

# Gender-Inclusive Bathrooms Signal Fairness Across Identity Dimensions

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## Abstract

While gender-inclusive bathrooms serve a practical function of providing a safe public restroom for transgender individuals, they may also signal identity safety for women and racial minorities who may experience identity threat in organizations. Across three studies, we demonstrated that women (Study 1) and racial minorities (Blacks, Latinos; Studies 2 and 3) report greater procedural fairness and a more positive gender (Study 1) or racial (Studies 2 and 3) climate in organizations with gender-inclusive bathrooms compared to traditional bathrooms. Further, these effects were due to companies with gender-inclusive bathrooms being perceived as lower in gender essentialism (Studies 1–3), signaling more egalitarian social environments (Study 3) and promoting identity safety across stigmatized identity dimensions.

## Keywords

identity safety, transgender, stigma, essentialism, organizational

Gender-inclusive bathrooms have become increasingly common in a variety of settings including universities (e.g., Michigan State), museums (e.g., American Folk Art Museum), and the White House (Eisenhower Executive Office Building). These controversial bathroom signs have varied in design but are all aimed at providing restrooms for people across the gender spectrum. Indeed, numerous laws have been created to ensure environments in which all individuals feel safe, with some cities passing laws that require gender-inclusive bathrooms (e.g., Seattle; Ball, 2015) and others passing bills that require individuals to use bathrooms of their natal sex (e.g., North Carolina's House Bill 2 [HB2] law; Fausset, 2017).

While restrooms may be an unusual place to express ideologies, gender-inclusive bathrooms may operate as an identity safety cue, a signal that relevant stigmatized identities will not be tied to negative outcomes in the setting (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005). Perceptions of identity safety in the workplace are associated with greater organizational trust (Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Dittmann, & Crosby, 2008) and job satisfaction (Mor Barak & Levin, 2002). Gender-inclusive bathrooms signal a transgender friendly workplace while also serving a critical function for transgender employees. This may be especially important in organizations, where 90% of transgender individuals report harassment, including being denied access to appropriate bathrooms or losing jobs due to bias (Grant et al., 2011).

Gender-inclusive restrooms may also signal identity safety to members of other stigmatized groups, including cisgender women and racial minorities, due to the underlying

organizational ideologies that gender-inclusive restrooms represent. Recent research has demonstrated that identity safety cues can transfer, such that White women report greater perceived procedural fairness and a greater sense of belonging at organizations with racial diversity awards and Black and Latino men reported greater identity safety at organizations with gender diversity awards (Chaney, Sanchez, & Remedios, 2016). Identity cue transfers occurred because organizations with racial diversity commitments were perceived as more egalitarian (low social dominance orientation [SDO]; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001), signaling more positive attitudes toward women (Chaney et al., 2016). Indeed, witnessing the treatment of one stigmatized group (e.g., women) indicates to other stigmatized groups (e.g., Blacks) how they should anticipate being treated by that same individual or organization (Sanchez, Chaney, Manuel, Remedios, & Wilton, 2017). Thus, we propose that gender-inclusive bathrooms signal identity safety for not only transgender individuals but also cisgender women and racial minorities. Specifically, we propose individuals hold a lay understanding of the overlapping nature of intergroup attitudes, such that cues which signal positive attitudes toward transgender individuals (e.g., gender-inclusive bathrooms)

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**Figure 1.** Control image (left) and gender-inclusive image (right).

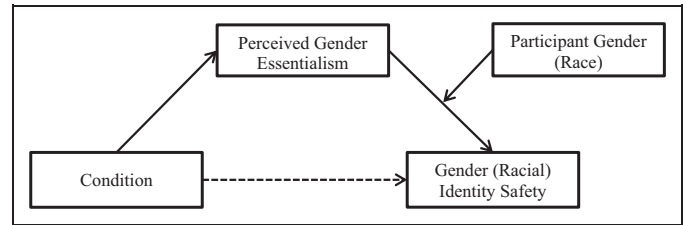
should similarly signal identity safety for other stigmatized groups, including cisgender women and racial minorities.

