



Western Washington University
Western CEDAR

WWU Graduate School Collection

WWU Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship

Summer 2021

Not My Privilege: How Construal Level Explains Reactions to Male Privilege

Allison Schwam

Western Washington University, allison_schwam@msn.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwuet>



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schwam, Allison, "Not My Privilege: How Construal Level Explains Reactions to Male Privilege" (2021).
WWU Graduate School Collection. 1041.
<https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwuet/1041>

This Masters Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the WWU Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in WWU Graduate School Collection by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.

Not My Privilege:

How Construal Level Explains Reactions to Male Privilege

By

Allison Schwam

Accepted in Partial Completion
of the Requirement for the degree
Master of Science

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr. Alex Czopp, Chair

Dr. Meg Warren

Dr. Kristi Lemm

GRADUATE SCHOOL

David L. Patrick, Dean

Master's Thesis

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Western Washington University, I grant to Western Washington University the non-exclusive royalty-free right to archive, reproduce, distribute, and display the thesis in any and all forms, including electronic format, via any digital library mechanisms maintained by WWU.

I represent and warrant this is my original work, and does not infringe or violate any rights of others. I warrant that I have obtained written permissions from the owner of any third party copyrighted material included in these files.

I acknowledge that I retain ownership rights to the copyright of this work, including but not limited to the right to use all or part of this work in future works, such as articles or books.

Library users are granted permission for individual, research and non-commercial reproduction of this work for educational purposes only. Any further digital posting of this document requires specific permission from the author.

Any copying or publication of this thesis for commercial purposes, or for financial gain, is not allowed without my written permission.

Allison Schwam

July 2nd, 2021

Not My Privilege:

How Construal Level Explains Reactions to Male Privilege

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Allison Schwam
June 2021

Abstract

Awareness of one's privilege has been shown to evoke feelings of defensiveness or collective guilt, particularly when one's privileged identity is highly central to their sense of self. Research on privilege indicates that people may psychologically distance themselves from the notion of privilege in order to protect themselves from its potentially threatening manner (Phillips & Lowery, 2015). Construal level theory states that concepts that are more psychologically close are construed in more concrete terms whereas concepts that are more psychologically distant are construed as more abstract (Trope & Liberman, 2010). In the present study, 246 male participants were assessed for the importance of their male identity and were then primed with either a close or distant construal mindset. They were then randomly assigned to read about privilege or to read neutral statements. Afterwards, participants' reactions were assessed including levels of defensiveness and collective guilt. Results indicated that male identity did not interact with construal condition or privilege condition to predict reactions to male privilege. However, participants' political orientation did interact with privilege condition and construal level, such that when primed with a close construal level, liberal participants were more likely to respond with collective guilt when made aware of their privilege in comparison to conservative participants. Implications and possible explanations for the lack of anticipated effects are discussed.

Keywords: male privilege, inequality, Construal Level Theory, collective guilt, prejudice

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
List of Tables and Figures.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Method.....	10
Results.....	20
Discussion.....	28
References.....	34
Appendix A: Tables and Figures.....	38
Appendix B: Materials and Measures.....	51

List of Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Sample items from the Gestalt Completion Task (Street, 1931).....	39
Figure 2: Interaction Plot of Political Orientation X Privilege Condition X Construal Level Condition on the Confederate’s Character Evaluation of the Participant.....	40
Figure 3: Interaction Plot of Political Orientation X Privilege Condition X Construal Level Condition on the Confederate’s Character Evaluation of the Participant.....	41
Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for all Self-Report Measures.....	42
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the Ratings of the Quality of the Interpersonal Interaction and the Character Evaluation of the Participant and Confederate.....	43
Table 3: Results from the Hierarchical Regression Testing the Effects of Collective Self-Esteem, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Modern Sexism.....	44
Table 4: Results from the hierarchical regression testing the effects of Collective Self-Esteem, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Collective Guilt.....	45
Table 5: Results from the hierarchical regression testing the effects of Collective Self-Esteem, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Collective Shame.....	46
Table 6: Results from the hierarchical regression testing the effects of Collective Self-Esteem, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Whole Group Accountability.....	47
Table 7: Results from the Final Hierarchical Regression Model Testing the Effects of Construal Level, Privilege Awareness, and Collective Self Esteem and Covariates on the Overall Quality of the Interpersonal Interaction.....	48
Table 8: Results from the Final Hierarchical Regression Model Testing the Effects of Construal Level, Privilege Awareness, and Collective Self Esteem and Covariates on Character Evaluations During the Interpersonal Interaction.....	49
Table 9: Results from the Multiple Regression Model Testing the Effects of Political Orientation, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Collective Guilt.....	50

Not My Privilege: How Construal Level Explains Reactions to Male Privilege

Privilege affects many different aspects of day-to-day life. The ability for most men to feel safe when walking alone in public and not fear sexual assault is a (male) privilege. White people's assuredness that the worst thing they will experience when pulled over for speeding is a ticket is a (White) privilege. Able-bodied people walking into a building without thinking twice about the stairs they had to climb to get inside is an (able-bodied) privilege. People with privilege benefit from the unequal structure of society and have certain advantages that are not extended to members of other groups. Privilege is relevant across a variety of contexts and awareness of one's own privilege can evoke a multitude of reactions. In this thesis, my goal was to examine the ways in which men respond to male privilege. More specifically, I have investigated how the way in which privilege is psychologically construed affects whether men respond with defensiveness or collective guilt when thinking about their privilege.

