

Bridging the divide: Understanding the psychological factors influencing feminist women's support to transgender related policies

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Abstract

The demand for trans people's institutional rights and the approval of the Trans Law (Law 04/3023) has polarized the feminist movement in Spain. In this contentious context, our studies examined the relationship between feminist identity and support for, or opposition to, trans rights among the University community. Two correlational studies (Study 1a = 317; Study 1b = 323) conducted before the law's passage provided opposing results regarding the association between feminist identity and support for trans rights. Building upon these findings, two experimental studies (Study 2 $N=415$; Study 3 $N=405$) exposed ciswomen to cooperation or conflict narratives and examined their impact on reactive threat, zero-sum beliefs, and support for pro-trans or anti-trans collective actions. Conflict narratives increased reactive threat and zero-sum beliefs, leading to more anti-trans and fewer pro-trans actions. Additionally, a direct positive link was observed between feminist identification and support for pro-trans actions, while a negative association was found with reactionary actions (opposite for ideological threat). Based on these findings, we propose a series of win-win strategies to support trans rights and promote peace-building and inclusivity in Spanish universities without triggering threat or zero-sum beliefs in ciswomen.

KEYWORDS

collective actions, feminism, intraminority solidarity, threat, trans rights, zero-sum beliefs

Highlights

- Studies were run in a real-life legal change advancing trans rights.
- Feminist identification promotes cooperation with trans people in ciswomen.
- High ideological threat perception might dissuade ciswomen who identify as feminist from supporting trans rights.
- The exposure of narratives of conflict (vs. cooperation) enhances people's endorsement of zero-sum beliefs and reactive threat, which in turn predict more support for anti-trans collective actions and less support for actions advancing trans rights.
- We propose a series of win-win strategies to guarantee trans rights in the context of a Spanish university while not triggering threats nor zero-sum beliefs in ciswomen.

INTRODUCTION

"In recent years, in some countries around the world, laws have been passed that allow any male to 'self-determine' a woman with his word as the only necessary formality. This endangers the rights of women and girls based on their sex. We, as feminists, cannot allow gender to be introduced into the law as an 'identity' and protected above the category of sex." Plataforma Contra el Borrado de las Mujeres (2021).

"The lives of trans people are as valuable as any other life and they themselves must be the subjects of their own. Recognizing their rights only hurts the global far right, but certainly not feminism, whose enemies are others." Gimeno (2022).

Historically, the feminist and the LGBTIQ+ movements in many countries have been allies, sharing common goals and struggles, such as confronting traditional gender roles (Mayor et al., 2021). However, there have also been some tensions (e.g., "lavender menace"¹; Napikoski, 2019; Womyn-born womyn²; Kaveney, 2012). Currently, some feminists advocate for cooperation and the recognition of transgender identities as part of the feminist movement and acknowledgment of their historical contributions to feminism (Mayor et al., 2021), whereas other feminists, sometimes referred to as *trans exclusionary radical feminists* (cf. TERFs; Smythe, 2008), have expressed concerns about the effect of the advancement of trans rights on cisgender women.³ The positions of the latter range from advocating for a mandatory professional assessment (e.g., psychiatric, hormonal) to making changes to gender identity documents, to opposing trans women's access to women-only spaces (e.g., gendered bathrooms). However, research suggests that opposition to trans-inclusive policies may be more related to attitudes toward trans people than to concerns about the safety of cisgender women (Morgenroth et al., 2022).

Spanish society has made significant progress since the days when trans people—those who do not identify with their assigned sex at birth (e.g., transgender, non-binary)—were persecuted under the "Law of Social Danger and Rehabilitation" (1970). However, trans people still face the highest levels of discrimination within the LGBTIQ+ community,

¹Radical feminist movement in the 1970s that challenged the exclusion of lesbians from feminism and sought to highlight the intersections between gender and sexuality in women's liberation.

²Term refers to women that were raised as girls and identify as womyn, a deliberately spelling against male centrism, characterized by the exclusion of trans women.

³Cis: Gender assigned at birth correlates with how one lives and experiences one's gender.

with 63% reporting harassment, 54.2% experiencing discrimination, and 16.7% suffering physical or sexual assaults (Federación Estatal de Lesbianas, Gais, Trans, Bisexuales, Intersexuales y Más, 2023).

This research explores the psychological mechanisms that may shape feminist ciswomen's support for or opposition to trans rights in Spain, within the context of the ongoing public debate and the approval of the new Trans Law recognizing gender self-determination (approved last 2023, Law "Para la igualdad real y efectiva de las personas trans y para la garantía de los derechos de las personas LGTBI," 04/2023, henceforth referred to as the "Trans Law"). Specifically, we focus on the role of feminist identification and perceived threats as psychosocial mechanisms that can promote pro- or anti-trans collective actions among ciswomen. Furthermore, we investigate the impact of being exposed to narratives of cooperation or conflict on subsequent support or opposition for trans rights.

Feminist identity as a mechanism to promote support for trans rights

Social identities, especially those with political meaning (e.g., feminist or LGBTIQ+ identities), play a key role in shaping collective action (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Research shows that identifying as a feminist—a politicized identity that challenges patriarchy and traditional gender norms—can drive support for ciswomen's rights (Estevan-Reina et al., 2020). Feminist identity also fosters stigma-based solidarity with other marginalized groups, including the broader LGBTIQ+ community (Mayor et al., 2021; Uysal et al., 2022) and specifically, trans individuals (Conlin et al., 2021; Platt & Szoka, 2021; Worthen, 2012). It has been linked to greater openness toward diverse gender representations and gender fluidity (Molin et al., 2012; Platt & Szoka, 2021). Therefore, we hypothesized that for ciswomen, stronger feminist identification would correlate with greater intentions to engage in pro-trans collective actions and lower intentions to support anti-trans actions that uphold the status quo (Thomas & Osborne, 2022).

Threat as a mechanism to promote opposition for trans rights

While politicized feminist identification may promote cooperation and solidarity, the emergence of opposition to trans rights in certain feminist circles suggests that perceptions of threat may undermine the positive impact of this identification and thus be a barrier to solidarity. The revised Intergroup Threat Theory (Stephan & Renfro, 2002) distinguishes between symbolic and realistic threats. Some feminist ciswomen may perceive trans demands as undermining the distinction between men and women, which is central to their understanding of feminism (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2021). Maintaining ingroup distinctiveness can be especially important for disadvantaged groups (in our case ciswomen), even when seeking solidarity. While ciswomen are not a numerical minority and possess legal rights in many Western societies, they can be considered a disadvantaged group due to the power imbalances regarding ciswomen that they face, despite formal legal equality (e.g., 50% of Spanish women suffer gender violence during their lives; Amnistía Internacional, 2024; and gain 18.63% less than their male coworkers; Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2024).

When disadvantaged groups perceive symbolic threats to their distinctiveness from other disadvantaged groups (trans people), they can react with hostility or stress (White et al., 2006) and this can decrease their willingness to help the other group with their concerns (Durrheim et al., 2011) and even increase willingness to act against them (Shepherd et al., 2018). In fact, both Outten et al. (2019) and Hayes and Reiman (2021) found that ciswomen were less supportive of

gender-inclusive bathroom policies when they perceived trans women as a threat to their own gender identity.