Gender-inclusive bathroom signs may also visually communicate less rigid conception of gender (see Figure 1). Rigid conceptions of gender often underpin negative attitudes toward transgender individuals (Davidson & Czopp, 2014; Tee & Hegarty, 2006) and support for transgender individuals using bathrooms of their natal sex (Roberts, Ho, Rhodes, & Gelman, in press). Specifically, the belief that members of a social category share deep, underlying commonalities rooted in biology (i.e., essentialism) has repeatedly been shown to reinforce prejudice toward many groups (Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000). For example, gender and racial essentialist beliefs are also predictive of negative stereotyping and prejudice toward women and Blacks and Latinos, respectively (Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Demoulin, Leyens, & Yzerbyt, 2006; Yzerbyt & Rocher, 2002). Essentialism thus serves as an underlying ideology for negative attitudes toward multiple stigmatized groups (i.e., generalized prejudice; Bastian & Haslam, 2006; Duckitt & Sibley, 2007). Thus, we propose gender-inclusive bathrooms signal low gender essentialism (GE) within an organization.

Notably, past research has indicated that GE is positively correlated with SDO (Tebbe, Moradi, & Ege, 2014). Indeed, prejudice associated with essentialist beliefs is due, in part, to essentialism indicating that social hierarchies (created via rigid group boundaries) are naturally occurring and, thus, facilitate the endorsement of SDO (Mandalaywala, Amodio, & Rhodes, in press). We propose that individuals hold a lay understanding of the relationship between gender and racial essentialism, and SDO, and thus, gender-inclusive bathrooms should signal less endorsement of GE, and therefore low SDO, ultimately promoting identity safety for women and men of color.

### Current Research

Across three studies, we sought to determine whether gender-inclusive bathrooms signal greater identity safety for cisgender women and cisgender Black and Latino participants. Specifically, we examine whether both cisgender men and women will perceive an organization with gender-inclusive bathrooms as



**Figure 2.** Proposed model for identity cue transfers through perceived gender essentialism for women and racial minorities (Studies 1 and 2).

more female friendly and more procedurally fair for women and whether women will report less anticipated gender stigma, compared to an organization with traditional bathrooms (Study 1). While men may perceive a gender-inclusive bathroom organization as more egalitarian for women, they should not report less anticipated gender stigma as they are not stigmatized on this identity dimension (see Figure 2). Because women are stigmatized due to their gender (same identity dimension as transgender individuals), in Study 2, we examine whether gender-inclusive bathrooms similarly promote identity safety on a race dimension for cisgender Black and Latino participants. As in Study 1, we anticipated that White, Black, and Latino participants would perceive organizations with gender-inclusive bathrooms as more procedurally fair for racial minorities and signal a more positive racial climate than organizations with traditional bathrooms, and only Black and Latino participants will anticipate less racial stigma at a gender-inclusive bathroom company, as Whites do not face racial stigmatization. In Study 3, we limit the sample to heterosexual Black and Latino cisgender men to replicate findings.

Critically, as in past research on cue transfers (Chaney et al., 2016), we anticipated that all participants, including men and Whites, will perceive the gender-inclusive bathroom as indicative of the organizational ideology (low GE), but that only women and racial minorities will perceive low GE as cuing an underlying attitude toward their stigmatized group identity, signaling identity safety. Specifically, we anticipate that gender-inclusive bathrooms will signal lower perceptions of GE (Studies 1 and 2), which will, in turn, indicate lower levels of SDO (Study 3), signaling identity safety for incongruent targets.

### Study 1

Study 1 examined whether cisgender women and men would perceive organizations with gender-inclusive bathrooms as lower in GE, facilitating identity safety for women.

### Method

#### Participants

Cisgender<sup>1</sup> undergraduate students ( $N = 287$ ) completed an online survey in exchange for partial course credit; however,

117 participants failed the attention check question and were removed from analyses,<sup>2</sup> leaving an analytic sample of 170 participants (94 men, 55.3%;  $M_{\text{age}} = 19.00$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ). Notably, college research pools can be less attentive than Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) samples (Hauser & Schwarz, 2016), and excluding participants who fail attention checks promotes higher quality data (Peer, Vosgerau, & Acquisti, 2014). The sample was racially diverse, identifying as White (37.1%), Asian (36.5%), Latino/Hispanic (11.2%), Black/African American (8.8%), and “other” (6.4%). For a 2 (condition)  $\times$  2 (participant gender) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), a collection stop point was set at 160–180 participants based on suggestions for between-subject designs and an unknown effect size (minimum 40 per cell; Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011). Participants who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB;  $n = 17$ ) were retained as their inclusion did not alter results (see Online Supplemental Material Table S1).