Privilege plays a very prominent role in determining the experiences people have, often in ways that are not even noticed or recognized by the privileged individual. Peggy McIntosh famously dubbed privilege an "invisible knapsack," wherein people who hold this knapsack carry unseen benefits and advantages (McIntosh, 2003). Privilege exists in many different contexts: White privilege, male privilege, heterosexual privilege, able-bodied privilege, class privilege, etc. However, privilege can also vary across contexts. A Black man may find himself privileged in some contexts as a man but disadvantaged in other contexts as a racial minority. In the social psychology literature, privilege is most commonly studied in terms of White privilege, particularly in contrast with Black disadvantage (e.g. see Branscombe et al., 2007; Iyer et al., 2003; Lowery et al., 2007; Powell et al., 2005). Current research in the field suggests that, when

made aware of their privilege, people often experience two common reactions: collective guilt and defensiveness.

Collective Guilt in Response to Privilege Awareness

When faced with the reality of their privileged group membership, some people tend to report feelings of guilt on behalf of their privileged group for the unearned benefits they reap from their status (Powell et al., 2005). This feeling of guilt on behalf of one's group membership is referred to as *collective guilt* and is generally caused by the knowledge that one's group has engaged in some sort of wrongdoing (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). This emotion can be experienced even if an individual has not personally engaged in any wrongdoing; the mere association with the perpetrating group can be sufficient to evoke these feelings. Men can experience collective guilt due to the ways in which women are disadvantaged in society. White Americans can experience collective guilt due to the history of slavery and the continued mistreatment of Black people in the United States. Straight individuals can experience collective guilt due to the heteronormative ways that are dominant nowadays. In short, group-based guilt can be felt across many contexts.

In order for someone to experience group-based guilt, they not only need to recognize that there is a difference in group status, but they also need to acknowledge the advantages that are inherently associated with their elevated standing (Mallett & Swim, 2007). Mallett and Swim (2007) found that merely recognizing intergroup inequality is not sufficient to evoke feelings of collective guilt. The researchers discovered that feelings of collective guilt were particularly high when the perceived justifiability of the disparity between groups was low and when perceived responsibility of the ingroup for causing the disparity was high. In other words, people tend to feel particularly guilty when their group is seen as responsible for creating an unjustified gap

between groups. For example, men who recognize that members of their group are primarily responsible for the unjust imbalance between men and women may feel especially guilty.

Collective guilt is rooted in the wrongdoings of one's group but has been shown to have very prosocial outcomes such as increased willingness to correct for past injustices (Iyer et al., 2003; Peetz et al., 2010; Swim & Miller, 1999). There are a variety of contexts in which collective guilt has been shown to be associated with the desire to take prosocial action. Peetz et al. (2010) found that Germans who had higher levels of collective guilt in response to thoughts about the Holocaust were more likely to want to compensate Jews and other affected groups in comparison to those with lower levels of collective guilt. Additionally, White people who experience high levels of White guilt are more likely to endorse affirmative action programs that benefit Black people (Iyer et al., 2003; Swim & Miller, 1999).

While feelings of guilt are often associated with prosocial outcomes such as a drive to fix interpersonal relationships, guilt itself is an aversive emotion (Baumeister et al., 1994). These feelings of guilt are generally seen as being elicited due to perceived inequity between groups. Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) focuses on the ways in which resources are distributed in proportion to the contributions made by individuals. People tend to prefer outcomes that are proportional to inputs. A perceived discrepancy between what one deserves and what one receives is often associated with feelings of distress, which can take the form of guilt (Walster et al., 1973). When considering the different statuses of groups within society, Equity Theory can help explain why guilt is a common reaction to privilege awareness; privileged group members may recognize that they are receiving a surplus of advantages relative to that which they deserve. Especially when considered in comparison to marginalized groups, majority group members may

feel guilty in response to their inequitable advantages. Because guilt can be an unpleasant emotion to experience, people can be motivated to avoid these feelings.

Defensiveness in Response to Privilege Awareness

People may be highly motivated to avoid feelings of guilt and in turn can react in a defensive manner (Lickel et al., 2011). Defensiveness in the face of privilege awareness can take many forms, such as attempting to deny the existence of inequality, or denying personally benefitting from such inequality. Some studies have shown that when confronted with the reality of one's privilege, people may respond by downplaying the level to which inequality exists. Branscombe et al. (2007) found that those who were particularly threatened by thoughts of White privilege reported higher agreement with statements denying the continuing existence of inequality between White and Black people. This tactic may render privilege as less threatening to an individual because if there is no inequality there can be no privilege.

Another strategy people use to avoid feelings of guilt is to create the perception that they do not personally benefit from their group's privilege. Phillips and Lowery (2015) showed that White participants who had recently been made aware of their privilege reported having had more hardships in life in comparison to White participants who had not been made aware of their privilege. By distancing themselves from the concept of privilege, people can acknowledge inequality at the group level while simultaneously denying having personally benefitted from their privileged status. This muffles the threatening impact of privilege awareness because it is seen as not personally applicable.

What Makes Privilege Threatening?

