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Loss and loyalty: Change in political and gender identity among Clinton supporters after the 2016 U.S. presidential election

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ABSTRACT

How do voters' identities change after a candidate's defeat? A longitudinal, within-subjects study used Hillary Clinton's loss in the 2016 U.S. presidential election to explore social identity theory's (SIT) tenet that threats to self-relevant groups motivate further connection to and affirmation of the group. Two independent samples (university students and adults on Mechanical Turk) were assessed before and after the 2016 U.S. presidential election. After Hillary Clinton's defeat, those who reported voting for Clinton affirmed their political and gender identities in several ways, such as increasing their identification with Clinton. These ecologically valid results are consistent with SIT, and suggest supporters affirm their identities following a threat such as the defeat of their candidate during a high-stakes election. We discuss the implications of these findings within the context of the increasingly polarized U.S. electorate.

Hillary Clinton supporters, bright with optimism and eager to celebrate the first U.S. female president, assembled at Clinton's official election night party in Manhattan. The majority of pre-election polls indicated a Clinton victory was imminent (Katz, 2016). Yet as the results trickled in, excitement turned into apprehension. With the race too close to call, Clinton's campaign manager encouraged people to go home, but news footage betrayed evanescent hope as supporters left visibly shaken with tears of heartbreak instead of triumph. A few moments later, Clinton officially conceded the race to Donald Trump.

Because a preferred candidate's loss in an election is experienced as a self-relevant threat (Greene, 1999, 2004; Huddy, 2001), people will engage in coping efforts in the aftermath of this threat. One way people cope is by engaging in identity affirmation after threat (e.g., increasing identification with the group, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997). However, these findings have largely been observed under experimenter-induced circumstances, such as

minimal groups (e.g., Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995) and/or manipulated threats (e.g., Ouwerkerk, de Gilder, & de Vries, 2000). On the other hand, studies that track identity longitudinally across a real-world and real-time identity threat, have generally shown that people cope with the loss of their candidate by distancing from the group identity (e.g., Boen et al., 2002; Miller, 2009), and have focused almost exclusively on willingness to publicly display one's identity (e.g., use of election signs outside of people's homes).

Here, we investigate whether Clinton supporters, a group who experienced a real-world threat to significant social identities after the unexpected loss of their candidate, responded by either increasing or decreasing relevant group identities after the election. Specifically, we explore both political and gender identities. Political identity (how people align the self with political parties, politicians, and platforms) was conceptualized as multifaceted, including explicit identification with Clinton and liberal ideology, as well as support for gender equality related policies and ideologies (e.g., equal pay for women) endorsed by Clinton and her campaign. Gender identity was also explored in both explicit gender identification and perceptions of gender discrimination. Thus, this work serves as an ecologically valid real-world test of whether a candidate's loss leads to identity distancing or affirmation, and explores a wide variety of conceptualizations of identification.

Political and gender identities as social identities

Social identity theory (SIT; Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) provides a relevant framework for understanding individuals' alignment of the self with both political and gender identities. According to SIT, group memberships become central parts of self-definitions, and as a consequence, people are motivated to protect, bolster, and take pride in those groups (Tajfel, 1979).

Political identity

Political scientists and psychologists have conceptualized political identities as social identities, and have shown how political identity operates similarly to other social identities (Greene, 1999, 2004). For example, political identification fosters in-group favoritism (Greene, 2004; Jost, Nam, Amodio, & Van Bavel, 2014; Munro, Zirpoli, Schuman, & Taulbee, 2013), and partisanship (Dancey & Goren, 2010; Unsworth & Fielding, 2014), and has been shown to be related to self-esteem (Jost et al., 2014). Additionally, political identities can motivate cognition by leading people to maintain pre-existing beliefs by discounting contradictory evidence (Cohen, 2003; Jost & Amodio, 2012; Jost et al., 2014; Taber & Lodge, 2006). With diametrically opposed views from Clinton on key political issues of immigration, taxes, gun control, and health care (Zezima & Callahan, 2016), Trump's surprising election was a direct challenge to Clinton voters' political identity.

Gender identity

Similar to political identification, individuals vary in their gender identification, which shapes attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors. Strong gender identification for women is related to more support for feminist policies and experiencing gender-related threats as more self-relevant (Major, Quinton, & Schmader, 2003; Schmader, 2002). For men, strong gender identification is

related to less support for feminist policies (Burn, Aboud, & Moyles, 2000). In the context of this election, with a female candidate who was projected to become the first U.S. female president (Katz, 2016), and a male candidate who was widely criticized for sexist language and behavior (e.g., reactions to Access Hollywood's tape of Trump's lewd remarks about women), gender as a social identity was highly salient for voters (Burns, Haberman, & Martin, 2016).

Coping with threats to social identities

A candidate's defeat, then, can be considered a threat to their voters' social identities. Previous literature has identified a variety of coping mechanisms in which members of a group can respond to identity threats (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002). One way people respond to identity threats is by modulating the extent to which they identify with the group, where increasing group identification affirms the identity and decreasing group identification distances from the identity (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Ellemers et al., 2002; Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Social identification can be measured many ways, including public identity displays (e.g., election signs and team jerseys), private identity displays (e.g., explicit measures of identification, Simon et al., 1998), and attitudes linked with group identity (e.g., perceptions of group homogeneity, Ellemers et al., 1997).

Distancing from identity to cope with threat

One way individuals can respond to a group identity threat is by distancing from the group. This process can preserve personal self-esteem in the face of group derogation (Cialdini et al., 1976; Ellemers et al., 2002). For example, in the domain of sports, people are less inclined to visually associate themselves with their team (e.g., willingness to be photographed with the team or wear team apparel) after a loss than a win – an effect known as "cutting off reflected failure" (CORF; Bizman & Yinon, 2002; Cialdini et al., 1976). Public identity CORFing also occurs in the realm of politics. Field studies in Belgium and the U.S. found that people whose political candidate lost an election were quicker to take down yard and window political signs compared to those whose candidate won (Boen et al., 2002; Miller, 2009). Similarly, Twitter activity decreased among those who supported the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum after it failed, suggesting a CORFing pattern (Lachlan & Levy, 2016).

However, the CORFing pattern found in most of these studies reflects public displays of identity (e.g., wearing team apparel, keeping yard and window political signs, Tweets) which may not fully reflect internalized identities, and may be influenced by other factors such as impression management (Tedeschi, 1981). Furthermore, studies suggest that distancing does not occur when individuals are highly identified with a group, or when identities are impermeable (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1997; Wann & Branscombe, 1990).