### Procedure

Participants accessed the survey ostensibly examining how people evaluate companies online and were introduced to a finance company, Cargill, before learning that the company was opening a “state-of-the-art office building.” Three digital mock-ups of the office building were displayed, including offices and a reception area (see Online Supplemental Material). Near the front desk, there was a sign for a bathroom down the hall that was labeled, based on random assignment, “all gender restroom” with a nonbinary gender image or “restroom” with a binary gender image (Figure 1). Next, participants answered questions regarding artwork in the building and which restroom sign was visible as a manipulation check question and given a second opportunity to review the materials if they failed the manipulation check the first time.<sup>3</sup> Participants then completed the following questions before debriefing.

**Perceived GE.** Participants completed a 5-item GE, naturalness scale (Haslam et al., 2000), indicating to what extent managers at this company would say, for example, gender “is stable or unstable,” on 9-point scales. A composite was calculated with higher scores indicating greater perceived GE ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

**Female friendly climate.** Participants rated the company’s climate on 4 items such as “how likely it is that at this company, women are offered paid maternity leave,” on a scale from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*;  $\alpha = .92$ ).

**Fairness for women.** Participants, imagining they were employed by the company, responded to 5 items, such as “women have influence over the outcomes they receive at Cargill” (Kaiser et al., 2013) on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .94$ ).

**Anticipated gender stigma.** On a scale from 1 (*not at all likely*) to 7 (*very likely*), participants indicated how likely it is they would be treated negatively at the company based on their “gender,”

“sex,” and “being a woman (or a man)” ( $\alpha = .97$ ; Sanchez et al., 2017).

**Transgender prejudice.** Adapting Herek’s (1984) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale, participants completed 3 items regarding their transgender prejudice, such as “transgender people are just plain wrong” on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .75$ ).

## Results

Correlations are presented in Online Supplemental Material Table S3. Transgender prejudice levels were significantly affected by condition in Study 1; thus, we control for transgender prejudice across Studies 1–3 (see Online Supplemental Material). Study 1 analyses were conducted as 2 (condition: gender-inclusive bathroom, control)  $\times$  2 (participant gender: male, female) ANCOVAs. Results remain the same without the covariate (see Online Supplemental Material Table S4).

### Perceived GE

There was a main effect of condition,  $F(1, 165) = 25.86$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.79$ , 95% confidence interval (CI) [0.71, 1.60], no effect of participant gender,  $F(1, 165) = 0.03$ ,  $p = .86$ ,  $d < 0.01$ , 95% CI [−0.43, 0.51], nor an interaction,  $F(1, 165) = 1.57$ ,  $p = .21$ ,  $d = 0.19$ . Participants perceived managers as higher in GE in the control condition ( $M = 5.11$ ,  $SE = .17$ ) than in the gender-inclusive condition ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SE = .15$ ).

### Female Friendly Climate

There was a main effect of condition,  $F(1, 165) = 21.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.72$ , 95% CI [0.58, 1.45], no effect of participant gender,  $F(1, 165) = 2.64$ ,  $p = .11$ ,  $d = 0.26$ , 95% CI [−0.08, 0.82], and no interaction,  $F(1, 165) = 1.64$ ,  $p = .20$ ,  $d = 0.20$ . Participants perceived the gender-inclusive bathroom company as more female friendly ( $M = 5.40$ ,  $SE = .15$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SE = .16$ ).

### Fairness for Women

There was a main effect of condition,  $F(1, 165) = 13.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.57$ , 95% CI = [0.33, 1.11]. Participants perceived the control company ( $M = 4.98$ ,  $SE = .15$ ) to be less procedurally fair than the gender-inclusive bathroom company ( $M = 5.70$ ,  $SE = .13$ ). There was a main effect of participant gender,  $F(1, 165) = 4.46$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $d = 0.33$ , 95% CI [0.03, 0.85], with women reporting less procedural fairness ( $M = 5.12$ ,  $SE = .15$ ) than men ( $M = 5.56$ ,  $SE = .13$ ) and an unexpected marginally significant interaction,  $F(1, 165) = 3.67$ ,  $p = .057$ ,  $d = 0.30$ . Simple effect analyses revealed that men did not perceive a difference by condition ( $M_{\text{control}} = 5.38$ ,  $SE = .17$ ;  $M_{\text{gender-inclusive}} = 5.68$ ,  $SE = .17$ ),  $F(1, 91) = 1.54$ ,  $p = .22$ ,  $d = 0.26$ , 95% CI [−0.77, 0.18]. Women reported more fairness at the gender-inclusive bathroom company

( $M = 5.72$ ,  $SE = .21$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SE = .25$ ),  $F(1, 73) = 12.40$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $d = 0.82$ , 95% CI [0.50, 1.79].