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) posits that people's identities and self-esteem are partially derived from the group memberships they hold. Recognizing privilege

appears to be especially threatening (i.e. more likely to evoke a defensive response) when the dimension of privilege is a highly valued part of one's identity (Branscombe, 1998; Branscombe et al., 2007; Powell et al., 2005). For instance, White participants who strongly identified with their racial group reported higher levels of racism after being asked to think about White privilege in comparison to White participants who did not identify as strongly with their racial group (Branscombe et al., 2007). In theory, this same concept could be applied to any form of privilege, for instance, strength of identification with one's gender may predict responses to male privilege.

Privilege is, definitionally, associated with advantages in life. It may therefore seem counterintuitive that recognizing oneself as privileged could be perceived as threatening to one's identity, since it is associated with a plethora of benefits. However, privilege is also associated with the notion that perhaps one did not fully earn their position in life, and therefore can be threatening to one's merit. Merit is highly valued in American society – people like to think that they work hard for their accomplishments in life. However, many types of privilege (including White and male privilege) are perceived as illegitimate and are defined as being unearned. In other words, those who benefit from such privileges are not seen as having earned it, but rather having happened into it. Being forced to face the reality of one's own privilege can call one's merit into question.

People who firmly believe that one earns their position in life through hard work tend not to want to acknowledge their own privilege. Indeed, across several studies, Knowles and Lowery (2012) found a negative relationship between meritocracy and perceptions of White privilege. One such study found that those who more strongly endorsed meritocracy tended to report lower levels of perceived White privilege, as well as lower levels of perceived Black discrimination.

Additionally, these authors found that when primed with meritocratic ideals, people reported lower perceptions of White privilege in comparison to those who were primed with humanitarian ideals. Belief in and endorsement of meritocratic ideals appear to play a role in how people perceive privilege.

The Framing of Privilege

One approach researchers have taken in studying the outcomes of privilege is to examine how the way that privilege is framed affects individuals' responses. Some studies have compared reactions to privilege awareness when privilege is framed as ingroup advantage in comparison to outgroup disadvantage. Powell et al. (2005) found that White participants were more likely to report feelings of collective guilt in response to privilege that was framed as White advantage in comparison to participants who thought about privilege that was framed as Black disadvantage. When thinking about racial inequality, White people can perceive it as an outgroup issue (Black disadvantage) and as not having a lot to do with themselves and their group, thus evoking less collective guilt. However, when asked to think about inequality in terms of White advantage, the issue suddenly becomes relevant to White people, which allows for greater feelings of guilt. Essentially, when privilege is framed as an abstract construct unrelated to the self (i.e., as Black disadvantage), there appears to be little motivation to feel strongly about it. However, when privilege is framed as relevant to the self (i.e., as White advantage), it appears to have a more influential impact and allows for a stronger reaction to privilege awareness.

Across the literature, there are different reactions to privilege awareness, and there are several explanations as to what influences these reactions, such as Social Identity Theory, endorsement of meritocratic ideals and the framing of privilege. One explanation that has not yet

been explicitly explored is construal level theory and how that overarching cognitive process may contribute to how different reactions to privilege awareness are evoked.

Construal Level Theory

Construal level theory (CLT; Trope & Liberman, 2010) posits that people have mental representations of abstract constructs and that these mental representations are held at some psychological distance from the self. This theory assumes that the self is the reference point in determining psychological distance. Ideas that are more psychologically distant from the self are construed in more abstract terms, whereas ideas that are more psychologically close to the self are construed in more concrete terms. These mental representations are important in that they help determine the aspects of the construct on which an individual focuses. Psychologically distant (abstract) construals tend to be more focused on the bigger picture, whereas psychologically close (concrete) construals tend to be more detail oriented. For example, when imagining what your day will look like tomorrow (a psychologically close construct due to its temporal proximity to your present-day self) you might think through specific details about what you are going to do, such as what you will have for breakfast and things you plan to accomplish at work. Alternatively, when asked to imagine what your day will look like a year from today (a psychologically distant construct) you are more likely to think about your day in a more general, abstract way such as whether or not you will likely be working that day. Psychological closeness can be determined on a variety of dimensions, including temporal, spatial, social, and hypothetical.

Research on CLT has shown that participants can be primed with different construal levels and this can affect how they approach subsequent tasks even when those tasks are unrelated. McCrea and colleagues (2012) looked at the effects that construal level has on

people's tendencies to use stereotypes when evaluating strangers. They primed one group of participants with an abstract construal by telling them that recognizing pictures as being made up of different parts was an important perceptual process and had them complete picture recognition tasks. They primed another group of participants with concrete construal by telling them that detecting missing details from pictures was an important perceptual process and asked them to detect missing details from pictures. These different primings led participants to either focus on broad, higher-level, abstract aspects or detailed, lower-level, concrete aspects, respectively. Indeed, the researchers found that those primed with the abstract construal level were more likely to rely on stereotypes when evaluating strangers than those who were primed with concrete construal level. Theoretically, this is due to the fact that stereotypes are themselves an abstract, higher level form of thinking that focus on broad categorizations as opposed to concrete individualized details.

In the context of research on privilege, CLT may provide an explanation as to why there are different reactions in response to privilege awareness and when these different reactions are likely to occur. When looking at the literature through the lens of construal level theory, some patterns begin to emerge. For instance, Powell et al.'s (2005) finding that White participants react more strongly when privilege is framed as White advantage instead of Black disadvantage can be interpreted as relating to CLT. White advantage is a more psychologically close construct (to White people) than Black disadvantage. White advantage is a concrete idea that White participants themselves have experienced and know what it is like to experience. Black disadvantage on the other hand, is a more distant, abstract idea that has less direct relevance to the self. The finding that viewing privilege as White advantage evokes a stronger reaction among

White participants than viewing privilege as Black disadvantage could be partially due to the different psychological distances each construct holds with respect to the self.