Some feminist ciswomen may also view trans demands as a realistic threat to their well-being—politically, economically, or physically. For instance, holding concerns about losing women-only spaces, like restrooms or sports competitions (Contra el Borrado de Mujeres, 2021). This sense of threat is likely amplified by a *zero-sum belief-based* threats that one group's gains come at another's expense (Kehn & Ruthig, 2013), fostering a competitive mindset and potentially fueling intergroup conflict. Research shows that zero-sum beliefs are linked to lower willingness to ally with other groups (Stefaniak et al., 2020). Thus, both symbolic and realistic threats from zero-sum beliefs may weaken the positive link between feminist identity and support for pro-trans collective action among ciswomen.

Narratives of cooperation and conflict

Distinctiveness threats and threats based on zero-sum beliefs may represent aspects of a group's (or individual's) broader worldview and thus represent what we call ideological threat. However, distinctiveness threats and threats based on zero-sum beliefs can also emerge or grow because of specific narratives that emerge and circulate at specific times. These threats that arise as reactions to the current normative context represent what we call reactive threats (see Figure 1).

Context of these studies and implications for institutional changes

On February 28th, 2023, the Spanish Parliament approved a law (Trans Law, 4/2023) allowing trans people to change their sex on identity documents without medical, surgical, or psychological procedures. The proposal sparked widespread public debate, with competing narratives shaping the discourse. Two narrative themes emerged, one that focused on conflict and the other on cooperation. This same debate and conflicting narratives emerged within the feminist movement. These opposing perspectives were reflected in widely shared slogans seen at demonstrations, on banners and graffiti, such as “Feminism will be trans-inclusive, or it won't be”

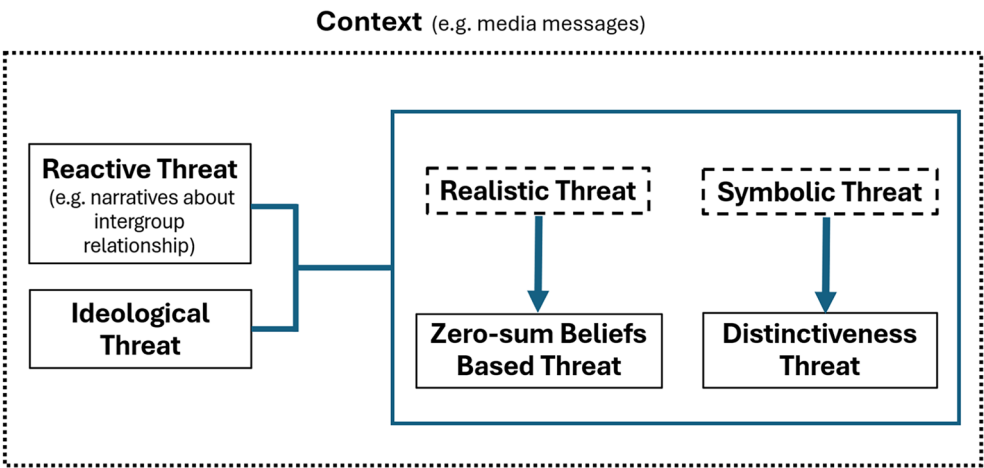


FIGURE 1 Perceived threat theoretical model. In dotted lines, theoretical constructs; in regular lines, empirical variables tested in our studies.

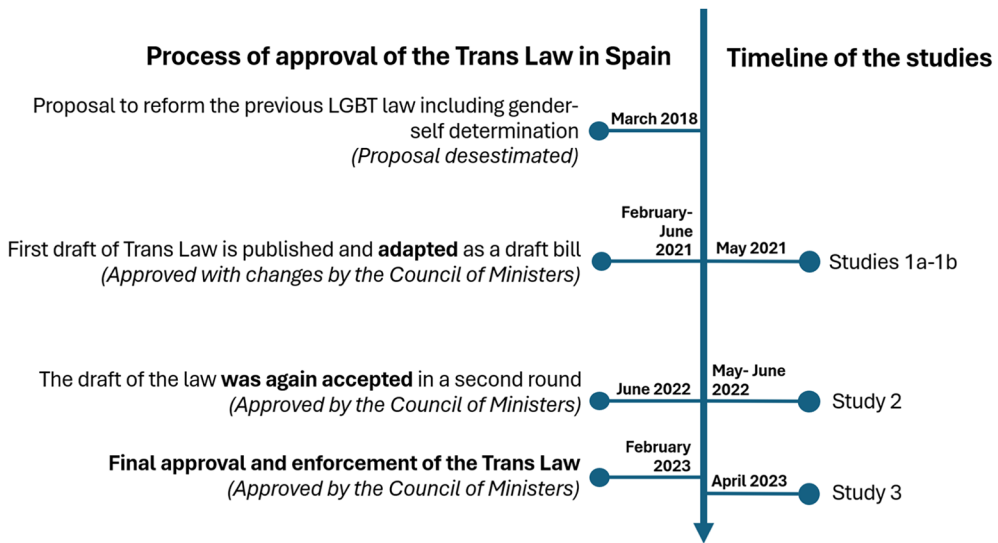


FIGURE 2 Timeline of the studies in relation to the approval of the trans law in Spain. *Italic*=final decision around the specific proposal.

(Borraz, 2020) or “Being a woman is not a feeling” (Ferré & Zaldívar, 2022). These conflicting narratives were also fed by the media (e.g., “Feminism and trans: an open war”; Sen, 2019).

Endorsing different narratives about trans rights should have opposite effects on how feminist ciswomen respond. Cooperation narratives may foster the perception that trans people and ciswomen share common struggles and goals, reducing zero-sum threats and promoting solidarity. In contrast, conflict narratives may increase “us vs. them” thinking (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), heightening zero-sum threats to ciswomen's gender identity (Hayes & Reiman, 2021) and decreasing support for pro-trans action. Given the current context in Spain, this study tests the impact of these narratives. We hypothesize that ciswomen exposed to conflict narratives will report higher zero-sum threat, leading to reduced support for trans rights. The timeline of our studies parallels the process of public debate and approval of the Trans Law (see Figure 2).

The Trans Law in Spain aimed to improve the lives of trans individuals by requiring institutions, including universities, to adapt their facilities and protocols to support trans and LGBTIQ+ rights. Given universities' role in shaping public attitudes, particularly among young people (Diez-Gutiérrez, 2018), it makes them a crucial context for this research.

STUDY 1A AND 1B

These studies were launched 2 months after the first formal proposal of the Trans Law. The aim was to examine the relationship between feminist identification and pro-trans collective action intentions and explore the role of perceived threat in defining that relationship. Study 1a was our first test of the hypothesis⁴ that ciswomen's level of feminist identification would be positively related to intentions to participate in pro-trans collective actions, considering the role of threat as a moderator. Study 1b was designed as a replication of Study 1a.

⁴All hypotheses were preregistered and materials can be found in OSF preregistration: https://osf.io/htn3r/?view_only=8e0f8ee3c6ae4f8a8613d8049fd140e2.