Affirming identity to cope with threat

Another way people can cope with identity threats is by affirming the group (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1997; Ouwerkerk et al., 2000; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997). Affirmation of identity under threat can provide social support with the group (Ellemers et al., 2002), ease uncertainty caused by the threat (Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner, & Moffitt, 2007), and provide a sense of how to act going forward (Ellemers et al., 2002). For example, women respond

to experimentally induced threats to their gender identity by increasing identification with women as a group (Schmitt, Branscombe, Kobrynowicz, & Owen, 2002). Additionally, highly-identified psychology students whose identities as psychology majors were experimentally threatened (e.g., by being unfavorably compared to other majors) were more likely to self-stereotype (see themselves as more prototypical of the group) than low identifiers (Spears et al., 1997). Similarly, people who were experimentally led to believe they were highly identified with an experimentally created group (via false feedback on a performance task) were more committed to the group and perceived the group as more homogenous than people in the low identification condition (Ellemers et al., 1997). However, with these latter two studies, those particular group identities (college major and a minimal group) are less central to the self compared to more enduring demographic identities such as political and gender, which may explain why affirmation was observed only among those who were strongly identified.

In addition to strengthening explicit group identification, people may also respond to identity threats by bolstering their support for attitudes linked with their group identity. For example, union workers reported being more willing to engage in collective action on behalf of their group when reminded that the status of their group was threatened (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). Similarly, when gay men recalled a group-level threat, their identification with the gay rights movement increased (Simon et al., 1998). In the context of the 2016 election cycle, Clinton ran an explicitly pro-women platform, advocating for policies aiming to reduce gender inequality and highlighting the need for future gender progress such as breaking the "highest" glass ceiling (Hillary for America, 2016). Consequently, supporters may affirm their political identity following Clinton's loss by increasing their support for gender equality.

Unlike the studies showing identity distancing (e.g., Bizman & Yinon, 2002; Boen et al., 2002; Cialdini et al., 1976; Lachlan & Levy, 2016; Miller, 2009), these studies demonstrating identity affirmation generally used non-public displays of identity. These studies also used lab-induced experimental threats (e.g., Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998), minimal groups (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1997), and/or relatively unimportant social identities (such as psychology students, e.g., Doosje et al., 1995; Ouwerkerk et al., 2000). While these methods allow for experimental control, showing that manipulated identities can influence group processes, they lack ecological validity. To our knowledge, a single ecologically valid study, using the 1992 Bush/Clinton election and a Clinton victory, provides evidence of identity affirmation after a loss (Wann, Hamlet, Wilson, & Hodges, 1995). However, this small-sample study used public identity markers (i.e., badges) with mixed results; while the threatened group (i.e., Bush supporters) took less (but not significantly so) badges, they were also more likely to wear them. Thus, further evidence is needed to establish the ecological validity of identity affirmation after group threats.

Coping with threats in the 2016 presidential election

What, then, would we expect Clinton voters to do in the face of an unexpected loss during a highly contentious election? Previous studies on identity in elections suggest that we might expect Clinton supporters to distance themselves from both Clinton, and the ideals she represents, after a loss. However, research also suggests that individuals do not distance themselves from strong and impermeable identities, especially in non-public ways. In the

2016 election, with political and gender identities highly polarized (Gramlich, 2016; Tyson & Maniam, 2016), distancing from one's candidate and political party would have been extremely costly. Thus, the literature would suggest that Clinton voters would affirm their identity after her defeat.

Overview of research

The present research investigates how Clinton supporters responded to the psychological threat to their identities as a result of her defeat in the 2016 presidential election. More specifically, we examine whether Clinton supporters affirm or distance themselves from their identities after Clinton's defeat in two ways. First, we assess explicit identification with Clinton and political ideology. Second, we assess support for gender equality policies and ideologies represented by Clinton's campaign. We also test how people changed in gender identification and perceived gender discrimination to investigate how people responded to threats to their gender group. If Clinton voters indeed affirm their identities in response to the threat, as past literature suggests, we would expect to see an increase in identification with Clinton, liberal ideology, gender-related policies, and for women, their gender group. In capturing this historical moment, we studied both university students and adults on Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in order to replicate and generalize with different segments of the electorate.

Method

In line with national polls (Katz, 2016), we anticipated a Clinton victory, and our pre-registrations (university sample: https://aspredicted.org/qg43v.pdf; MTurk sample: https://aspredicted.org/ux7gm.pdf) and study design reflect that expectation. In light of the actual election outcome, the exploratory analyzes we present here diverge considerably from our initial plan. Our initial goal was to extend upon previous literature that found people overestimated racial progress following President Obama's victory in 2008 and 2012 (Gaither, Wilton, & Young, 2014; Kaiser, Drury, Spalding, Cheryan, & O'Brien, 2009). We anticipated voters might similarly overestimate gender progress in the case of a Clinton victory. Following Trump's victory, we reassessed our possibilities and drew upon SIT to examine the Clinton voters in an exploratory fashion, as mentioned in our pre-registration.

Participants

Two distinct samples were independently recruited and assessed. The final inclusion criteria for both samples were such that participants must have completed both pre- and post-election surveys, passed an attention check, been born in the U.S., reported voting for either Clinton or Trump in the 2016 presidential election (assessed at time 2), and identified as either "man" or "woman," with the latter criteria allowing for examination of potential gender differences. Because our measures were designed for a Clinton victory, Trump supporters were analyzed as a control in which we did not anticipate any change in political identification with Clinton after the election (we did not ask about identification with Trump, a social identity that might have been more relevant for his supporters).

University sample

One sample was comprised of university undergraduates, who were offered course credit as compensation (final $N = 191$; $M_{age} = 19.22$, SD = 3.23; 148 women, 43 men; racial/ethnic identity: 88 White, 62 Asian, 5 Latino, 7 Black, and 29 multiracial).

MTurk sample

A second sample of participants was recruited using the online crowdsourcing service Amazon Mechanical Turk (final $N = 236$; $M_{age} = 36.28$, SD = 11.97; 130 women, 106 men; racial/ethnic identity: 150 White, 49 Asian, 9 Latino, 12 Black, 2 Native American, 14 multiracial). Turk Prime was used to recruit the same participants for pre- and post-election measurement.

Procedure

Participants from both samples each completed two nearly identical online surveys: one approximately five weeks before the 2016 Election Day (October 3–7), and another during the week after Election Day (November 14–18). Conservative power analysis based on previous research (Gaither et al., 2014), and in line with pre-registered predictions, suggested a sample size between 200 and 386 to detect a small effect with 80% power. Due to an expected high (~40%) attrition and exclusion rate, we oversampled at the first survey (T1).