When people are threatened by their privilege, strategies to combat that threat include denial of personally benefitting from privilege or over-reporting hardships that one has overcome (Phillips & Lowery, 2015). This can be seen as a way of creating psychological distance between oneself and the privilege. CLT posits that psychologically distant constructs are viewed in more abstract ways on a variety of dimensions (time, space, social distance, hypotheticality; Trope & Liberman, 2010). Creating psychological distance between oneself and one's group-based privilege allows the idea of privilege to be viewed as a more abstract construct. This abstractness can construe the privilege as a hypotheticality or as not relevant to the self, which is much less threatening.

Present Research

Theoretically, construal level and its effects on responses to privilege awareness could be applied to any type of privilege. While a lot of the literature surrounding privilege in social psychology focuses on White privilege, the present research focused on male privilege and sought to determine whether Construal Level Theory can help explain different responses men have to thinking about their privilege. In a 2 (construal level priming: close vs distant) x 2 (privilege condition: privilege awareness vs no privilege awareness) x continuous (importance of male identity) between subject factorial design, male participants were primed with an either abstract or concrete construal level. Participants were then exposed to either statements regarding male privilege or neutral statements relating to people in general (control condition). Reactions to privilege awareness were assessed in a variety of ways, including levels of collective guilt, collective shame, modern sexism, whole group accountability, as well as how male participants

interacted with a female confederate after the privilege awareness manipulation. The level of importance participants placed on their male identity was also measured in order to evaluate how the centrality of the ingroup affects reactions to privilege awareness.

Hypotheses

H₁: Participants primed with psychological closeness will show more negative reactions to privilege awareness (more defensiveness, less collective guilt, poorer quality of interaction between participant and female confederate) in comparison to those primed with psychological distance and the control groups that do not involve any privilege awareness. This effect will be particularly strong for participants who place a lot of importance on their male identity.

H₂: Participants primed with psychological distance will show more prosocial reactions to privilege awareness (less defensiveness, higher levels of collective guilt, better quality of interaction between participant and a female confederate) in comparison to those primed with psychological closeness and the control groups, that do not involve any privilege awareness. This effect will be particularly strong for participants who place a lot of importance on their male identity.

Methods

Participants

A total of 271 men were recruited to participate in this study. A portion of the participants (n = 18) were recruited from Western Washington's psychology student subject pool in exchange for class credit. The remaining participants (n = 253) were recruited through the online crowdsourcing website Prolific in exchange for a financial compensation. 25 participants in total were excluded from data analysis for failing to pass attention checks or failing to complete the study, resulting in a total of 246 participants in the final analyses. An a priori power

analysis based on a medium f^2 effect size of .07 determined that this would be an adequate sample size for 80% power. Of these participants, 59 were able to complete the entire study with the interpersonal interaction with the female confederate, of which 5 failed to pass attention checks resulting in 54 participants who provided data relevant to the interpersonal interaction with the confederate.

Approximately half (46.3%) of the sample self-identified as White, 24.8% identified as Asian, 9.8% identified as Latinx, 7.7% identified as Black, 0.8% identified as Native American, and the remaining 10.6% identified as mixed-race. Participants were, on average, in their early 20s ($M = 21.92$, $SD = 2.57$).

Procedure

In this 2 (construal condition: close vs. distant) x 2 (privilege condition: no awareness vs awareness) x continuous (importance of male identity) between-subjects factorial design, participants were randomly assigned to a construal level condition and a privilege awareness condition. Participants were measured on the extent to which their male identity was important to their overall sense of identity, and then were exposed to either psychologically close construal level priming (referred to as the close condition) or to psychologically distant construal level priming (referred to as the distant condition). Then all participants were exposed to either statements regarding male privilege or neutral statements regarding people in general. Appendix B contains information relating to all conditions as well as all measures included as a part of this study.

Originally, this study was designed to include a live interaction with a female confederate in order to assess how reactions to privilege awareness influence interactions with an outgroup member. However, live data collection on Zoom proved to be more difficult than originally

anticipated, and as such, partway through data collection, the interpersonal interaction with a female confederate aspect of the study was removed to allow for completely asynchronous data collection. Participants who were recruited through Prolific and participated in the entire study (with the Zoom interaction) were compensated \$6.50 for their participation. Those recruited through Prolific and who participated in the truncated version of the study (without the Zoom interaction) were compensated \$2.50 for their participation.

In order to cover the true purpose of the study, participants were recruited to take part in three separate studies (or two separate studies if they were recruited after the interpersonal interaction was cut from the study). Before starting with what was ostensibly the first study, participants responded to basic demographic questions, the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), and the Preference for Merit Principal scale (Davey et al., 1999). In what the participants believed to be was the first study, participants underwent the construal level priming. Then, participants proceeded onto what they were told was the second study, which involved the privilege awareness manipulation and were measured on levels of modern sexism, collective guilt, collective shame, and whole group accountability. The order in which these four self-report measures were presented to participants was counterbalanced. Some participants then went on to what was apparently the third and final study, where they were asked to complete the Desert Island Task with a female confederate on Zoom and evaluate the quality of that interaction they had with the confederate. As stated previously, this portion of the study was eventually removed to allow for more timely data collection, and as such only a portion of the participants completed the interpersonal interaction with the female confederate.