Method

Participants and procedure

Convenient sampling was used. Participants were recruited using an email list provided by the Vice Rectorate for Equality, Inclusion, and Sustainability of the University of Granada. They were not only students but also people who are, or were previously, connected to the university (students, staff members, other workers, and people interested in the activities organized by the Vice Rectorate).⁵ Those who participated completed an anonymous and voluntary survey and could enter a lottery for a prize of 100 €. In both studies, we excluded participants younger than 18 years, those who did not identify as women, those who identified as part of the LGBTIQ+ community,⁶ those not fluent Spanish speakers, and those who did not correctly respond to the attention checks.

The final sample in Study 1a consisted of 317 cisheterosexual women aged between 18 and 70 years ($M = 33.09$, $SD = 12.91$). The final sample in Study 1b consisted of 323 cisheterosexual women aged between 18 and 79 years ($M = 37.39$, $SD = 12.93$). Most participants in both studies had university studies (Study 1a: 86.1%; Study 1b: 86.4%).

Instruments

Unless otherwise specified, participants responded to each item on a Likert scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). Following the recommendations of Goodboy and Martin (2020), we offer McDonald's omega as a coefficient of reliability. We included a definition of the terms “cis” and “trans” when presenting participants with items including these terms.⁷ The full instruments are included in [Supplementary Materials](#).

Feminist identification

We measured participants' level of identification with the feminist movement using the 3-item centrality subscale of Leach et al. (2008) the multicomponent ingroup identification scale (e.g., “I feel linked to the feminist movement”), plus a general identification item (“I identify myself as a feminist”) for a total of four items (Study 1a: $\omega = .95$; Study 1b: $\omega = .92$).

Perceived threat

Based on the principles defended in the main Spanish platform of feminists against trans rights legislation (Contra el Borrado de Mujeres, 2021), we generated three items to measure the extent to which participants felt that trans people and their demands negatively affected women's rights and feminist aims (e.g., “Accepting what trans people ask for at the legal level goes against the rights of non-trans women,” Study 1a: $\omega = .76$; Study 1b: $\omega = .93$).

Pro-trans collective actions

Based on Radke et al. (2018), we generated five items to capture participant's intentions to engage in actions for trans rights (e.g., “Confront transphobic attitudes when I perceive them in my every-day life”; Study 1a: $\omega = .87$; Study 1b: $\omega = .92$).

⁵This is common to all studies.

⁶LBIQA+ participants were excluded because these studies were part of a larger project where we were interested in attitudes toward the LBIQA+ community.

⁷“Cis people are those who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. People who do not identify with the gender assigned at birth are trans people.” Definition included in all studies.

Demographics

We measure participants' age, gender, level of studies, first language, political orientation, with a scale from 0 to 100 where 100 was far right, and membership in the LGBTIQA+ community.

Open-ended question

At the end of the questionnaire, we offered participants the opportunity to give their opinion on the study. A researcher blind to the purpose of the study coded participants' responses as indicative of support for, or opposition to, trans rights.

Results

Preliminary analyses

Means, standard deviations, and Pearson's correlations can be found in [Table 1](#). In Study 1a, we found a significant positive correlation between feminist identification and pro-trans collective action intentions. However, in Study 1b, this correlation was reversed—significantly negative. The relationship between perceived threat and pro-trans collective action intentions was significant and negative in both studies.

Exploratory analyses

Considering the contradictory results found in Studies 1a and 1b, we wondered whether we had reached qualitatively different samples. To test this possibility, we first explored mean differences between the two samples on the main outcome variables through a t-test for independent samples. Second, we tested whether perceived threat could be moderating the relationship between the feminist movement and pro-trans collective action, since there are different beliefs regarding trans people within the feminist movement (Morgenroth et al., 2024) that may alter if participants solidarize with them or not (using R Core Team, 2021; Rosseel, 2012). Finally, we applied qualitative content analysis (QCA; Schreier, 2012) using a concept-driven approach to explore responses to the open-ended question. We developed a category for attitudes toward trans rights legislation (positive/negative) and conducted a frequency analysis. To assess the relationship between study type and attitudes, we performed a Pearson's Chi-square test, followed by a post hoc Bonferroni test.

Means comparison between samples of Study 1a and 1b

Participants in Study 1a reported lower feminist identification, lower perceived threat, and greater willingness for pro-trans collective action than those in Study 1b (see [Table 1](#)). Notably, the difference in perceived threat was substantial, with the highest scores in Study 1a still falling below the mean in Study 1b.

Perceived threat as a moderator of the relationship between feminist identification and pro-trans collective action

Although the interaction was significant in both studies (Study 1a: $b = .06$, 95% CI [.02, .10], $p = .002$; Study 1b: $b = -.11$, 95% CI [-.17, -.04], $p = .001$), the patterns differed notably between them, particularly among participants reporting higher perceived threat (see [Table 2](#) and [Figure 3](#)). In Study 1a, feminist identification was positively related to pro-trans collective action intentions at all levels of perceived threat, with the strongest relationship

TABLE 1 Pearson's correlations, means, standard deviations, and results of mean comparisons between Study 1a and 1b.

	Study 1a N = 317					Study 1b N = 323		<i>t</i> (<i>gf</i>)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)			
1. Feminist identity	–	.32**	–.15**	–.48**	.08	5.58 (1.68)	6.26 (1.27)	–5.77 (589.12)	<.001	–.46
2. Perceived threat	–.21**	–	–.72**	.15**	–.25**	1.97 (1.40)	4.29 (2.60)	–13.97 (492.86)	<.001	–1.11
3. Pro-trans collective actions	.54**	–.42*	–	–.35**	.29**	5.93 (1.34)	4.50 (2.04)	10.51 (554.74)	<.001	.83
4. Political orientation	–.43**	–.32*	.03	–	–.22**	24.28 (23.37)	17.57 (21.88)	3.70 (621)	<.001	.30
5. Age	–.14*	–.00	.12*	–.04	–	34.09 (12.91)	37.39 (12.94)	–3.22 (638)	<.001	.26

Note: Study 1a below the diagonal, Study 1b above the diagonal.

p* < .05; *p* < .01.

TABLE 2 Conditional effects of feminist identification on pro-trans collective actions moderated by perceived threat in Studies 1a and 1b.

	Study 1a (N= 317)		Study 1b (N= 323)	
	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI	<i>b</i> (SE)	95% CI
Less threat	.29 (.05)	[.20, .38]	.36 (.09)	[.18, .54]
Mean level threat	.35 (.05)	[.26, .46]	.01 (.08)	[−.19, .15]
More threat	.42 (.04)	[.35, .49]	−.28 (.14)	[−.56, −.01]