University sample

The pre-election survey was administered to the university sample as part of a department-wide pre-screening survey, which was assessed at the beginning of the quarter (total prescreening $N = 935$) between October 3–10. These screening survey participants were subsequently contacted and invited to take the post-election survey for additional course credit from November 13–23, 2016. Because of a limited departmental allotment of subject hours, only 800 slots were available for the second assessment (on a first-come, first-serve basis) resulting in 503 participants completing both assessments. Of these, 173 were not eligible for the study for not being born in the U.S., a criterion we set in our pre-registrations because our university has a high number of international students who may not be familiar with American politics. Seven participants were excluded for failing an attention check ("For this question, please answer 'Strongly agree'"). In line with the political identity as a social identity-based approach we took in our exploratory analyzes, we only analyzed participants who reported actually voting in the election. Thus, 84 were excluded for not voting, 18 for reporting voting for another candidate besides Clinton or Trump, and 3 for not providing this information because it was unclear what the political identities of these individuals were. Three were excluded for not identifying as men or women as we planned to test for gender interactions. Lastly, only participants who reported voting for Clinton were included since there were not enough Trump voters in this sample to analyze ($n = 24$), leaving a final sample of $N = 191$. Participants who completed both T1 and T2 did not significantly differ from participants who only completed T1 on all dependent variables, all $ps > .11$.

MTurk sample

The pre-election survey was opened to MTurk users between 25 October–7 November 2016, and 434 completed the first survey and passed the attention check. Following the study eligibility criteria in our pre-registrations and exclusion practices described above for the

University sample, we excluded 57 participants who indicated they had not been born in the U.S., five who were not eligible to vote, and five for not identifying as gender-binary men or women (to facilitate gender-based analysis). The 367 participants from T1 who met inclusion criteria were subsequently contacted and invited to complete the post-election survey for additional compensation between 14–24 November 2016. Fifty-seven eligible participants did not complete T2, two did not pass an attention check ("For this question, please answer 'Strongly agree'"), 41 did not vote, and 31 voted for candidates other than Clinton or Trump, ending in a final sample of 236 participants (*completers*; Clinton voters = 141, Trump voters = 95). Participants who completed both T1 and T2 did not significantly differ from participants who only completed T1 on all dependent variables, all $ps > .19$.

Measures

Most items were presented in identical form across time points, with the exception of a few items relevant to specific pre- or post-election insights (e.g., initial candidate preference vs. actual voting behavior), which are designated below. Unless otherwise noted, all measures were rated on scales with endpoints of 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). Additional measures that were included in the study are described and analyzed in the Supplementary Materials.

Political identification

The following measures capture the participants' political identification in two ways: identification with Clinton and their self-reported political ideology.

Identification with Hillary Clinton
Three items were used to measure participants' identification with Clinton. Participants were asked the extent to which they felt "a bond with," "solidarity with," and "committed to" Clinton, in the style of previous studies on Basking In Reflected Glory (Cialdini et al., 1976) and in-group identification (e.g., Leach et al., 2008) ($\alpha_{Uni, T1} = .90$, $\alpha_{Uni, T2} = .91$; $\alpha_{MTurk, T1} = .97$, $\alpha_{MTurk, T2} = .98$).

Political ideology
Participants rated their political views on a 7-point ideological scale ranging from 1 (*Extremely liberal*) to 7 (*Extremely conservative*) with a midpoint at 4 (*Moderate*) to measure participants' political identity.

Beliefs about gender equality

These measures capture political identity via support for policies and beliefs about gender equality represented by Clinton's campaign. Thus, affirming one's political identity could materialize as an increase in support for these policies associated with Clinton's campaign.

Gender equality progress
This scale assessed participants' beliefs about the extent to which equality for women has advanced over the past few decades. According to Clinton's platform, gender equality has not yet been realized, and her ultimate defeat might stand to highlight this lack of progress.

The scale consisted of three items: "Women in the U.S. have gained many rights and opportunities over the last 50 years," "Life for women in the U.S. is not much better today than it was 50 years ago," [Reverse coded] and "Since the height of the Women's Suffrage Movement in the 1920s, great progress has been made toward gender equality in the United States" ($\alpha_{Uni, T1} = .64$, $\alpha_{Uni, T2} = .65$; $\alpha_{MTurk, T1} = .73$, $\alpha_{MTurk, T2} = .77$).

Future gender progress

This scale assessed participants' estimation of the need for future gender equality progress, or the difference between current conditions and ideal levels of rights, opportunities, and quality of life for women. In line with Clinton's platform, her supporters should believe there is a need for future progress, and her defeat might serve to make this belief system more compelling. The scale consisted of three items: "The United States has further to go in order to achieve gender equality," "There is little need for further efforts to achieve gender equality," and "When I think about gender equality progress, I think about how much improvement the U.S. has left to make" ($\alpha_{Uni, T1} = .80$, $\alpha_{Uni, T2} = .70$; $\alpha_{MTurk, T1} = .82$, $\alpha_{MTurk, T2} = .86$).

Policy support

Here, participants' support for legislative and business policies which aim to remedy existing gender inequality was assessed. These policies were part of Clinton's platform, and her defeat might further enhance the significance of these policies. The scale consisted of four items: "Decreasing the wage gap between men and women should be a top national priority," "Affirmative action programs to advance women are essential today," "Employers should be required to offer paid leave to mothers of new children," and "Efforts should be made to promote and secure women's access to healthcare" ($\alpha_{Uni, T1} = .73$, $\alpha_{Uni, T2} = .71$; $\alpha_{MTurk, T1} = .81$, $\alpha_{MTurk, T2} = .82$).

Perceived gender system permeability

A modified form of Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, and Federico's (1998) scale addressed perceptions of the ease with which women experience societal upward mobility in America. Clinton's campaign emphasized the barriers women face in upward mobility, and as such, these beliefs might become more salient among her supporters following the election. Three items were included: "America is an open society where individuals of any gender can achieve higher status," "Advancement in American society is possible for individuals of any gender," and "Individual women face significant challenges achieving higher status" ($\alpha_{Uni, T1} = .79$, $\alpha_{Uni, T2} = .74$; $\alpha_{MTurk, T1} = .52$, $\alpha_{MTurk, T2} = .59$).

Social Dominance Orientation

The short version of Ho et al.'s (2015) revised Social Dominance Orientation scale (SDO) measured participants' opposition to social inequality and their preference for group-based hierarchy. Eight items were included, including "Some groups of people are simply inferior to others" ($\alpha_{Uni, T1} = .77$, $\alpha_{Uni, T2} = .79$). This measure was only included in the university sample, as it was added (along with some other measures, see supplemental materials) in light of the outcome of the election (i.e., we had access to these data for T1 because they were part of another research team's measures in the department-wide pre-screening survey).

