism. As noted above, this issue is also reflected in feminist discourse (Butler, 2002; Gilligan, 1977). A further consequence of the two independent dimensions is that some women are highly identified with women as a group, but do not hold politicized identities. Indeed, our findings on collective action confirm that high identification with women does not automatically increase politicized attitudes (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994).

As feminist identity can function independently of women's identity, feminist identity can also be part of men's gender identity (e.g. Digby, 2013). Preliminary results of applying the multiple identities approach to men's gender identity<sup>3</sup> show that, as amongst women, men's identification correlates with perceived masculinity and self-stereotyping, while stronger identification with feminists increases perceived prevalence of sexism. However, the relationship between the identities is somewhat different amongst men: for men the factors are negatively correlated; those who identified more strongly with men, and felt more masculine, were less likely to identify with feminism (see also Burn, Aboud, & Moyles, 2000; Lemaster, Strough, Stoiko, & DiDonato, 2015). In sum, the possibility of applying the multiple identities approach to men's gender identity allows us to assess how men's attitudes towards gender group membership differs from women's, as well as where similarities lie. Though further work is needed on this front, we consider this a strength of the model.

The distinction between group characteristics and the group's social position may also play an important role in how people think of identities outside the gender context, such as ethnic group membership. For instance, we can think of the multiculturalist approach to ethnic diversity as appreciating group differences while also addressing political disadvantage (Verkuyten &

<sup>3</sup> Further details of this work can be obtained from the first author.

Brug, 2004), suggesting that, as the multiple identities approach argues, both attitudes to group characteristics and perceptions of the group's social position play a role in how social group membership is constructed.

A further methodological strength of this approach is its concise measure of identification, using eight items in total to measure women's and identification with feminists. The items used to measure both identities were the same, apart from the fact that the word "women" was replaced by "feminists". Thus, the identities are shown to be independent, even when there measures are very similar. Therefore, the lack of correlation between women's and feminist identity is a conservative test of the independence of the identities.

A limitation of the current study is its correlational nature, preventing inferences about causal direction. For instance, the relationship between identification with feminists and perceived sexism might arise because identification with feminists leads to increased sensitivity to sexism (Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003) or, conversely, increased exposure to sexism might lead to increased identification with feminism (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1994). In fact, it is likely that both these processes play a part in identity development.

**Conclusions.** This study develops the multiple identities approach to gender identity, in which women's identity and feminist identity are orthogonal components of gender identity, which together predict attitudes towards gender group membership. Women's identity predicts attitudes towards group characteristics, such as perceived femininity and self-stereotyping, while feminist identity predicts attitudes towards the group's social position, such as sexism and disadvantage for women. Different combinations of identification with women and feminists give rise to four conceptual identity profiles: non-identifiers, traditional women, distinctive feminists, and dual identifiers. Importantly, the multiple identity approach helps to explain differences in gender attitudes, notably that: 1) Strong identification with feminists does not preclude a sense of being feminine; 2) Strong identification with women as a group does not automatically increase politicized attitudes; and 3) Critical attitudes towards gender stereotypes are most pronounced amongst feminists who are less strongly identified with women. Taken together, findings from these studies suggest that considering women's identity and feminist identity as multiple identities can provide valuable new insights into attitudes towards gender group membership.