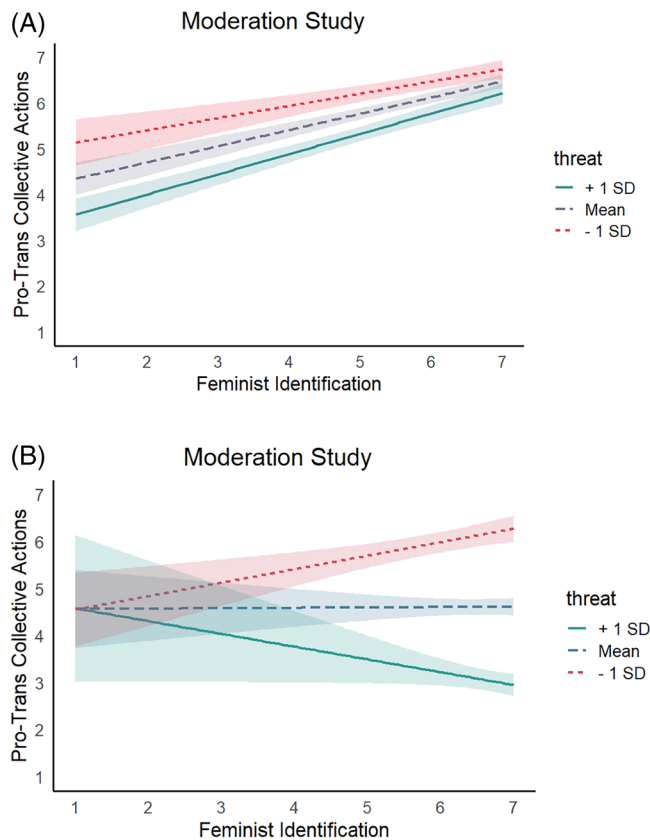


FIGURE 3 Conditional effects of feminist identification on pro-trans and collective actions moderated by perceived threat in Studies 1a (Figure A) and 1b (Figure B). Blue line=Mean level of perceived threat; Green line=−1SD below the mean (lower perceived threat); and Red line=+1SD above the mean (higher perceived threat).

among those feeling the most threat. However, in Study 1b, feminist identification negatively predicted pro-trans action intentions, and this negative effect was driven entirely by participants experiencing the highest levels of threat. Among those with lower perceived threat, the pattern mirrored Study 1a, where feminist identification was positively linked to pro-trans collective actions.⁸

⁸When including age and political orientation as covariable, the same interaction patterns were found (Study 1a: $b = .06$, 95% CI [.02, .10], $p = .004$; Study 1b: $b = -.10$, 95% CI [−.16, −.04], $p = .004$).

TABLE 3 Frequencies, percentages, and Bonferroni post hoc test of attitudes toward the Trans Law in Studies 1a and 1b.

Attitudes toward trans law	Total observations	Study 1a (<i>N</i> _{coments} = 105)		Study 1b (<i>N</i> _{coments} = 184)		<i>p</i>
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Supporting Trans Law	157	85	54.1	72	45.9	<.001
Against Trans Law	132	20	15.2	112	84.8	<.001

Content analysis of open-ended responses in studies 1a and 1b

A total of 249 participants commented in the open-ended question (Study 1a = 92; Study 1b = 157). Each comment could contain different arguments and different valences (supporting and against Trans Law). The number of arguments included in each comment varied across participants (from 1 to 6 per person supporting the Trans Law; and from 1 to 12 per person against the Trans Law). We coded a total of 289 arguments. Results of the frequency analyses can be seen in Table 3.

Results of the Chi-square test indicated a significant association between participants' stance on the Trans Law (supporting or opposing) and the study they were part of (Study 1a vs. Study 1b), $\chi^2 = 33.41$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .40$. Post hoc Bonferroni tests revealed that participants in Study 1a made significantly more comments in support of the Trans Law and fewer comments opposing it, whereas participants in Study 1b made fewer supportive comments and more comments opposing the Trans Law.

Discussion of Study 1a and 1b

In Study 1a, we found a positive relationship between feminist identification and pro-trans collective actions, in line with our predictions and with previous literature showing the role of feminist identity in reducing transphobia (e.g., Conlin et al., 2021; Platt & Szoka, 2021). This highlights the potential of feminist identification as a key mechanism in promoting support for trans rights among cisheterosexual women. However, in Study 1b, we found a negative relationship between feminist identification and pro-trans collective action, which could lead people to think of feminist identification and feminism more generally as an obstacle for trans rights.

Post hoc exploratory analyses using both qualitative and quantitative data confirmed that the samples in Study 1a and 1b differed significantly in their levels of perceived threat, which influenced the effects of feminist identification on pro-trans collective action intentions. Specifically, it was only those women in Study 1b who perceived very high levels of threat who showed the negative relationships between feminist identification and pro-trans collective action. Participants in Study 1b who perceived the lowest levels of threat showed the same positive association between feminist identification and pro-trans collective action that we saw in Study 1. Thus, the demobilization for trans rights effect among those with strong feminist identification occurs only when advancing trans rights is perceived as likely to harm ciswomen and could even mobilize for anti-trans actions. These different patterns might be attributed to us having recruited a sample in Study 1b that included a significant number of women who already endorsed a conflict narrative regarding the relationship between ciswomen and trans people. This endorsement suggests that those who identify more strongly with the ingroup (feminist women) may seek to emphasize this perceived conflict by endorsing anti-trans attitudes and behaviors (in line with the Normative Conflict Model; Packer & Miners, 2014).

The interplay between the strength of feminist identification and the level of perceived threat may help distinguish the different types of narratives about the relationship between ciswomen and trans people that may be dominant among different groups of feminism.

To further investigate these conflicting findings, Study 2 used an experimental design to manipulate exposure to two different threat messages designed to either heighten or reduce perceptions of the threat posed by transwomen to create conditions of high versus low reactive threat. The assumption was that exposure to a strong threat message could evoke adequate levels of reactive threat to adequately demonstrate the reversal of the feminist identification/pro-trans collective action relationship found among those with the highest threat in Study 1b.

In addition, because we were no longer restricted by the sampling limitation of Studies 1a and 1b, we expanded our sample to include LBIQA+ participants, allowing us to explore threat messages might resonate across a broader spectrum of feminists. This more diverse sample might also help to clarify the different patterns observed in Studies 1a and 1b and deepens our understanding of how reactive threat influences support for pro-trans (or anti-trans) collective actions.

STUDY 2

This study was carried out in May 2022, after the draft of the law was again accepted in a second round. The main goal was, first, to offer another test of the role of feminist identification in promoting (or undermining) support for trans rights among ciswomen, and second, to test the effect of messages designed to manipulate the level of threat posed to ciswomen by trans people's legal advances and to determine whether the impact of these messages might moderate the relationship between feminist identification and collective actions to support trans rights. In addition, we explored this relationship with a second dependent measure assessing participation in anti-trans collective actions—actions that seek to limit trans rights.

We again hypothesized that, in line with results of Study 1a, higher feminist identification would generally make women more prone to participate in pro-trans collective actions and less prone to participate in anti-trans collective actions. However, we also predicted that this effect would be moderated by participants exposed to messages about threats posed by trans people's legal advances and that this interaction effect would be explained by differences in reported reactive threat.

Method

Participants and procedure

We followed the same recruiting method as in previous studies. After applying our preregistered exclusion criteria (i.e., same as in Studies 1a and 1b plus those who did not reply correctly to the memory check), the final sample included 415 ciswomen aged between 18 and 61 years ($M = 24.46$, $SD = 7.51$), who highly identified as feminists ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.59$). Of these, 39.5% self-identified as LBIQA+.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions (high vs. low threat), where they read a fictitious article and answered a memory check. Then, they responded to the main measures, provided demographic information, and were debriefed (see [Supplemental Materials](#)).