Gender identification

The following measures capture the participants' gender identification in two ways: explicit gender identification and perceptions of gender-based group discrimination. Although perceptions of sexism are distinct from gender identification, perceived discrimination is an important part of the experience of possessing a devalued social identity (Kaiser & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009; Major et al., 2003) While the beliefs about gender equality described above measure participants' general beliefs about the status of women in the U.S., these latter measures directly explore people's personal experiences of belonging to their gender group.

Gender identification

Items from the centrality subscale of Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale measured the extent to which participants' gender was central to their self-concept. This scale included four items, including "The gender group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am" ($\alpha_{Uni, T1}$ = .80, $\alpha_{Uni, T2}$ = .82; $\alpha_{MTurk, T1}$ = .84, $\alpha_{MTurk, T2}$ = .85).

Perceived gender discrimination

Participants reported the extent to which they believed they personally and members of their gender group were subject to gender-based discrimination (Levin, Sinclair, Veniegas, & Taylor, 2002). This was measured with four items: "I experience discrimination because of my gender," "I personally have been a victim of gender discrimination," "My gender group is discriminated against," and "Discrimination against my gender group is a big problem today." ($\alpha_{Uni, T1}$ = .92, $\alpha_{Uni, T2}$ = .91; $\alpha_{MTurk, T1}$ = .93, $\alpha_{MTurk, T2}$ = .95).

Election measures

At Time 1, participants indicated whether they supported Clinton, Trump, another candidate, or if they had no preference. At Time 2, participants were asked whether or not they voted in the election, and if they did, for whom they voted.

Data analysis plan

The two samples (university students and Mturk adults) were analyzed independently. All analyzes below use repeated measures ANOVA to test for within-subject differences between Time 1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2). Time X Vote (Clinton vs. Trump) interactions were tested only in the Mturk sample due to participants' sufficient political diversity (Clinton voters = 141; Trump voters = 95). Since there were not enough Trump voters in the University sample (n = 24), only Clinton voters were included in this sample. Simple effect analyzes were used in significant interactions ($p < .05$), and the direction of means were discussed in the case of marginally significant interactions ($p < .1$) but not formally analyzed. Consistent with the exploratory nature of these analyzes, and the high salience of gender in the election context, gender interactions were also explored. Though generally participant gender did not significantly interact with other factors (time, vote), we have reported the full factorial analyzes (University Sample: 2 (Time; T1, T2) X 2 (Gender; Women, Men); Mturk Sample: 2 (Time; T1, T2) X 2 (Vote; Clinton, Trump) X 2 (Gender; Women, Men). Removing gender as a factor does not substantially change reported effects.

Results

See Tables 1, 2a and 2b for descriptive statistics and correlations.

Political identification

University sample

Affirmation of one's political identity would manifest as an increase in identification with Clinton and liberal political ideology. Consistent with this possibility, there was a significant main effect of time $F(1, 189) = 36.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$. While this was qualified by a significant Time X Gender interaction for identification with Clinton, $F(1, 189) = 4.77$, $p = .030$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$, simple effect analyzes revealed that both male Clinton supporters, $F(1, 189) = 4.89$, $p = .028$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$, 95% CI [.04, .72], and female Clinton supporters $F(1,189) = 75.80$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .286$, 95% CI [.62, .99] increased identification with Clinton, see Figure 1. There was not a main effect of gender, $F(1, 189) = 3.01$, $p = .084$, $\eta_p^2 = .016$. Consistent with the identity affirmation coping strategy, Clinton supporters (both men and women, but women more so) increased their identification with her.

Also consistent with an identity affirmation coping response, participants reported a significant increase in liberal political ideology following the election, $F(1, 189) = 11.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .057$. The Time X Gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 189) = .003$, $p < .957$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$.

MTurk sample

Results from the MTurk sample echo the University sample, and the number of Trump supporters in this sample allowed to test whether identification with Clinton was moderated by how people voted (Clinton or Trump) where Trump voters were conceptualized as a control where no movement in identification with Clinton was expected. A significant Time X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232)=9.04$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .037$, modified main effects of Vote (Clinton or Trump voting behavior), $F(1, 232) = 339.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .594$, and Time $F(1, 232) = 7.91$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .033$, on identification with Clinton. There were no other significant main effects, Gender $F(1, 232) = 2.846$, $p = .093$ $\eta_p^2 = .012$, or significant interactions, Time X Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = 2.695$, $p = .102$, $\eta_p^2 = .011$, Time X Gender $F(1, 232) = .05$, $p = .827$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = .98$, $p = .323$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$. Simple effect analyzes revealed that while Clinton voters increased their identification with Clinton after their election, $F(1, 232) = 20.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .082$, 95% CI [.20, .49], Trump voters did not $F(1, 232) = .02$, $p = .900$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, 95% CI [−.19, .17], see Figure 2. Thus, Clinton supporters, but not Trump supporters, significantly increased their explicit identification with Clinton after the election, demonstrating an identity affirmation coping response.

The analyzes on political ideology produced mixed results. There was a significant Time X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232) = 5.93$, $p = .016$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$, which modified a main effect of Vote (Clinton or Trump voting behavior), $F(1, 232) = 264.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .533$. There were no other significant main effects, Time $F(1, 232) = .71$, $p = .399$, $\eta_p^2 = .003$, Gender $F(1, 232) = .005$, $p = .943$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, or significant interactions, Time X Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = .827$, $p = .364$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$, Time X Gender $F(1, 232) = .05$, $p = .817$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = 1.45$, $p = .230$, $\eta_p^2 = .006$. Simple effects revealed that Trump voters increased in conservative ideology, $F(1, 232) = 4.54$, $p = .034$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$, 95% CI [.14, .35], and there was no significant

Table 1. University sample descriptive statistics split by gender.