Measures & Manipulations

All scales in this study were scored on a 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*) Likert scale, unless otherwise indicated. Table 1 contains all means and standard deviations of self-report measures (Modern Sexism Scale, Collective Guilt Scale, Collective Shame Scale, and Whole Group Accountability Scale) for each of the four different conditions. Table 2 contains all means and standard deviations of the two measures related to the interpersonal reaction (assessment of the quality of interaction and character evaluation).

Demographics

In order to code for potential intersectionality and its effects on male privilege, participants were asked to report their age, race, sexual orientation and perceived socioeconomic status. Participants were also to report their political orientation, their gender (although anyone who did not report that they were male was excluded from the study) as well as their year in school (if applicable).

Importance of Male Identity

To measure the importance that the participants placed on their male identity, participants responded to the Importance of Identity subscale from the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). This four-item subscale ($\alpha = .86$) was adapted from its original form to target men as the referent social group. Sample items from this scale include, *Being a man is an important reflection of who I am* and, *In general, being a man is an important part of my self-image*. This questionnaire was embedded amongst twelve filler questions that target different social identities (students and Americans) as well as their identity with social groups in general. The average of the four CSE items was taken to give a single score out of 7 to indicate an overall importance of identity, with higher scores representing a greater importance placed on male identity.

Endorsement of Meritocracy

Participants responded to the Preference for the Merit Principal Scale (PMP; Davey et al., 1999), which was used as a covariate in the regression analyses. Previous research has shown that responses to privilege awareness are linked to the endorsement of meritocratic ideals (Knowles & Lowery, 2012). This scale consists of 15 items ($\alpha = .71$) that assess how much participants endorse the idea that people who work hard get what they deserve. Example items of this scale include, *In life, people ought to get what they deserve* and *Members of a work team ought to receive different pay depending on the amount each person contributed*. The average of all 15 items was taken to determine an overall score of preference for meritocracy, where higher scores indicate a greater preference for meritocratic ideals.

Construal Level Priming

All participants were randomly assigned to either the close or distant construal condition, where were primed with either concrete or abstract construal levels, respectively. Both priming conditions involved participants looking at and evaluating pictures from the Gestalt Completion Task (Street, 1931) in a Qualtrics survey. All of the pictures in this task depict common objects (e.g., a cat, a dog, a boat, etc.) made up of abstract shapes. Figure 1 shows two sample items from this task. This methodology is drawn from McCrea et al. (2012), which similarly investigated the effects that construal level priming has on social evaluations. In the present study, those in the distant condition were told that recognizing partially completed pictures for what they are is an important mental process and were asked to identify the object depicted in each image. This ensured participants were focusing on the bigger picture, and thus primed them with a distant construal mindset.

While focusing on the big picture is associated with a distant construal level, focusing on details is associated with lower level thinking that is consistent with a close construal level. As such, those in the close condition were told that examining pictures closely for their constituent parts is an important mental process and were asked to count the number of shapes in each of the images from the Gestalt Completion Task in order to prime them with a close construal mindset

Privilege Awareness Manipulation

All participants were randomly assigned to either a privilege awareness or the no privilege awareness condition. Those in the privilege awareness condition read through a set of ten statements relevant to male privilege and rated the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. To further reinforce the construal level mindset with which participants had just been primed, the statements that participants read were phrased differently to mirror the different construal levels. For instance, participants who had been primed with a close construal mindset read statements phrased as “I” statements to emphasize the sense of psychological closeness, whereas those in the distant condition read privilege statements pertaining to men in general, to emphasize the sense of psychological distance. For example, those in the close/privilege awareness condition were presented with the statement, *When I make mistakes, people generally do not attribute my mistake to my gender*. In comparison, those in the distant/privilege awareness condition were presented with the statement, *When men make mistakes, people generally do not attribute the mistake to their gender*.

Participants in the no privilege awareness (control) condition read and responded to neutral statements pertaining to people in general. The statements were likewise phrased differently to reflect the different construal level primings. An example statement from the no privilege awareness condition is, *[I/People] don't like making mistakes*. Both the privilege

awareness and the no privilege awareness conditions include 10 statements. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement on a one to seven Likert scale (*1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree*). The ratings of the privilege awareness/neutral scales themselves were not of a priori interest, but rather served as a way for the participants to engage with the sentences rather than simply reading through the statements.

Defensiveness

Denying the existence of male privilege is viewed as a form of defensiveness and is operationalized as such in this study. Participants responded to the Modern Sexism Scale (Swim et al., 1995), which consists of eight items ($\alpha = .91$) and measures the degree to which participants deny the existence of gender inequality in America. It contains statements such as, *Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States*. The average of all eight items was taken to determine the overall score on modern sexism, in which higher scores reflect greater modern sexism.

Collective Guilt

To measure the degree to which they feel group-level guilt, participants were asked to respond to the Collective Guilt Scale (adapted from Powell et al., 2005). This is a seven-item scale ($\alpha = .92$) originally designed to measure collective White guilt but was adapted to measure male guilt for the purposes of this study. The scale contains items such as, *I feel guilty about men's harmful actions towards women*. The average of all seven items determined an overall level of collective guilt, in which higher scores reflect more collective guilt.