### Anticipated Gender Stigma

There was a main effect of condition,  $F(1, 165) = 10.54$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $d = 0.51$ , 95% CI [0.28, 1.14], participant gender,  $F(1, 165) = 10.53$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $d = 0.51$ , 95% CI [0.29, 1.19], and a significant interaction,  $F(1, 165) = 6.44$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $d = 0.40$ . While men's anticipated gender stigma did not differ by condition ( $M_{\text{control}} = 2.01$ ,  $SE = .20$ ;  $M_{\text{gender-inclusive}} = 1.90$ ,  $SE = .19$ ),  $F(1, 91) = 0.14$ ,  $p = .71$ ,  $d = 0.09$ , 95% CI [-0.44, 0.65], women's did,  $F(1, 73) = 14.67$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.90$ , 95% CI [0.63, 2.00]. Women anticipated less gender stigma in the gender-inclusive condition ( $M = 2.12$ ,  $SE = .22$ ) than the control ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SE = .26$ ).

### Mediations

To examine whether the effect of condition on anticipated gender stigma, procedural fairness, and female friendly climate was mediated by perceived GE, we conducted moderated mediations with participant gender moderating the effect of GE (see Figure 2) on dependent variables (DVs) based on a 10,000 bootstrapped sample in PROCESS (Hayes, 2012). Condition (1 = *gender-inclusive*, -1 = *control*) and gender (1 = *women*; -1 = *men*) were effects coded, GE was standardized, and we controlled for transgender prejudice.<sup>4</sup>

The indirect effect on procedural fairness for women was significant for women,  $B = .14$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% bias-corrected (BC) CI [0.02, 0.30], but not men,  $B = -.01$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95% BC CI [-0.14, 0.10]. The indirect effect on anticipated gender stigma was significant for women,  $B = -.18$ ,  $SE = .09$ , 95% BC CI [-0.38, -0.04], but not men,  $B = .05$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95% BC CI [-0.06, 0.18]. The indirect effect on female friendliness was significant for women,  $B = .19$ ,  $SE = .09$ , 95% BC CI [0.04, 0.40], but not men,  $B = .05$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95% BC CI [-0.06, 0.17]. Additional statistics are given in Online Supplemental Material Table S5.

### Discussion

Study 1 demonstrated that gender-inclusive bathrooms signal identity safety for cisgender women due to perceiving the organization as less gender essentialist. Critically, women reported less anticipated gender stigma and greater procedural fairness for women, and cisgender men and women perceived a more female friendly climate at the organization with the gender-inclusive bathrooms compared to the company with the traditional bathrooms. Further, effects for women were mediated by perceived GE, but this was not the case for men. Although we anticipated men would similarly perceive a company with a gender-inclusive bathroom as signaling fairness for women, this was not the case, suggesting men may not be as sensitive to incongruent identity safety cues as anticipated.

## Study 2

In Study 2, we examined whether racial minorities would similarly experience identity safety from gender-inclusive bathrooms due to a perception of low GE. Specifically, we propose that due to a lay understanding of generalized prejudice (Duckitt & Sibley, 2007), and the association between essentialism and SDO (Mandalaywala et al., *in press*), participants would perceive lower GE as signaling a broader egalitarian ideology, including racial equality. Critically, Black and Latino participants indicated their anticipated identity safety on a different identity dimension than transgender individuals (i.e., race), and thus, Study 2 is a stricter test of identity safety cue transfers. Notably, we include both cisgender male and female participants due to a limited sample of Black and Latinos in our available pool, though we control for participant gender in analyses to more carefully examine racial identity safety. Additionally, we include a novel measure of comfort at the company to demonstrate that gender-inclusive bathrooms do not make people *uncomfortable*.

## Method

### Participants

Cisgender undergraduate participants identifying as White, Black, or Latino ( $N = 149$ ) in a prescreen completed an online survey for partial course credit. We removed 12 participants who failed attention checks and 4 participants who did not identify as White, Black, or Latino during the study, leaving an analytic sample of 133 participants (76 White, 25 Black, 31 Latino;  $M_{\text{age}} = 18.89$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) that was gender diverse (68 women, 51.5%). A collection stop point was set at 128 participants to achieve 80% power based on power analyses for  $2 \times 2$  ANCOVAs with significant interactions, a medium effect size ( $d = 0.50$ ), and two covariates. Ten participants who identified as LGB were retained as their inclusion did not alter results (see Online Supplemental Material Table S6).