	M1 / M2	SD1 / SD2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Women N = 148											
1. Identification with Clinton	3.58 / 4.39	1.40 / 1.41	–	−.280**	.108	−.089	.144	−.151	.143	.164*	−.082
2. Political orientation	2.59 / 2.39	1.11 / 1.06	−.338**	–	−.173*	.162*	−.188*	.217**	.048	−.330**	.358**
3. Policy support	5.84 / 6.05	.84 / .70	.283**	−.342**	–	−.114	.627**	−.255**	−.008	.259**	−.233**
4. Gender progress	5.38 / 5.30	.90 / .83	−.079	−.036	−.027	–	−.232**	.492**	−.140	−.288**	.156
5. Future progress	5.80 / 5.84	.98 / .92	.432**	−.351**	.467**	−.062	–	−.457**	.001	.407**	−.327**
6. System permeability	3.54 / 3.57	1.24 / 1.17	−.307**	.162*	−.302**	.414**	−.533**	–	−.131	−.455**	.252**
7. Gender identification	4.61 / 4.85	1.18 / 1.12	.242**	−.121	.240**	−.025	.314**	−.298**	–	.201	−.230**
8. Gender discrimination	4.87 / 5.15	1.37 / 1.20	.333**	−.299**	.402**	−.198*	.555**	−.522**	.356**	–	−.181*
9. Social Dominance Orientation	2.40 / 2.20	.86 / .88	−.307**	.362**	−.326**	.042	−.407**	.248**	−.195*	−.328**	–
Men N = 43											
1. Identification with Clinton	3.39 / 3.77	1.58 / 1.74	–	−.310*	.430**	−.081	.318*	−.320*	−.108	−.018	−.319*
2. Political orientation	2.74 / 2.53	1.07 / 1.08	−.279	–	−.428**	.218	−.260	.259	.245	.279	.267
3. Policy support	5.41 / 5.34	.74 / .85	.573**	−.127	–	−.345*	.692**	−.625**	−.107	−.156	−.462**
4. Gender progress	5.75 / 5.67	.74 / .79	−.475**	.427**	−.498**	–	−.436**	.577**	.100	.028	.146
5. Future progress	5.57 / 5.52	.98 / .88	.509**	−.560**	.561**	−.580**	–	−.630**	−.153	−.133	−.362*
6. System permeability	3.95 / 4.16	1.39 / 1.19	−.445**	.363*	−.643**	.565**	−.615**	–	.062	.274	.359*
7. Gender identification	3.94 / 4.10	1.44 / 1.43	−.335*	.525**	−.027	.428**	−.321*	.210	–	−.081	.114
8. Gender discrimination	2.21 / 2.76	1.04 / 1.34	.099	.433**	−.083	.147	−.302*	.214	.032	–	.370*
9. Social Dominance Orientation	2.54 / 2.40	.90 / .88	−.340*	.308*	−.355*	.303*	−.499**	.301	.267	.308*	–

Notes: T1 correlations are above the diagonal, T2 correlations are below the diagonal.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 2a. Mturk men's descriptive statistics split by Clinton and Trump voters.

	M1	SD1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	M2	SD2								
Clinton voters N = 60										
1. Identification with Clinton	4.00	1.48	–	-.386**	.376**	-.095	.110	-.161	.006	.110
	4.23	1.41								
2. Political orientation	2.88	1.32	-.182	–	-.015	.212	-.227	.394**	.175	-.182
	2.73	1.19								
3. Policy support	5.38	.91	.201	-.070	–	.257*	.530**	.072	-.157	-.410**
	5.47	.87								
4. Gender progress	5.86	.91	.007	.046	.149	–	.305*	.266*	.071	-.587**
	5.66	.90								
5. Future progress	5.21	1.20	.091	.024	.455**	.350**	–	-.371**	-.354**	-.279*
	5.37	.90								
6. System permeability	4.09	.76	.078	-.027	-.191	.116	-.414**	–	.163	-.208
	4.10	.74								
7. Gender identification	4.04	1.36	-.023	.163	-.210	.111	-.181	.286*	–	-.055
	3.79	1.26								
8. Gender discrimination	2.59	1.39	-.078	-.088	-.188	-.336**	-.392**	.177	-.080	–
	2.55	1.24								
Trump voters N = 46										
1. Identification with Clinton	1.20	.61	–	-.386**	.156	-.463**	.128	-.245	.004	.141
	1.27	.79								
2. Political orientation	4.96	1.28	-.290	–	-.051	.141	-.204	.223	.009	-.016
	5.17	1.08								
3. Policy support	4.18	1.24	.059	-.110	–	.132	.498**	-.035	-.105	-.238
	4.07	1.18								
4. Gender progress	5.86	.95	-.356*	.206	-.144	–	-.174	.377**	.182	-.170
	5.96	.86								
5. Future progress	3.96	1.31	.009	.005	.510**	-.430**	–	-.047	-.041	-.346*
	3.71	1.43								
6. System permeability	4.59	.82	-.267	.266	-.371*	.587**	-.523**	–	-.196	.022
	4.67	.95								
7. Gender identification	3.97	1.32	-.118	.279	-.208	.100	.106	.043	–	.133
	4.35	1.34								
8. Gender discrimination	3.01	1.57	.195	.188	-.294*	-.001	-.194	.225	.000	–
	3.15	1.76								

Notes: T1 correlations are above the diagonal, T2 correlations are below the diagonal.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 2b. Mturk women's descriptive statistics split by Clinton and Trump voters.

	M1 / M2	SD1 / SD2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Clinton voters N = 81										
1. Identification with clinton	4.33 / 4.79	1.65 / 1.61	–	–.352**	.340**	–.086	.119	.011	.246*	.185
2. Political orientation	2.63 / 2.60	1.12 / 1.19	–.253*	–	–.252*	.086	–.339**	.368**	–.346**	–.446**
3. Policy support	5.81 / 5.98	.85 / .76	.255*	–.256*	–	–.051	.386**	–.303**	.456**	.418**
4. Gender progress	5.45 / 5.45	.92 / .89	–.163	.201	–.215	–	.037	.386**	–.081	.000
5. Future progress	5.68 / 5.83	1.07 / .97	.178	–.200	.494**	–.182	–	–.362**	.360**	.626**
6. System permeability	3.81 / 3.68	.84 / .89	–.248*	.362**	–.297**	.140	–.345**	–	–.404**	–.374**
7. Gender identification	4.69 / 4.91	1.35 / 1.27	.162	–.190	.482**	–.135	.247*	–.154	–	.314**
8. Gender discrimination	5.01 / 5.31	1.19 / 1.19	.245*	–.248*	.472**	–.180	.554**	–.321**	.319**	–
Trump voters N = 49										
1. Identification with Clinton	1.39 / 1.30	1.11 / .77	–	–.254	.156	–.005	–.020	–.043	–.126	.150
2. Political orientation	5.16 / 5.31	1.20 / 1.19	–.405**	–	–.443**	–.134	–.308*	.085	.185	–.230
3. Policy support	4.67 / 4.52	1.29 / 1.15	.315*	–.440**	–	–.140	.473**	–.419**	.081	.464**
4. Gender progress	5.92 / 6.01	.69 / .87	–.228	.205	–.433**	–	.141	.222	.249	–.166
5. Future progress	4.22 / 4.01	1.32 / 1.43	.198	–.111	.624**	–.442**	–	–.311*	.115	.665**
6. System permeability	4.28 / 4.48	.90 / .96	–.115	.135	–.300*	.487**	–.526**	–	–.038	–.358*
7. Gender identification	4.20 / 4.15	1.15 / 1.26	–.032	–.024	–.093	.119	–.011	.146	–	.154
8. Gender discrimination	3.72 / 3.54	1.65 / 1.55	.213	–.167	.512**	–.486**	.774**	–.423**	.102	–