Instruments

We used the same materials as in Studies 1a and 1b. Feminist identification (four items, $\omega = .94$) was measured before the manipulation, whereas pro-trans collective action intentions (five items, $\omega = .89$) and reactive threat perception (six items, $\omega = .90$) were measured afterward. In this study, we argue that the nature of threat differs conceptually from previous studies due to the experimental manipulation. Here, we focused on reactive threat, whereas in Studies 1a and 1b, our threat measure likely captured both perceived and reactive threat, reflecting participants' responses to the feminist community's existing narratives circulating in Spain at that time.

Also, we developed a new outcome measure to capture participant's intentions to engage in actions against trans rights (anti-trans collective actions: five items, e.g., "Share content on social media advocating gender segregation in sports to ensure fairness for women's competition," $\omega = .84$). Finally, participants replied to the same demographic items as Studies 1a and 1b.⁹

Experimental manipulation

In Study 2, we used an experimental manipulation previously pretested in a pilot study ($N = 58$), where we found significant differences in reactive threat between the two conditions. Participants exposed to the high threat condition reported more reactive threat than those exposed to the low threat condition ($t(56) = -2.26$; $p = .014$); see [Table 4](#) and check [Supplementary Materials](#) to see the full information of the scenarios in the pilot and Study 2.

Low threat message

"A study by the University of Granada finds that most women do not feel threatened by the demands of the trans community [...] 73% [of the women] stated that the demands of the trans collective are compatible with the demands of women and do not harm or question gender violence or the struggle for equality at all."

High threat message

"University of Granada study finds that most women feel increasingly threatened by the demands of the trans community. [...] 73% [of the women] expressed their concern that the demands of the trans collective could jeopardize the importance of what it means to 'be a woman' to defend the rights achieved in terms of equality and gender violence."

Results

Analysis strategy

We use R v.4.4.0 software (R Core Team, 2021) to run simple regressions and simple mediation models (using one-tailed 95% confidence intervals and 10,000 bootstrap samples for indirect

⁹Except for political orientation, which was not included in the study due to an error in the questionnaire.

TABLE 4 Pearson's correlations, means, and standard deviations in Studies 2–3 between experimental conditions (cooperation vs. conflict).

	Study 2 N=415							Study 3 N=405					
								High threat condition n = 165		Cooperation condition n = 185		Conflict condition n = 219	
								Low threat condition n = 250		M(SD)		M(SD)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
1. Feminist identification	–	–.23**	–.31**	.54**	–.17**	–.52**	–.12*	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. Reactive threat	–.26**	–	.81**	–.53**	.50**	.33**	.00	1.87 (1.21) _a	2.24 (1.50) _b	1.82 (1.47) _a	2.32 (1.73) _b	2.12 (1.50) _b	2.12 (1.50) _b
3. Zero-sum beliefs	–	–	–	–.55**	.46**	.39**	.04	–	–	1.70 (1.19) _a	2.12 (1.50) _b	2.12 (1.50) _b	2.12 (1.50) _b
4. Pro-trans collective actions	.55**	–.51**	–	–	–.33**	–.56**	–.05	5.75 (1.37) _a	5.71 (1.48) _a	5.09 (1.56) _a	4.78 (1.64) _b	4.78 (1.64) _b	4.78 (1.64) _b
5. Anti-trans collective actions	–.24**	.62**	–	–.34**	–	.35**	.02	2.46 (1.29) _a	2.53 (1.33) _a	2.77 (1.57) _a	2.93 (1.654) _a	2.93 (1.654) _a	2.93 (1.654) _a
6. Political orientation	–	–	–	–	–	–	.02	–	–	32.27 (25.50)	34.14 (25.85)	34.14 (25.85)	34.14 (25.85)
7. Age	–.27**	.14**	–	–.11**	.17**	–	–	24.03 (6.82)	25.09 (8.38)	27.26 (10.57)	26.25 (8.83)	26.25 (8.83)	26.25 (8.83)

Note: Study 2 below the diagonal, Study 3 above the diagonal; Experimental condition, age, and LBIQA+ membership included in the correlation matrix as a covariates; For means comparison in each study, cells not sharing a common subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

paths using lavaan; Rosseel, 2012). We control for the experimental manipulation when it was not included as a predictor in the analyses.¹⁰ We run t-tests for independent samples to analyze the effect of experimental conditions (high vs. low threat) on our main variables.

Preliminary analyses

Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations, and Pearson's correlations for all variables. In Study 2, feminist identification was positively correlated with pro-trans collective actions and negatively correlated with anti-trans actions and reactive threat.

Feminist identification as a predictor of pro-trans and anti-trans collective actions

Results showed that feminist identification was positively related to pro-trans collective action intentions (Hypothesis 1), $F(1, 396) = 104.87$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .34$; $\beta = .52$. Also, feminist identification was negatively related to anti-trans collective actions, $F(2, 399) = 19.6$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .09$; $\beta = -.24$.

Effect of threat manipulation

Participants exposed to the high threat message reported more reactive threat than those exposed to the low threat message ($t(397) = -2.77$; $p = .006$, $d = -.30$ (Hypothesis 2; see Table 4)). There was no significant effect of the manipulation on pro-trans or anti-trans collective action intentions (pro-trans: $t(402) = 1.97$; $p = .050$, $d = .20$; anti-trans: $t(403) = -.96$; $p = .337$, $d = -.10$).

Effect of the threat manipulation on pro-trans and anti-trans collective actions mediated via reactive threat (exploratory analyses)

We ran two simple mediation analyses where the experimental condition was the predictor (X), reactive threat was the mediator (M), and pro-trans and reactionary collective actions were the criterion variables (Y ; separately). Regression coefficients for the proposed models can be seen in Figure 4.

In the first mediation model, results showed that neither the total effect ($\beta = -.04$, 95% CI $[-.36, .24]$, $p = .770$), nor the direct effect ($\beta = .17$, 95% CI $[-.07, .04]$, $p = .171$) of the threat manipulation on pro-trans collective action was significant. However, the indirect effect via reactive threat was significant ($\beta = -.21$, 95% CI $[-.37, -.06]$, $p = .007$). Thus, being exposed to the high threat (vs. low threat) messages increases reactive threat, which in turn is associated with lower willingness to engage in pro-trans collective action.

In the second mediation model, results showed that neither total effect ($\beta = -.06$, 95% CI $[-.20, .32]$, $p = .676$), nor direct effect ($\beta = -.18$, 95% CI $[-.38, .02]$, $p = .080$), of the threat manipulation on anti-trans collective action was significant. However, the indirect effect via reactive

¹⁰We run the analyses of Studies 2–3 twice: excluding and including LBIQA+ membership, and age and political orientation when possible as covariates to be sure that the sample composition was not affecting our predictions. If meaningful differences in the patterns are found, they will be highlighted in the footnote. Otherwise, the effect of the covariables can be found in Supplementary Materials.