### Procedure

Study 2 was identical to Study 1, though for generalizability, participants completed an alternative 10-item measure of perceived GE (Coleman & Hong, 2008), as they believed managers at the company would respond. Participants responded to items, such as "to a large extent, a person's gender biologically determines his or her abilities," on a scale from 1 (*a manager would strongly disagree*) to 6 (*a manager would strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .75$ ). Additionally, participants completed the measure of procedural fairness from Study 1 adjusted for racial minorities ( $\alpha = .93$ ), anticipated racial stigma (adjusted from Study 1 to, e.g., "race"  $\alpha = .98$ ), and racial climate (e.g., "racial minorities earn just as much as Whites,"  $\alpha = .87$ ). Participants completed a 4-item measure of comfort at the company (e.g., "how comfortable would you be working at this company") on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*;  $\alpha = .78$ ) and the Study 1 measure of transgender prejudice ( $\alpha = .82$ ) before

debriefing. Correlations are given in Online Supplemental Material Table S7.

## Results

ANCOVAs controlling for transgender prejudice revealed no significant difference between Black and Latino participants for any measures,  $F_s < 1.54$ ,  $p_s > .22$ ,  $d_s < 0.35$ , thus we collapsed across ethnicity. Analyses were conducted as 2 (condition: gender-inclusive, control)  $\times$  2 (participant race: White, racial minority) ANCOVAs controlling for participants' gender and transgender prejudice. Removing transgender prejudice did not alter results (Online Supplemental Material Table S8).

### Perceived GE

There was a main effect of condition,  $F(1, 126) = 42.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.16$ , 95% CI [0.68, 1.27], no effect of participant race,  $F(1, 126) = 1.72$ ,  $p = .19$ ,  $d = 0.23$ , 95% CI [-0.49, 0.10], nor an interaction,  $F(1, 126) = 0.08$ ,  $p = .77$ ,  $d = 0.06$ . Participants perceived the gender-inclusive bathroom company as lower in GE ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SE = .10$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SE = .11$ ).

### Racial Climate

There was a main effect of condition,  $F(1, 126) = 17.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.74$ , 95% CI [-0.53, 1.52], participant race,  $F(1, 126) = 12.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.64$ , 95% CI [0.40, 1.38], and no interaction,  $F(1, 126) = 2.28$ ,  $p = .13$ ,  $d = 0.27$ . Participants reported a more positive climate in the gender-inclusive condition ( $M = 5.16$ ,  $SE = .17$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SE = .18$ ), and Whites reported a more positive climate ( $M = 5.09$ ,  $SE = .16$ ) than racial minorities ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SE = .19$ ).

### Fairness for Racial Minorities

There was an effect of condition,  $F(1, 126) = 13.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.66$ , 95% CI [0.38, 1.25], participant race,  $F(1, 126) = 4.07$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $d = 0.36$ , 95% CI [0.01, 0.88], and no interaction,  $F(1, 126) = 0.38$ ,  $p = .54$ ,  $d = 0.11$ . Participants reported greater fairness in the gender-inclusive condition ( $M = 5.46$ ,  $SE = .15$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.64$ ,  $SE = .16$ ). Whites reported greater procedural fairness ( $M = 5.27$ ,  $SE = .14$ ) than racial minorities ( $M = 4.83$ ,  $SE = .17$ ).

### Anticipated Racial Stigma

There was an effect of condition,  $F(1, 126) = 7.20$ ,  $p = .008$ ,  $d = 0.48$ , 95% CI [0.17, 1.12], participant race,  $F(1, 126) = 24.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.89$ , 95% CI [0.72, 1.67], and unexpectedly, no interaction,  $F(1, 126) = 1.31$ ,  $p = .26$ ,  $d = 0.20$ . Participants reported less anticipated racial stigma in the gender-inclusive condition ( $M = 2.19$ ,  $SE = .16$ ) than the control ( $M = 2.83$ ,  $SE = .18$ ), and racial minorities reported greater

anticipated racial stigma ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SE = .18$ ) than Whites ( $M = 1.91$ ,  $SE = .15$ ).