Notes: T1 correlations are above the diagonal, T2 correlations are below the diagonal.
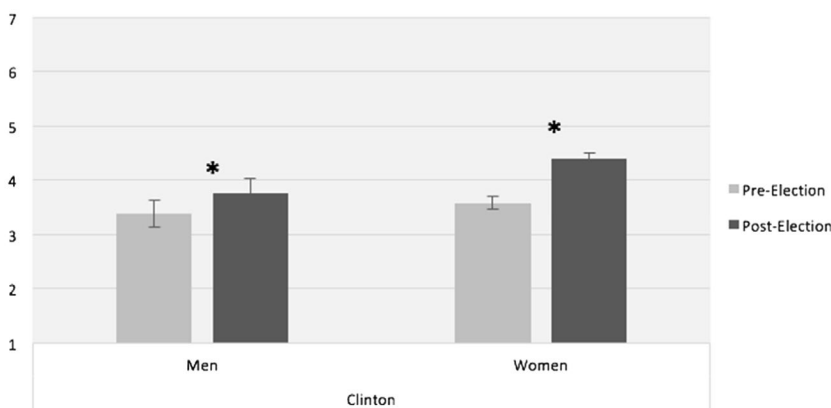*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

Figure 1. University sample – explicit identification with Clinton pre- and post-election.
Note: *Indicates a significant difference between pre- and post-election scores.

Figure 2. MTurk sample – explicit identification with Clinton pre- and post-election.
Note: *Indicates a significant difference between pre- and post-election scores.
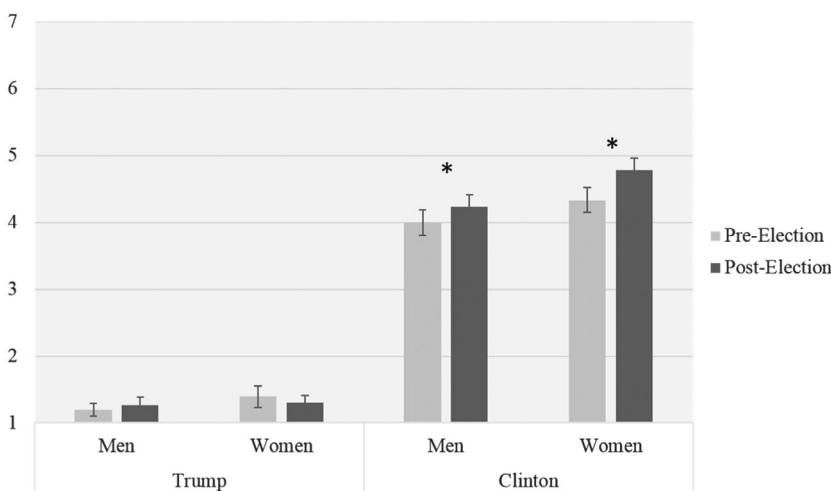
change in political ideology for Clinton voters after the election, $F(1, 232) = 1.55$, $p = .214$, η_p^2 = .007, 95% CI [−.23, .05], though the pattern of means reflected increased liberal identity, echoing the findings in the University sample where Clinton supporters increased in their liberal ideology.

Beliefs about equality

University sample

The second way we tested whether Clinton supporters affirmed their political identity or distanced themselves from their political identity was by measuring endorsement of policies represented by Clinton and her campaign. A significant Time X Gender interaction for policy support, $F(1, 189) = 4.76$, $p = .030$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$, qualified a main effect for gender, $F(1, 189) =$

22.92, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .108$. There was no main effect for time, $F(1, 189) = 1.21$, $p < .274$, $\eta_p^2 = .006$. Simple effect analyzes reveal that female Clinton supporters increased support for policies that address gender inequality, $F(1, 189) = 11.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .059$, 95% CI [.09, .33], while male Clinton supporters did not, $F(1,189) = .38$, $p = .539$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$, 95% CI [−.15, .29]. Thus, female Clinton supporters affirmed their political identity by increasing their support for policies represented by Clinton's campaign.

However, there were no significant changes in support for more abstract political ideals represented by Clinton and her campaign. There was no significant change in perceptions of gender progress, $F(1, 188) = 1.40$, $p = .239$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$, and the Time X Gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 188) = .004$, $p = .953$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$. Likewise, there were no changes in need for future gender progress, $F(1, 189) = .003$, $p = .953$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, and the Time X Gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 189) = .367$, $p = .545$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$. There was also no significant change in gender system permeability, $F(1, 188) = 2.00$, $p = .159$, $\eta_p^2 = .011$, and the Time X Gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 188) = 1.08$, $p = .299$, $\eta_p^2 = .006$.

However, Clinton supporters' SDO significantly decreased after the election, $F(1, 189) = 5.65$, $p = .018$, $\eta_p^2 = .029$. The Time X Gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 189) = .158$, $p = .692$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$, suggesting that both male and female Clinton supporters shifted ideologically with respect to opposing group-based hierarchy and inequality.

Thus, overall, there was weak support for the notion that Clinton supporters would affirm gender related ideologies associated with her political platform, as that support occurred on two of five measures in the university sample and only for women on one of these measures.

Mturk sample

Similar to the university sample, the evidence was mixed on support for gender equality related platforms. Analyzes on support for policies to address gender equality revealed a significant Time X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232)=7.76$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .032$, which modified main effects of Vote (Clinton or Trump voting behavior), $F(1, 232) = 106.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .315$, and gender, $F(1, 232) = 13.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .057$, such that women ($M = 5.25$) supported these policies more than men ($M = 4.77$). There was no main effect of Time $F(1, 232) = .00$, $p = .994$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, or other significant interactions, Time X Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = .48$, $p = .490$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$, Time X Gender $F(1, 232) = .05$, $p = .827$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = .001$, $p = .97$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$. Simple effect analyzes reveal that Clinton voters increased support for these policies, $F(1, 232) = 4.73$, $p = .031$, $\eta_p^2 = .020$, 95% CI [.12, .25], while Trump voters marginally decreased their support for these policies, $F(1,232) = 3.29$, $p = .071$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$, 95% CI [−.27, .01]. Thus, like with the university women, identity affirmation was observed in the Mturk sample where Clinton supporters (but not Trump supporters) increased support for policies represented by Clinton and her campaign. Of importance, this effect was observed among both men and women, whereas in the university sample, it was limited to women.