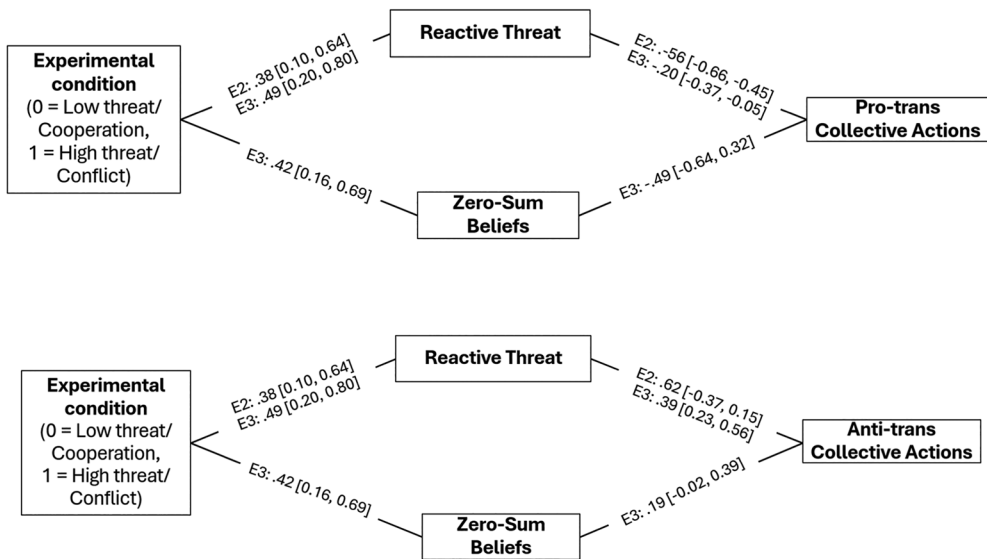


FIGURE 4 Effect of the threat manipulation on pro- and anti-trans collective action intentions mediated via reactive threat and zero-sum beliefs-based threat for Studies 2 and 3. In Study 2, the experimental condition was high versus low threat, while in Study 3, it was cooperation versus conflict.

threat was significant ($\beta = .23$, 95% CI [.07, .42], $p = .010$). Thus, being exposed to the high threat (vs. low threat) messages increases reactive threat, which in turn is associated with higher willingness to engage in anti-trans collective actions.

Discussion

In line with Study 1a, results confirmed that feminist identification is positively related to support for trans rights among ciswomen and negatively related to anti-trans actions. Unlike Study 1b, which investigated threat beliefs as a moderator between feminist identification and pro-trans collective actions, Study 2 centered on reactive threat elicited by an experimental manipulation—specifically, high versus low threat messages in public discourse. Although high (vs. low) threat did not directly affect pro-trans collective actions, the manipulation had an indirect negative impact via reactive threat. High (vs. low) threat messages increased reactive threat, which was associated with lower intentions to take pro-trans actions and higher intentions to take anti-trans actions.

However, it is important to note that these results were based on post hoc exploratory analyses. We ran a preregistered replication in Study 3, refining the experimental manipulation to represent narratives of conflict vs. cooperation rather than high versus low threat messages, which could conceptually overlap with the measured mediator and did not allow us to differentiate the effect of the perceived group norms in the variables of interest. This adjustment aimed to clarify how narratives about the nature of the intergroup relationship shape reactive threat and influence pro- and anti-trans collective action. To further investigate the role of threat, we also added a measure that focused specifically on zero-sum belief-based threats. Additionally, to ensure a clearer separation of processes and a broader understanding of how different types of perceived threats can influence collective action, we incorporated a measure specifically focused on zero-sum belief-based threats in Study 3. By examining both perceived social norms and zero-sum beliefs, we aimed to provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors driving pro- and anti-trans actions.

STUDY 3

Study 3 was carried out 1 month after the final approval and enforcement of the Trans Law. The main goal was to test again the relationships between feminist identification, perceived threat, and pro- and anti-trans collective action intentions, as well as testing the effect of exposure to conflict (vs. cooperation) narratives on threat (reactive threats and zero-sum beliefs) and support or opposition to trans rights. We hypothesized that higher feminist identification would be associated with greater support for pro-trans collective actions and less support for anti-trans collective action (Hypothesis 1). On the other hand, we predicted that perceptions of threat would be negatively related to pro-trans actions but positively related to anti-trans collective actions (Hypothesis 2). Also, we expected that, compared to participants exposed to a cooperation narrative, participants exposed to a conflict narrative would report higher reactive threat, higher zero-sum beliefs-based threats (Hypothesis 3), lower pro-trans collective action, and higher anti-trans collective actions (Hypothesis 4a). Finally, we hypothesized that the effects of exposure to conflict (vs. cooperation) narratives on pro- and anti-trans collective actions would be mediated by reactive threat and zero-sum beliefs-based threats (Hypothesis 4b).

Method

Participants and procedure

We followed the same recruiting and exclusion method as in Study 2, and our final sample included 405 ciswomen aged between 18 and 65 years ($M=26.70$, $SD=9.67$) who were highly identified as feminists ($M=5.15$, $SD=1.78$). Of these, 30.1% were LBIQA+.

Before the experimental manipulation, participants rated their level of perceived threat regarding advances in trans rights using a masked item to reduce social desirability bias (e.g., “I feel threatened because trans people's legal demands endanger women's rights”), alongside five unrelated items (e.g., “I feel threatened by high gas prices during winter”). Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two conditions (cooperation vs. conflict) before responding to the main measures, completing a memory check, providing demographic information, and being debriefed (see [Supplemental Materials](#)). A sensitivity analysis for mediation analysis with two mediators using the “pwr2ppl” package for RStudio (Aberson, 2019) showed that with 405 participants and $\alpha=.05$ and power $1-\beta$ ($M1=.90$; $M2=.90$), we can detect a minimum effect size between $r=.23$ and $r=.25$.

Instruments

We used many of the same materials as in Study 2. However, some scales were shortened. The pre-manipulation measures were as follows: feminist identification (three items, $\omega=.92$) and the one-item perceived threat measure. After the manipulation, participants rated their collective action intentions (three pro-trans items, $\omega=.79$, three anti-trans items, $\omega=.71$), reactive threat (three items, $\omega=.93$), and zero-sum beliefs-based threat (adapting 5 items from Ruthig et al. (2017) to our context, $\omega=.95$; e.g., “More rights for trans women mean fewer rights for ciswomen”). Finally, they completed the same demographic items¹¹ as in previous studies.

¹¹Except political orientation, which was not included due to an error in the questionnaire.

Experimental manipulation

In Study 3, we changed the experimental manipulation from Study 2, in part not only due to the generally low levels of reactive threat that it produced, but also to focus more directly on manipulating the dominant narrative about the intergroup relationship between ciswomen and transwomen (cooperation vs. conflict). To do this, we substituted the university newspaper with an external article to enhance credibility, expanded the content of the manipulation, and reframed the discussion to focus specifically on cooperation and conflict between the groups. This approach aimed to provide a clearer test of the effects of the narratives about the intergroup relationship on the dependent variables (see [Supplementary Materials](#)).

Cooperation narrative

“[...] A study on reactions to the recently approved ‘Trans Law’ indicates that most feminist women support the demands of the trans movement. [...] 73% of the interviewed feminists emphasized that the demands of the trans movement are compatible with feminist goals.”

Conflict narrative

“[...] A study on reactions to the recently approved ‘Trans Law’ indicates that most feminist women feel threatened by the demands of the trans movement. [...] 73% of the interviewed feminists expressed fear that the demands of the trans movement could endanger women's rights.”