Collective Shame

Participants also responded to three items ($\alpha = .91$) that were designed to measure the extent to which participants felt a sense of collective shame. Collective shame focuses on the

shame people feel regarding the reputation of their group that has resulted from the group's actions, which is slightly different than collective guilt. These items were inspired by Brown and colleagues' (2008) study on collective guilt and shame and included, *I feel ashamed of how others might think about men because of the harm inflicted against women*, *I feel bad because many people think poorly of men because of how women are treated*, and *I feel ashamed when I think of the negative ways in which men are perceived by the world because of how some men treat women*. The average of the participant's agreement with the three items was taken to create one overall collective shame score out of seven, in which higher scores indicate more collective shame.

Whole Group Accountability

The Whole Group Accountability Scale (WGA; Branscombe et al., 2004) was also used to measure the degree to which participants felt that the entire group should be held accountable for the actions of its members. This scale consists of five items ($\alpha = .90$) and includes statements like, *A group ought to be held accountable for the actions of its members* and *I think that members of a group are accountable for what others in their group do*. Participants agreement with the statements were averaged to give one overall WGA scores out of seven, in which higher scores indicate a greater likelihood to hold the whole group accountable.

Interaction with a Female Confederate

A total of 59 participants were able to participate in the interpersonal interaction portion of the study that took place on Zoom, 54 of whom passed all attention checks and were used in the final analyses. After completing the self-report measures of reactions to privilege awareness as described above, these participants were provided with a link to join a video-chat call via Zoom. They were told that this portion of the study was designed to assess the quality of

interactions people are able to have in online spaces. The purpose of this task was to see how male privilege awareness affects the manner in which men interact with women.

After joining the Zoom link, which was embedded in the Qualtrics study, participants found themselves on a Zoom call with a female confederate who was posing as another participant, and a study assistant. The female confederate (who was unaware of the true purpose of the study) appeared to be another participant in the study and had her camera on. The study assistant had their camera off and was named “Study Assistant” on the Zoom call in an attempt to maintain anonymity and decrease the sense that the participants were being monitored. Participants and the female confederate were given instructions from the study assistant via the chat function on Zoom and were told that they would be completing a simple task with each other and then answering some questions about the task.

For this interaction, the participant and the confederate were asked to complete the Desert Island Task. The Desert Island Task is an activity where participants are presented with a list of people along with their occupations and asked to choose who they would like to bring with them if they were to be stranded on a deserted island. Tasks similar to this have been used in previous research on interpersonal interactions and confrontation of sexist remarks (see Swim & Hyers, 1999). In the present study, the study assistant shared their screen on Zoom and showed a set of 24 photographs of individuals people (12 men and 12 women), along with each person’s job title. Appendix B includes a screenshot of the photographs and jobs titles that participants saw during the Desert Island Task. In this task, the participant and confederate were instructed to choose a total of 12 people (6 each) from the slide that they would bring with them to a deserted island. The confederate had a script to follow but was allowed to stray from the script if necessary to

maintain the fluidity of the interaction. The main purpose of this task was to simply get the participant and the confederate to interact with one another.

Quality of the Interpersonal Interaction

After completing the Desert Island Task and ending the Zoom meeting, both the participant and the confederate filled out brief questionnaires on Qualtrics to assess the quality of the interaction overall. The participant and confederate responses on three items, (*Overall, the interaction went well; I think the interaction went poorly; and I think the interaction could have gone better*) were averaged to create one overall Quality of Interaction score for each perspective. Three blind coders also rated the audio recordings on these three statements, thus, there were a total of three perspectives assessing the interaction: the participant's ($\alpha = .68$), the confederate's ($\alpha = .84$), and the coders' ($\alpha = .91$).

Character Evaluation

Both the confederate and participant also rated the extent to which they felt the other person displayed a variety of characteristics including friendliness, rudeness, sexism, enthusiasm, and discomfort. There were ten characteristics in total, and the ratings of the negative traits were reverse scored and averaged with all of the positive traits to create one overall character evaluation score, in which higher scores indicated a more favorable view of the person. The blind coders also rated the participants on these characteristics, creating a total of three character evaluation scores from three different perspectives: the participant's evaluation of the confederate ($\alpha = .87$), the confederate's evaluation of the participant ($\alpha = .86$), and the coders' evaluation of the participant ($\alpha = .83$).

Debriefing

Funnel debriefing practices were used to assess if participants were suspicious of the true purpose of the study. At the end of the study, participants were asked to respond to a set of open-ended questions including, *What do you think the purpose of this study was?* and *Did any of the tasks affect what you did on any of the other tasks?* and *Did any part of these studies seem strange or suspicious to you?* No participants were excluded from data analysis due to suspicion.

Results

Hierarchical Regression

To determine the extent to which the interaction between privilege awareness condition, construal level condition, and collective self-esteem uniquely predicted reactions to privilege awareness, hierarchical regression was employed using RStudio (version 4.0.3). A series of four models were run for each of the dependent variables. In the first model, all of the demographic information and Preference for Merit Principle (PMP) scores were input. In the second model, the main effects of privilege condition, construal level condition, and collective self-esteem (CSE) were added. In the third model, all two-way interactions between privilege condition, construal condition, and CSE were added. In the fourth and final model, the hypothesized three-way interaction between privilege condition, construal level condition, and CSE was added. Tables 3 through 6 show regression coefficients for all models pertaining to modern sexism, collective guilt, collective shame, whole group accountability, respectively. Regression coefficients for the analyses related to the quality of the interpersonal interaction between the confederate and the participant and the character evaluations relevant to that interaction are shown in Tables 7 and 8, respectively. The change in R^2 was tested for statistical significance between each subsequent model to determine the variance that was uniquely contributed at each step.