Analyzes on perceptions of gender progress revealed a main effect of Vote (Clinton or Trump voting behavior), $F(1, 232) = 9.99$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .041$. This should be interpreted with caution as a marginally significant Time X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232) = 3.45$, $p = .065$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$, modified this effect, with Clinton voters decreasing their perceptions of gender progress, and Trump voters increasing their perceptions of gender progress (see Tables 2a and 2b for means). There was an additional marginally significant Gender X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232) = 2.95$, $p = .087$, $\eta_p^2 = .013$. There were no other significant main effects: Time $F(1, 232) = .002$,

$p = .962, \eta_p^2 < .001$, Gender $F(1, 232) = 1.56, p = .213, \eta_p^2 = .007$, or significant interactions: Time X Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = 1.03, p = .311, \eta_p^2 = .004$, Time X Gender $F(1, 232) = .79, p = .374, \eta_p^2 = .003$. Thus, Clinton supporters marginally decreased their perception of current gender progress, suggesting a pattern of identity affirmation coping after Clinton's defeat.

Analyzes on the need for future gender progress revealed a significant Time X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232) = 8.51, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .035$, which modified the main effect of Vote (Clinton or Trump voting behavior), $F(1, 232) = 115.57, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .33$. Simple effect analyzes reveal that Trump voters decreased support for these beliefs, $F(1, 232) = 5.19, p = .024, \eta_p^2 = .022$, 95% CI [−.43, −.31], while Clinton voters marginally increased their support for these beliefs, $F(1,232) = 3.32, p = .070, \eta_p^2 = .014$, 95% CI [−.01, .216]. There was an additional main effect of Gender $F(1, 232) = 6.66, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$, such that women ($M = 4.93$) supported these beliefs more than men ($M = 4.56$). There were no other significant main effects, Time $F(1, 232) = .35, p = .56, \eta_p^2 = .001$, or significant interactions: Time X Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = .03, p = .87, \eta_p^2 < .001$, Gender X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232) = .41, p = .52, \eta_p^2 = .002$, Time X Gender $F(1, 232) = .01, p = .91, \eta_p^2 < .001$. Thus, Clinton supporters again demonstrated evidence of an identity affirmation coping response by marginally increasing their beliefs on a need for future gender progress after Clinton's defeat.

For gender system permeability, a marginally significant Time X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232) = 2.72, p = .101, \eta_p^2 = .012$, modified the main effect of Vote (Clinton or Trump voting behavior), $F(1, 232) = 37.45, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$. There was an additional main effect of Gender $F(1, 232) = 9.95, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .041$, such that women ($M = 4.06$) saw the system as less permeable than men ($M = 4.36$). There were no other significant main effects, Time $F(1, 232) = .46, p = .501, \eta_p^2 = .002$, or significant interactions, Time X Vote X Gender $F(1, 232) = .997, p = .319, \eta_p^2 = .004$, Gender X Vote interaction, $F(1, 232) = .30, p = .584, \eta_p^2 = .001$, Time X Gender $F(1, 232) = .004, p = .949, \eta_p^2 < .001$.

Thus, overall there was weak support for the notion that Clinton supporters would affirm gender related ideologies associated with her platform, as that support occurred on only one out of the four measures in the Mturk sample (though two of these measures showed statistically marginal patterns consistent with affirmation).

Gender identification & perceived gender discrimination

University sample
In addition to political identity and beliefs about equality, we also measured gender identity, which may have also been a social identity that was threatened for Clinton supporters (especially women) as a result of the election. Participants' gender identification significantly increased after the election, $F(1, 189) = 4.73, p = .031, \eta_p^2 = .024$. The Time X Gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 189) = .233, p = .630, \eta_p^2 = .001$. There was a main effect for gender, $F(1, 189) = 13.99, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .069$, where women identified more with their gender than men.

Participants' perceived gender discrimination also significantly increased after the election, $F(1, 189) = 20.06, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .096$. The Time X Gender interaction was not significant, $F(1, 189) = 2.10, p = .149, \eta_p^2 = .011$. There was a main effect for gender, $F(1, 189) = 161.41, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .461$, where women reported greater perceived gender discrimination than men. Thus, both men and women in the university sample increased in gender identification and perceived gender discrimination after the election, suggesting both men and women

who supported Clinton affirmed their gender identities similar to how they affirmed their political identities. While these findings support identity affirmation after threat for women, it remains unclear why men who supported Clinton also increased in gender identification. However, with only 43 men in the sample, it is difficult to interpret the implications of this finding.

MTurk sample

On the gender identification measure, there was a significant Time X Vote X Gender interaction, $F(1, 232) = 13.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .053$, which modified a significant Vote X Gender interaction, $F(1, 232) = 7.41$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .031$, and a main effect of Gender, $F(1, 232) = 7.77$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .032$. Simple effects analysis showed that women who voted for Clinton increased their gender identification, $F(1, 232) = 4.30$, $p = .039$, $\eta_p^2 = .018$, 95% CI [.01, .42], whereas women who voted for Trump did not change their gender identification, $F(1, 232) = .15$, $p = .700$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$, 95% CI [−.31, .21]. Among men, those who voted for Clinton decreased their gender identification, $F(1, 232) = 4.25$, $p = .040$, $\eta_p^2 = .018$, 95% CI [−.48, −.11], whereas those who voted for Trump increased their gender identification, $F(1, 232) = 7.79$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .033$, 95% CI [.11, −.65]. Thus, in line with the identity affirmation response to threat, women who voted for Clinton increased their gender-identity. Interestingly, men who voted for Clinton distanced themselves from their gender, but men who voted for Trump reaffirmed their gender identity. Though we only measured gender-congruent identity, this may suggest that men who voted for Clinton increased their identification with women. It is also possible that both men and women perceived Trump's victory as a symbol of patriarchy, and male Clinton supports may have been eager to disassociate themselves from this narrative. Conversely, men who voted from Trump may have affirmed their identity in light of his win. There were no other main effects or significant interactions.

The analyzes on perceptions of gender discrimination revealed a significant Time X Vote X Gender interaction, $F(1, 232) = 6.73$, $p = .010$, $\eta_p^2 = .028$ which modified a significant Vote X Gender interaction, $F(1, 232) = 33.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .125$, and a main effect of Gender, $F(1, 232) = 78.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .253$. Consistent with Clinton's loss being a threat to women's gender identity, simple effects analysis showed that women who voted for Clinton, $F(1, 232) = 7.94$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .033$, 95% CI [.09, .51] but not Trump, $F(1, 232) = 1.87$, $p = .173$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$, 95% CI [−.46, .08], increased their perception of gender discrimination. Neither men who voted for Clinton, $F(1, 232) = .112$, $p = .739$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, 95% CI [−.29, .20], or Trump, $F(1, 232) = .91$, $p = .341$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$, 95% CI [−.15, .42], significantly changed their perceptions of discrimination against men. There were no other significant main effects or interactions.