Results

Feminist identity and perceived threat as predictors of pro-trans and anti-trans collective actions

Results confirmed that feminist identification was positively related to pro-trans collective action intentions (Hypothesis 1) ($F(2, 401) = 116.3, p < .001; R^2 = .37; \beta = .54$). Also, feminist identification was negatively related to anti-trans collective actions ($F(2, 402) = 10.1, p < .001; R^2 = .05; \beta = -.20$).

On the other hand, perceived threat was negatively related to pro-trans collective action intentions ($F(2, 401) = 22.3, p < .001; R^2 = .10; \beta = -.29$)¹² and positively related to anti-trans collective actions ($F(2, 402) = 38.1, p < .001; R^2 = .15; \beta = .38$) (Hypothesis 2).

Effect of cooperation versus conflict narratives

T-test for independent samples confirmed that participants exposed to the conflict narratives reported more reactive threat ($M = 2.32, SE = 1.73$) and more zero-sum beliefs ($M = 2.12, SE = 1.50$) than those exposed to the narratives of cooperation (reactive threat: $M = 1.82, SE = 1.47, t(403) = -3.06; p = .002, d = -.31$; zero-sum beliefs: $M = 1.70, SE = 1.19, t(403) = -3.08$;

¹²LGBTIQ+ membership was a significant covariable in the model also ($F(5, 398) = 45.62, p < .001; R^2 = .36$); perceived threat: $\beta = .04$; LGTBQIA+ membership: $\beta = .84$. Being LGBTIQ+ was positively related to pro-trans collective actions.

$p = .002, d = -.31$). Also, participants in the conflict narrative condition reported fewer intentions to engage in pro-trans collective actions ($M = 4.78, SE = 1.64$) than those in the cooperation narrative condition ($M = 5.09, SE = 1.56; t(402) = 1.97; p = .049, d = .20$). However, the effect on the manipulation was not significant for intentions to engage in anti-trans collective actions ($t(403) = -.96; p = .338, d = -.10$) (Hypothesis 3).

Effect of the narratives (conflict vs. cooperation) on pro-trans and anti-trans collective actions mediated via reactive threat and zero-sum beliefs based threats

We ran two parallel mediation analyses where the experimental condition was the predictor (X), reactive threat (M1), and zero-sum beliefs (M2) were the mediators.¹³ Intentions to take pro-trans collective action and anti-trans collective action were the outcome variables in the two analyses (see Figure 3).

In the first mediation, results showed that the total effect of the narratives manipulation (conflict vs. cooperation) on pro-trans collective action was significant ($\beta = -.32, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.62, .00], p = .047$), as well as the indirect effects through reactive threat ($\beta = -.10, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.20, -.02], p = .036$) and through zero-sum beliefs ($\beta = -.20, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.36, -.06], p = .008$). The direct effect was not significant ($\beta = -.02, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.28, .24], p = .876$). Thus, being exposed to a narrative of conflict (vs. cooperation) increased reactive threat and zero-sum beliefs, which in turn, were associated with less willingness to engage in pro-trans collective actions (Hypothesis 4a).

In the second mediation model, the total effect of the narratives manipulation (conflict vs. cooperation) ($\beta = .16, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.15, .48], p = .958$), the indirect effect through zero-sum beliefs ($\beta = .08, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.01, .20], p = .130$), and the direct effect ($\beta = -.12, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.40, .17], p = .416$) on anti-trans collective actions was not significant. However, the indirect effect through reactive threat was significant ($\beta = .19, 95\% \text{ CI } [.06, .37], p = .011$). Thus, being exposed to narratives of conflict (vs. cooperation) increased reactive threat, which in turn was positively related to willingness to engage in anti-trans collective actions (Hypothesis 4b).

Discussion

Results of this third study again confirm a positive link between feminist identification and support for trans rights among ciswomen, along with a negative association with anti-trans actions, consistent with Studies 1a and 2. Perceived threat, on the other hand, showed the opposite effect—negatively related to pro-trans actions and positively related to anti-trans actions. Exposure to conflict narratives (vs. cooperative ones) heightened reactive threat and zero-sum beliefs-based threats, reducing intentions to support pro-trans actions. While the narrative manipulation did not directly increase anti-trans collective actions, it had an indirect effect through reactive threat, with zero-sum beliefs possibly driving the reduction in pro-trans action.

This suggests that both threat and zero-sum beliefs are key mechanisms in determining whether feminist ciswomen support or oppose trans rights. Importantly, these findings show that threat can be reactive—not only rooted in deep-seated ideology but also triggered by narratives framing the intergroup relationship as conflictive, influencing attitudes and behaviors toward trans rights.

¹³When controlling for ideological threat in these models' results do not change significantly.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to deepen our understanding of the psychological processes underlying the support for, or opposition to, trans rights among feminist ciswomen. To do this, we examined the impact of exposure to high versus low threat messages (Study 2) and exposure to narratives of intergroup conflict versus cooperation (Study 3). Findings from Studies 1a, 2, and 3 provided support for the positive relationship between identifying with the feminist movement and supporting actions to improve trans rights. This aligns with previous research indicating that feminist identification is related to more positive attitudes toward trans people (Conlin et al., 2021; Platt & Szoka, 2021) and transfeminism proposals (Mayor et al., 2021; Preciado, 2019). Feminists often demonstrate heightened awareness of the need to address various inequalities (e.g., racial discrimination, Fisher et al., 2017), potentially due to perceiving discrimination as structural and thus affecting multiple social axes simultaneously (Crenshaw, 1989). This awareness may be rooted in stigma-based solidarity, that is, mutual support among members of groups facing similar societal discrimination due to their identity (Chaney & Forbes, 2022; Preciado, 2019), which leads to increased willingness to engage in collective actions aimed to help a disadvantaged outgroup (Chaney & Forbes, 2022). Moreover, feminist identification was negatively associated with engaging in anti-trans collective actions (Studies 2–3), potentially acting as a buffer against intergroup hostility.

However, intergroup solidarity may be hindered when ciswomen perceive a threat from trans people, and these perceptions of threat are associated with diminished support for trans rights (Studies 1b, 2, and 3; consistent with Outten et al., 2019). Viewing trans people as a threat seems to trigger the motivation to protect “one’s own” and oppose them (Durrheim et al., 2011; White et al., 2006). Social media can play a significant role in shaping narratives about the intergroup relations between ciswomen and trans people and attitudes toward trans issues, and these narratives can influence subsequent support or opposition to trans rights (Bracco et al., 2024). In Spain, social media content often portrays a conflict between feminists and trans individuals, reinforcing threat perceptions and zero-sum beliefs (Ferré & Zaldívar, 2022; Sen, 2019). Our studies found that exposure to conflict narratives (vs. cooperation) on social media heightened reactive threat and zero-sum beliefs-based threats, reducing support for trans rights (Study 3). However, this did not directly increase anti-trans actions (Studies 2–3), suggesting that additional factors like reactive threat are needed to fuel hostility toward trans rights. Specifically, while both symbolic and realistic threats were triggered by conflict narratives, support for anti-trans actions was mainly driven by symbolic threats—those who feel their identity as women is under threat. Conversely, those who perceive a conflict of interests may withhold support for trans rights without endorsing anti-trans actions, with only those experiencing symbolic threat escalating to hostile actions. This underscores the potential of threat to influence behavior action, even when predispositions toward solidarity exist.