### Comfort

There was a main effect of condition,  $F(1, 126) = 7.84$ ,  $p = .006$ ,  $d = 0.50$ , 95% CI [0.18, 1.05], participant race,  $F(1, 126) = 5.19$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $d = 0.41$ , 95% CI [0.07, 0.92], and no interaction,  $F(1, 126) = 0.47$ ,  $p = .49$ ,  $d = 0.13$ . Participants reported greater comfort at the gender-inclusive bathroom company ( $M = 5.14$ ,  $SE = .15$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.53$ ,  $SE = .16$ ), and Whites reported greater comfort ( $M = 5.08$ ,  $SE = .14$ ) than racial minorities ( $M = 4.59$ ,  $SE = .17$ ).

### Mediations

As in Study 1, moderated mediations (see Figure 2) were conducted with condition ( $-1 = control$ ,  $1 = gender\ inclusive$ ) and race ( $-1 = White$ ,  $1 = racial\ minority$ ) effects coded, GE standardized, and controlling for participants' gender and transgender prejudice. The indirect effect of condition on anticipated racial stigma was significant for racial minorities,  $B = -.27$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% BC CI [0.12, 0.47], but not Whites,  $B = .07$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% BC CI [-0.06, 0.26]. The indirect effect on procedural fairness for racial minorities was significant for racial minorities,  $B = .27$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% BC CI [0.12, 0.44], but not Whites,  $B = .07$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95% BC CI [-0.06, 0.26]. The indirect effect on racial climate was significant for both racial minorities,  $B = .18$ ,  $SE = .09$ , 95% BC CI [0.02, 0.37], and Whites,  $B = .19$ ,  $SE = .09$ , 95% BC CI [0.01, 0.38]. Additional statistics are given in Online Supplemental Material Table S9. As predicted, GE mediated the effect of condition on anticipated racial stigma and procedural fairness for racial minorities only and unexpectedly mediated the effect on racial climate for both racial minority and White participants.

## Discussion

Study 2 demonstrated that a gender-inclusive bathroom signaled greater identity safety for racial minorities due to a perception of the company as lower in GE, and all participants reported being comfortable at the company with the gender-inclusive bathrooms. While White participants also reported less anticipated racial stigma at the company with the gender-inclusive bathrooms, this effect was not mediated by perceived GE and may have been due to the inclusion of White women.<sup>5</sup>

## Study 3

Heterosexual Black and Latino cisgender men were recruited to replicate Study 2 while limiting our sample to individuals who are not stigmatized due to gender. To demonstrate that a gender-inclusive bathroom signals identity safety for men of color due to perceptions of GE, not merely due to the company being perceived as more sensitive to employee needs, we control for organizational warmth. Lastly, as we propose this

identity safety transfer occurs because perceptions of GE signal a broader ideology of equality, we measure perceptions of SDO and examine whether perceptions of lower GE are associated with perceptions of lower SDO, signaling identity safety for men of color.

### Participants

Participants who identified as Black or Latino heterosexual cisgender men ( $N = 136$ ) completed a survey via MTurk for \$0.60. Two participants were excluded for not being in the United States and seven were excluded for failing attention checks, leaving a final sample of 127 participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 34.84$ ,  $SD = 12.77$ , range = 19–100). The sample was evenly split racially: 68 (53.5%) identified as Black and 59 (46.5%) identified as Latino/Hispanic. Data collection stop point was set at 125 to detect a medium effect ( $d = 0.50$ ) with 80% power for an ANCOVA with two groups and two covariates.

### Procedure

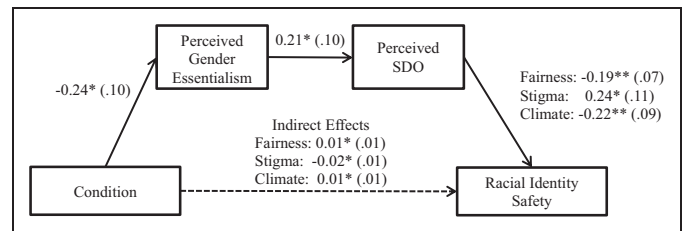
Procedures were identical to Study 2 except for the following changes. Participants completed a short version of the Study 2 GE measure ( $\alpha = .76$ ) and the 8-item SDO scale (Ho et al., 2015) as they believed company managers would ( $\alpha = .89$ ) on a scale from 1 (*managers at this company would strongly oppose*) to 7 (*managers at this company would strongly favor*), with appropriate items reverse scored such that higher scores indicate greater SDO. Additionally, participants completed a 3-item measure of organizational warmth (e.g., “how caring do you believe the managers at Cargill are?”) on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). Measures of fairness ( $\alpha = .92$ ), anticipated racial stigma ( $\alpha = .98$ ), racial climate ( $\alpha = .83$ ), and transgender prejudice ( $\alpha = .87$ ) were reliable (correlations; Online Supplemental Material Table S10).