Consistent with reaffirming a threatened identity, in both samples, women who voted for Clinton increased their identification with their gender, and their perceptions of discrimination against their gender. Consistent with claiming a positive identity, men who voted for Trump (Mturk sample only) also increased their identification with their gender. In the university sample men who voted for Clinton also increased their identification with men, as well as their perceptions of discrimination against their gender, perhaps suggesting these men increased their gender identification as a strategy to reduce uncertainty in the face of a Trump victory (Hogg et al., 2007). In the Mturk sample, however, men who voted for Clinton distanced themselves from their gender, perhaps demonstrating a pattern of collective guilt (Doosje et al., 1998). However, since the results are not consistent across samples, we are hesitant to draw any theoretical conclusions on gender identification and men in these data.

Additional results

In the supplemental materials, we describe analyzes on additional variables of secondary interest to the questions explored in the main text (e.g., racial identification, perceived racial discrimination).

Discussion

A longitudinal, within-subjects design across two different samples (university students and adults on MTurk) after the 2016 presidential election suggest Clinton supporters generally affirmed their political and gender identities after the election, both directly via self-report identification measures and to some degree, indirectly via support for policies associated with Clinton. These findings are consistent with theories contending that affirmation occurs in response to social identity threats. Importantly, these data provide a real-world study of a group whose social identities were threatened in real-time, giving ecological weight to theory previously largely supported by lab-induced threats and/or social identities. Additionally, running two identical but separate studies among different populations as a way of replication provides more holistic evidence in capturing a one-time event such as an election.

We offer a few possible explanations for these findings. The primary explanation offered in this paper is through a SIT lens, whereby Clinton voters may have experienced a threat to important group identities and affirmed these identities to cope with this threat. The increase in identification effect could also stem from reactance toward Trump's victory and his policies, instead of Clinton's loss, whereby increasing the association of the self with Clinton effectively dissociates the self from Trump (see Ledgerwood & Chaiken, 2007). Though pre-election approval ratings for both Trump and Clinton were historically low (ABC News/Washington Post, 2016), the implications of Trump's ultimate victory may have buoyed solidarity with Clinton. Further, the increasing political polarization in the American electorate (Abramowitz, 2015; Jacobson, 2013) may have served to enhance this pattern, as it made the opposing political party more of a perceived enemy than in years past. These possibilities are all consistent with tenets of SIT (see Ellemers et al., 2002).

These findings highlight the need for future "real-world" studies exploring identity threat and under what conditions do people affirm or distance from their identities. While previous research suggests that people who highly identify with relatively impermeable groups are likely to affirm, these studies have generally used lab-induced threats and/or relatively non-significant identities or group memberships. Studies that have found the opposite pattern of distancing from identities after threat have been found in more "real-world" contexts like in sports and politics, but have generally used public markers of identities like wearing team apparel, keeping yard and window political signs, and Tweets (e.g., Bizman & Yinon, 2002; Boen et al., 2002; Cialdini et al., 1976; Lachlan & Levy, 2016; Miller, 2009). Here, we find that Clinton supporters generally affirmed their political and gender identities (relatively important and impermeable groups) in the context of a real-world threat (Clinton's defeat) in non-public ways (i.e., change in self-report measures). Future research should continue to explore how these factors (relative importance and permeability of identities, real-world vs. lab-induced threats, public vs. private measures of identity, etc.) influence how people modulate their identities in response to threat.

These findings of increased identification with Clinton among Clinton supporters in both samples, increased support for liberal ideologies among university Clinton voters, and support for gender-equality policies parallel the unprecedented outpouring of collective action after the election. For example, over a million women and men across the U.S. marched in solidarity with the Women's March on Washington along with dozens of other similar demonstrations across the U.S. (Weaver, Rennison, Whipp, & Bullock, 2017). A surge in women interested in running for political office also suggests that women, whose political and gender identities were threatened, were leading the post-election collective action (Gajanan, 2016). Thus, the evidence that Clinton supporters increased their identification with Clinton and some values associated with her campaign may be an example of problem-based coping, whereby the identity threat galvanized her supporters to seek out ways to affirm the group identity (Ellemers et al., 2002; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Affirming the identity to cope with threat, then, may just be a first step of a larger plan to address the threat.

Though this study captured a unique moment in political history, the nature of this study also includes limitations. In line with an anticipated Clinton victory, we designed this study with a focus on liberal policies and the psychological consequences of electing the first female U.S. president. For example, neither sample significantly changed their beliefs on the attainment of gender progress or perceived gender system permeability (though it is also important to note these measures did not have strong statistical reliability). The gender progress items (e.g., "Women in the US have gained many rights and opportunities over the last 50 years") were specifically designed for a Clinton victory to capture how much progress people believed women made after the first female president, so observing change on these items in the face of Clinton's defeat seems unlikely (i.e., Clinton not becoming the first female president does not change the status quo of women's success in politics). Therefore, as we suggested in our pre-registration in the case of a Trump victory, the data were analyzed in an exploratory fashion and are best interpreted as suggestive rather than confirmatory.

Also, these data do not speak as much to the changes in political and gender identification of Trump supporters – for, example, did they also change political identities in relation to Trump post-election? The finding that MTurk Trump voters became more conservative and male Trump voters increased in gender identification following the election is consistent with the notion that these voters were perhaps basking in reflected glory (Boen et al., 2002; Miller, 2009).

Another limitation is the lack of racial diversity in both samples, which are largely White and disproportionately Asian-American (relative to the U.S. overall, but representative of the university where the study was conducted). While exit polls suggested gender did not predict voting behavior as much as expected, race certainly did as all non-White groups decidedly voted for Clinton over Trump (CNN, 2016). Thus, it is important to not generalize these findings across the broader electorate of Clinton supporters. Though initial sample sizes were large with the pre-registered consideration of strict inclusion criteria and expected high attrition rates due to survey collection, the attrition rates are still a limitation. No significant differences in any variables between those who completed both time points compared to those who only completed T1 and the relative consistency in effects across both samples allays concerns about any selection effect to some extent.

The 2016 presidential election, with its contentious candidates, increasing partisan polarity, and surprising results, serves as an excellent testing ground for the role of coping with a threat to highly salient and important identities. Coupled with evidence that supporters

of a winning candidate also increased their political ideology, these findings also lend credence to the existence of an increasingly polarized electorate after the election, and raise concerns about the possibility of achieving bipartisan compromise among a divided nation. The results also provide a glimpse into the dynamic taxonomy of social identities, such as the potential for political identity to subsume gender and personal identity. Finally, these data provide an empirical illustration of how real and important social identities (gender and political identity) can change in response to a real-world threat. Future research should further investigate how these changes in gender and political identification may continue to shift and fluctuate over time in an increasingly volatile political climate.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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