Furthermore, it appears that perceptions of threat are not entirely the result of reactions to the current information. More general threat perceptions may be imbedded in shared group ideologies, and these may also be associated with fewer intentions to support trans rights and more intentions to engage in anti-trans collective actions (Study 3). Other research shows that preexisting ideologies like gender essentialist beliefs or benevolent sexism can influence individuals’ attitudes toward trans rights (e.g., Atwood et al., 2023; Morgenroth & Ryan, 2021). These ideologies may also predispose individuals to view trans rights advancements as inherently conflictive with other group rights. Moreover, exposure to conflict narratives can intensify things by adding reactive threat to this ideological predisposition, for example, social narratives of how one group relates to the other, can shape an individual’s perspective of how acceptable it is to be hostile toward LGBTIQ+ people (Sweigart et al., 2024). However, it is also true that individuals tend to hold onto their values even when presented with opposing information (Erisen et al., 2018), thus future highly powered studies might seek to directly

examine contexts where ideological beliefs about intergroup threat contradict a dominant social narrative that describes a cooperative intergroup relationship.

The findings carry various implications. While exposure to high or low threat messages (Study 2) or conflict or cooperation narratives (Study 3) may not directly alter behavioral tendencies, they can escalate threats, leading to reduced support for pro-trans actions and increased anti-trans behaviors. This underscores the need to prevent such narratives from gaining traction. With Spain's recent approval of the Trans Law (Ley 04/2023), it is crucial to manage the narratives surrounding these changes while implementing new policies. Public institutions, including universities, are required to uphold the law. The Andalusian Government's recognition of the right to gender self-determination in 2014 (Ley 2/2014) highlights the responsibility of institutions like the University of Granada to promote inclusion and advance LGBTIQ+ rights under the Trans Law. Notably, in 2014, there was little public resistance to these changes, whereas the current Trans Law has faced significant opposition, illustrating the impact of public discourse on resistance to change.

Although the Spanish context offered a poignant and current example for the focus of this research, such controversies are not unique to Spain. For instance, the case of Imane Khelif, a cisgender intersex Olympic boxer who was wrongfully accused by her opponent of being a man despite meeting the eligibility criteria confirmed by the IOC, exemplifies how the solidarity between feminists and gender minorities can be undermined. These incidents and the conflictive narratives they spawn can affect all women, cis and trans alike (de las Heras, 2024). Feminist movements everywhere have represented a potent force in the move toward greater pluralization of gender identities and the inclusion of those who have long been marginalized. These emerging conflict narratives have the potential to undermine the history of solidarity between feminists and gender minorities.

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies) and 17 (partnerships for the goals), it is critical to foster dialogue that enhances understanding and cooperation among diverse gender identities. The rhetoric and actions of social change advocates and movements in one part of the world often serve as role models for similar movements elsewhere. Thus, the apparent rejection of trans folks by Western feminists could potentially undermine growing feminist/trans alliances globally.

Practical implications

Given the current findings, developing win-win strategies that promote solidarity and support for trans rights while addressing perceived threats and divisive narratives is crucial. In what follows, we suggest practical measures for the University of Granada to meet the Trans Law requirements while reducing reactive threat and zero-sum beliefs among cisgender women. Leveraging the current equity protocol, particularly Objective 8 concerning “LGBTQ+ people” (University of Granada, 2019), we propose the following strategies. It is essential to continuously monitor their effectiveness and anticipate unintended consequences through data collection on the well-being of cisgender and transgender individuals, along with policy reviews (see Table 5).

Limitations and future studies

These studies have limitations. Firstly, some studies lack data on participants' preexisting beliefs about transgender issues, hindering our understanding of how our experimental manipulations might be affected by these preexisting beliefs. Moreover, while experimental designs are useful for understanding causal relationships, they may limit the generalizability of our

TABLE 5 Win-win strategies proposed to guarantee trans rights in relation to the Protocol of Equality II (University of Granada, 2019), focusing on Objective 8.

Objectives	Actions	Win-win strategies proposed to avoid conflict
Objective 8.1. Raise awareness and educate the university community about LGBTI individuals to eradicate LGBTIphobic behaviors	8.1.3. Promote the presence of transgender and intersex individuals in the university sports world through awareness-raising within the university community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish confidential channels for ciswomen to voice their concerns and questions about trans inclusion in sport. Listen to their concerns and provide information and support to address them
	8.1.4. Establish measures to include a corporal, sexual, and gender diversity perspective, as well as the contributions of LGBT people in the teaching programs of the different disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guarantee the gender perspective on the teaching programs of different disciplines including specific and transversal teaching results
	8.1.6. Organize and collaborate in awareness, training, and prevention campaigns on LGBTIphobic behaviors, aimed at the university community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement education programs that address myths and stereotypes about trans people• Provide counseling services and access to information on well-being for ciswomen and transgender individuals, recognizing the different needs faced by them
Objective 8.3. Prevent, detect, and act in situations involving any type of LGBTIphobia	8.3.2. Ensure the creation of multi-gender and inclusive restrooms and other spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the creation of inclusive spaces and single-occupancy bathrooms offered for those who prefer more privacy• Create a protocol against LGBTIphobia led by specialized professionals

findings. The sensitive nature of the topic may also have led participants to provide socially desirable responses, potentially affecting the validity of the studies. Moreover, we cannot determine whether some individuals participated in multiple studies.

While we introduced new measures related to threat, further research is needed to fully develop and validate these measures and their underlying constructs. Importantly, we did not manipulate actual experiences of threat, but rather the perception of social norms surrounding threat, due to ethical concerns about polarizing attitudes toward trans individuals. Therefore, we cannot distinguish between the effects of perceived norms and actual threat experienced by participants, which could be addressed in future studies. Notably, Study 1 did not include participants identifying as LBQIA+, and subsequent studies did not differentiate between heterosexual and LBQIA+ women. Exploring intersectional experiences within the feminist movement is essential for understanding horizontal hostility toward trans individuals.

General conclusion

In sum, we find support for the positive relationships between feminist identification and support for trans rights, but this support may be hindered if ciswomen feel their own group is threatened. Exposure to high-threat messages or conflict narratives can intensify reactive

threat and zero-sum beliefs-based threats, and this can reduce support for pro-trans collective action, although its impact on anti-trans actions is less clear. In addition to these impacts on reactive threat, it seems important to also consider the role of ideological threat in reducing support for and promoting hostility toward trans people.

Our research highlights the significance of effectively communicating and framing policy changes and advocacy efforts. While advancing trans-inclusive policies is vital, it is equally important to engage diverse communities in ways that foster understanding and avoid triggering feelings of threat that can spawn negative reactions. Implementing the Trans Law in Spain requires careful narrative management, especially within large public institutions like universities. Let's respond to the call to action: To build bridges and create a future where every individual can thrive in a society that celebrates diversity and equality.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in OSF.io at https://osf.io/htn3r/?view_only=8e0f8ee3c6ae4f8a8613d8049fd140e2.

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