### Results

A 2 (condition: gender-inclusive, control)  $\times$  2 (participant race: Black, Latino) ANOVA on organizational warmth revealed a main effect of condition,  $F(1, 123) = 4.02$ ,  $p = .047$ ,  $d = 0.34$ , 95% CI [0.01, 0.94], no effect of participant race,  $F(1, 123) = 1.74$ ,  $p = .19$ ,  $d = 0.24$ , 95% CI [−0.85, 0.44], and no interaction,  $F(1, 123) = 0.19$ ,  $p = .66$ ,  $d = 0.09$ . Participants perceived the gender-inclusive bathroom company as warmer ( $M = 4.96$ ,  $SE = .16$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.49$ ,  $SE = .17$ ). Controlling for both warmth and transgender prejudice in analyses, 2  $\times$  2 ANCOVAs revealed no main effects of participants’ race,  $F_s(1,123) < 2.65$ ,  $p = .11$ ,  $d = 0.29$ ,<sup>6</sup> and no significant interactions,  $F_s(1,123) < 1.47$ ,  $p = .23$ ,  $d = 0.01$ . Thus, we collapsed across participants’ race for analyses reported below.<sup>7</sup>

### Organization Ideologies

Condition affected perceived GE,  $F(1, 123) = 4.35$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $d = 0.38$ , 95% CI [0.02, 0.87], and perceived SDO,



**Figure 3.** Serial mediations in Study 3, with unstandardized coefficients and standard errors for critical pathways.

$F(1, 123) = 3.74$ ,  $p = .055$ ,  $d = 0.35$ , 95% CI [−0.01, 0.92]. Participants perceived managers in the gender-inclusive bathroom company as lower in GE ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SE = .15$ ) and SDO ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SE = .16$ ) than the control (GE:  $M = 4.47$ ,  $SE = .15$ ; SDO:  $M = 3.23$ ,  $SE = .17$ ).

### Identity Safety

Participants in the gender-inclusive bathroom condition perceived the company as fairer for racial minorities ( $M = 5.30$ ,  $SE = .13$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.94$ ,  $SE = .13$ ),  $F(1, 123) = 3.83$ ,  $p = .053$ ,  $d = 0.35$ , 95% CI [0.001, 0.74]. Participants perceived the gender-inclusive company as having a more positive racial climate ( $M = 4.55$ ,  $SE = .16$ ) than the control ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SE = .16$ ),  $F(1, 123) = 4.22$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $d = 0.37$ , 95% CI [0.02, 0.93]. However, there was no effect of condition on anticipated racial stigma,  $F(1, 123) = 1.54$ ,  $p = .22$ ,  $d = 0.22$ , 95% CI [−0.20, 0.89]. Participants anticipated low racial stigma at the gender-inclusive bathroom company ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SE = .19$ ) and control ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SE = .20$ ).

### Comfort

Participants reported high levels of comfort in the gender-inclusive bathroom condition ( $M = 4.94$ ,  $SE = .11$ ) and the control condition ( $M = 4.80$ ,  $SE = .11$ ),  $F(1, 123) = 0.80$ ,  $p = .37$ ,  $d = 0.16$ , 95% CI [−0.45, 0.17].

### Mediations

Serial mediations, as presented in Figure 3, controlling for warmth and transgender prejudice, were conducted to determine whether the gender-inclusive bathroom company was perceived as lower in GE, which in turn predicted lower perceived SDO, leading to greater identity safety. Analyses revealed significant serial mediations for fairness, anticipated racial stigma, and racial climate (full analyses; Online Supplemental Material Table S12). Alternative models switching the order of perceived GE and perceived SDO were not significant (Online Supplemental Material Table S13).

### Discussion

Study 3 demonstrated that gender-inclusive bathrooms signal identity safety for heterosexual Black and Latino cisgender men due to perceptions of lower GE indicating a broader

ideology of equality via lower perceived SDO. Notably, effect sizes in Study 3 were smaller than in Studies 1 and 2, due in part to controlling for organizational warmth. As in Study 2, there was no effect of condition on anticipated racial stigma, though GE and SDO did significantly mediate the effect of condition on anticipated racial stigma. This may be, in part, because there was nothing to explicitly signal a threat for racial minorities, resulting in relatively low anticipated stigma levels, even in the control condition.