Contrary to my hypotheses, neither CSE, privilege awareness condition, construal level, or their interactions showed to be statistically significant predictors of reactions to privilege awareness, across any of the self-report measures (i.e., modern sexism, collective guilt, collective shame, and whole group accountability) or interpersonal interaction measures (i.e., overall interaction evaluation, character evaluations) dependent measures. In testing the proposed hierarchical regression model, the three-way interaction did not uniquely account for any variance in the models. Within the analyses, there were some statistically significant effects of covariates, which are discussed below.

Modern Sexism

Political orientation was a statistically significant predictor of scores on Modern Sexism, such that participants who were more conservative (scored higher on the measure of political orientation) tended to score higher on the Modern Sexism scale, $b = 0.43$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.36, 0.51], $p < .001$. Additionally, socioeconomic status of the participant was a statistically significant predictor of modern sexism scores, such that those higher on socioeconomic status (SES) scored higher on modern sexism, $b = 0.09$, $SE = 0.04$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.16], $p = .029$. None of the tested change in R^2 values between models were statistically significant. Table 3 shows the regression coefficients and significance of all predictors across the four models relating to modern sexism.

Collective Guilt

Political orientation was also a statistically significant predictor for levels of collective guilt such that those who were more conservative tended to report less collective guilt, $b = -0.33$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.43, -0.22], $p < .001$. PMP scores were also a statistically significant

predictor of collective guilt scores, such that participants who more strongly endorsed meritocratic ideals tended to have a lower collective guilt score, $b = -0.31$, $SE = 0.15$, 95% CI [-0.59, -0.01], $p = .042$. There was also no statistical significance in the change in R^2 between models. Table 4 shows the regression coefficients and significance of all predictors in all four models relating to collective guilt.

Collective Shame

Political orientation was a statistically significant predictor of collective shame, such that those who were more conservative also tended to report less collective shame, $b = -0.17$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI [-0.30, -0.04], $p = .009$. None of the other predictors in the models were statistically significant, nor were the changes in R^2 between the models statistically significant. See Table 5 for a comprehensive list of predictors and regression coefficients pertaining to collective shame.

Whole Group Accountability

Political orientation was also a statistically significant predictor of scores on the whole group accountability scale, such that participants who were more conservative tended to score lower on this measure, $b = -0.18$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI [-0.30, -0.06], $p = .003$. Once again, none of the other predictors in the models relating to WGA were statistically significant (see Table 6). The changes in R^2 between models were not statistically significant.

Quality of Interpersonal Interaction with a Female Confederate

The final manner of assessing reactions to privilege awareness included participants interacting with a female confederate and assessing the quality of that interaction and their interaction partner. The quality of the interaction was assessed from three different perspectives: the participant's, the confederate's, and the blind coders'. Table 7 contains regression estimates

from the final hierarchical regression model for all three perspectives assessing the quality of the interaction. From the participant's perspective, there was a statistically significant main effect of construal condition, such that participants rated the interaction more favorably when they were exposed to a close construal mindset in comparison to those who were exposed to a distant mindset, $b = -0.75$, $SE = 0.37$, 95% CI [-1.49, 0.00], $p = .049$. There were no other statistically significant effects from the participant's perspective. From the confederate's perspective, there was a marginally statistically significant three-way CSE X privilege condition X construal condition interaction, $b = -1.91$, $SE = 1.09$, 95% CI [-4.11, 0.29], $p = .087$. Due to its lack of statistical significance and the reduced sample size that was used for this dependent measure ($n = 54$), the simple slopes for this three-way interaction are not reported in the manuscript. From the coders' perspective, there were no statistically significant effects of any interactions, main effects, or covariates.

Character Evaluation

The three-way CSE X privilege awareness condition X construal level condition interaction was not statistically significant in predicting character evaluations for any of the three different perspectives (i.e., the confederate's rating of the participant, the coders' rating of the participant, and the participant's rating of the confederate). Table 8 contains the regression coefficient estimates for all main effects, interactions, and covariates pertaining to character evaluations from all three perspectives.

Additional Analyses

In an attempt to determine why the hypothesized effects of privilege condition, construal level, and CSE were not present in this analysis, I conducted some additional analyses that were

not a part of the original pre-registration of this study. Below is a description of the post-hoc analyses that were conducted.

Sub-Samples of Participants

One of the post-hoc analyses involved testing whether White participants responded to this survey differently than the participants of color. To examine this, the sample was divided into White ($n = 114$) and non-White ($n = 132$) participants to test the original CSE X privilege condition X construal level interaction in each sub-sample to see whether White participants responded differently to the study. For White participants, collective self-esteem was a statistically significant predictor of reaction, with those whose male identity was more important to them scoring higher on modern sexism ($b = 0.61$, $SE = 0.25$, $p = .017$) and lower on collective shame ($b = -0.64$, $SE = 0.28$, $p = .027$). None of the other predictors were statistically significant for White participants, including the anticipated three-way interaction. For non-White participants, there were no statistically significant predictors to reactions to privilege awareness.