## General Discussion

Across three studies, the present research demonstrates that cisgender women and racial minorities perceive organizations with gender-inclusive bathrooms as more procedurally fair for women (Study 1) and Blacks and Latinos (Studies 2 and 3), and a more positive climate for women (Study 1) and racial minorities (Studies 2 and 3) compared to companies with binary bathrooms, due to perceptions of the gender-inclusive bathroom organization as lower in GE (Studies 1–3), resulting in perceptions of lower SDO (Study 3). Further, while men (Study 1) and White participants (Study 2) similarly perceived companies with gender-inclusive bathrooms as lower in GE, this did not translate into identity safety for these groups (except for racial climate, Study 2). Importantly, gender-inclusive bathrooms did not appear to threaten people, as participants reported greater (Study 2) or equal comfort (Study 3) compared to traditional bathrooms. Moreover, these effects were independent of perceptions of the organization caring about their employees broadly (Study 3). Thus, across three studies integrating past research on essentialism (Haslam et al., 2000) and identity cue transfers (Chaney et al., 2016), the present research identifies an additional benefit of gender-inclusive bathrooms, specifically, promoting identity safety for cisgender targets who are stigmatized on another identity dimension.

The present research is the first to our knowledge to demonstrate that perceived GE is related to identity safety for women and racial minorities, due in part to low GE signaling a broader ideology, namely SDO. Specifically, the present research indicates that stigmatized individuals may perceive GE and racial attitudes as going together. As such, racial minorities experience identity safety in environments which signal lower GE, indicating a lay understanding of the overlapping nature of essentialist ideologies and the intergroup attitudes they predict. The present research is the first to our knowledge to examine lay perceptions of prejudice-related ideologies as overlapping and indicative of each other.

The present research focused on identity dimensions in which low essentialism is associated with more positive intergroup attitudes (e.g., gender, race). However, we encourage future research to examine how gender-inclusive bathrooms are perceived by individuals who hold a stigmatized identity in which high essentialism is associated with more positive attitudes (e.g., high essentialism of sexual orientation is associated with less prejudice; Haslam & Levy, 2006), as it is unclear if low GE would signal a broader attitude of equality or a broader

attitude of low general essentialism. Additionally, the present research employed a binary gender bathroom sign in the control condition, which could signal greater GE. However, as the binary gender bathroom sign is traditional, we anticipate it is not seen as an ideologically motivated decision, though we encourage future research to explore this.

Notably, while past research has found that White men are threatened by diversity structures (e.g., Dover, Major, & Kaiser, 2016), the present research found White men were not threatened by them (see also Chaney et al., 2016). We do not, however, see these findings as at odds, as Dover, Major, and Kaiser (2016) employed a paradigm in which individuals imagined interviewing for the company, signaling a zero-sum situation which may make White men threatened by diversity structures (i.e., diversity hiring) that they perceive as potentially disadvantaging them. In contrast, the present research did not signal a zero-sum situation, nor did the cue serve to potentially disadvantage them.

Across three studies, the present research thus demonstrated that gender-inclusive bathrooms may serve not only a practical function for transgender individuals but may also signal an organizational ideology of low GE and a broader ideology of equality, promoting identity safety across identity dimensions for cisgender individuals.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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## Notes

1. See Online Supplemental Material for gender identity question.
2. See Online Supplemental Material for analyses on exclusions.
3. See Online Supplemental Material for discussion of first time manipulation check failures.
4. Power analyses were conducted for primary analyses of covariance. Moderated mediation employing bias-corrected bootstrapping rarely has power issues due to its resampling strategy (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007).
5. Although the participant Race  $\times$  Condition interaction was not significant for anticipated race stigma, an exploratory simple effect analysis revealed that Whites' anticipated racial stigma did not significantly differ between the control ( $M = 2.12$ ,  $SE = .18$ ) and the gender-inclusive condition ( $M = 1.70$ ,  $SE = .21$ ),  $F(1, 73) = 1.89$ ,  $p = .17$ ,  $d = 0.32$ , 95% confidence interval  $[-0.17, 0.93]$ , likely preventing the mediation, and in line with hypotheses.
6. The only main effect of race which approached significance,  $p = .11$ , was for racial climate. Latinos anticipated a more positive racial climate than Blacks.

7. Results do not differ when removing covariates, except the condition effect for anticipated racial stigma becomes significant (Online Supplemental Material, Table S11).

## Supplemental Material

The supplemental material is available in the online version of the article.

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