Political Orientation as a Predictor

Since political orientation showed to be such a robust predictor of participant scores on the dependent variables as a covariate, I also chose to re-test the original hierarchical regression with political orientation in the three-way interaction instead of collective self-esteem (e.g., these analyses tested the political orientation X privilege condition X construal level condition interaction on each of the dependent measures). As with the original analyses, I will again discuss these analyses by dependent measure, but here I will only be focusing on the effects of the three-way interaction.

The distribution of scores on political orientation was positively skewed, with more participants identifying on the liberal end of the spectrum. As such, I tested each outcome variable twice, once with the original form of political orientation and once with a transformed version of political orientation in which the square root was taken of all the scores. The results reported below contain output using the transformed version of political orientation, and the differences that arose when analyzing the data with the non-transformed version of the variable are addressed in the footnotes.

Modern Sexism.¹ Results from the multiple regression model testing political orientation in the place of collective self-esteem revealed that the three-way political orientation X privilege condition X construal level condition was not a statistically significant predictor of scores on the Modern Sexism Scale, $b = -0.54$, $SE = 0.36$, 95% CI [-1.24, 0.17], $p = .133$.

Collective Guilt.² The analyses testing collective guilt revealed a statistically significant political orientation X privilege condition X construal level interaction, $b = 1.31$, $SE = 0.36$, 95% CI [0.42, 1.84], $p = .002$. Figure 2 shows a graph of this three-way interaction, and Table 9 contains coefficient estimates from the final regression model. Simple slopes analyses were conducted to probe this interaction, specifically to look at the political orientation X privilege awareness condition interaction within each of the two construal level conditions (see Figure 2). In the close construal condition, there was a statistically significant slope of political orientation for those in the privilege awareness condition, such that more conservative participants (i.e., those who score higher on political orientation) tended to express less collective guilt, $b = -0.86$,

¹ When analyzed with the non-transformed version of political orientation, the three-way political orientation X privilege condition X construal condition becomes marginally statistically significant, $b = -0.41$, $p = .092$. Otherwise, there are no changes to the pattern of results when using the transformed version of political orientation.

² The pattern of results remains the same when analyzed with the non-transformed version of political orientation.

$SE = 0.20$, 95% CI [-1.27, -0.46], $p < .001$. There was no statistically significant simple effect of political orientation for those in the no privilege awareness condition, $b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.17$, 95% CI [-0.27, 0.41], $p = .689$. In other words, when primed with a close construal level, participants' political orientation was predictive of reaction to privilege awareness such that those who were made aware of their privilege tended to report more collective guilt if they were more liberal. Those who were not made aware of their privilege reacted similarly regardless of their political orientation.

Within the distant construal level there were statistically significant simple effects or political orientation in both privilege awareness conditions. Within the privilege awareness condition, more conservative participants tended to score lower on collective guilt, $b = -0.51$, $SE = 0.19$, 95% CI [-0.88, -0.15], $p = .006$. Similarly, within the no privilege awareness condition, more conservative participants tended to score lower on collective guilt, $b = -0.71$, $SE = 0.18$, 95% CI [-1.06, -0.37], $p < .001$. The slopes of these two effects are not statistically significantly different ($p = .446$), therefore it can be inferred that, when primed with a distant construal level, in both the privilege and no privilege awareness conditions, political orientation similarly predicts likelihood to express collective guilt. Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that the three-way political orientation X privilege condition X construal condition did predict a unique amount of variance above and beyond the two-way interactions, and the demographic data, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $p = .002$.

Collective Shame.³ The political orientation X privilege condition X construal level condition interaction was not statistically significant in predicting collective shame, $b = 0.67$, $SE = 0.44$, 95% CI [-0.19, 1.54], $p = .126$.

Whole Group Accountability.⁴ The political orientation X privilege condition X construal level condition interaction was not statistically significant in predicting scores on the whole group accountability scale, $b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.41$, 95% CI [-0.36, 1.24], $p = .275$.

Quality of Interpersonal Interaction with a Female Confederate.⁵ The ratings provided by the confederate assessing the quality of the interpersonal interaction revealed a marginally statistically significant three-way interaction, $b = 2.29$, $SE = 1.21$, 95% CI [-0.16, 4.73], $p = .066$, but this interaction did not meet the threshold for statistical significance.

Character Evaluations from the Interpersonal Interaction.⁶ There was a statistically significant three-way interaction on the confederate's evaluation of the participant, $b = 1.90$, $SE = 0.91$, 95% CI [0.07, 3.74], $p = .042$. Within the privilege awareness condition, there was a statistically significant slope of political orientation in the distant construal condition, such that more conservative participants were rated more favorably by the confederates, $b = 1.64$, $SE = 0.61$, 95% CI [0.40, 2.88], $p = .011$. There was not an effect of political orientation for those primed with close construal in the privilege awareness condition, $b = -0.46$, $SE = 0.48$, 95% CI [-

³ When using the non-transformed version of political orientation, the three-way political orientation X privilege condition X construal level interaction becomes marginally statistically significant, $b = 0.80$, $p = .066$.

⁴ The pattern of results remains the same when analyzing the data with the non-transformed version of political orientation.

⁵ The marginally significant three-way interaction that was found in the confederate's rating of the interaction is no longer marginally significant when analyzed with the non-transformed version of political orientation, $p = 0.110$. The rest of the patterns of results regarding the quality of the interaction remain the same when run with the non-transformed version of political orientation.

⁶ The statistically significant three-way interaction on the confederate's evaluation of the participant becomes marginally statistically significant ($b = 1.60$, $p = .067$) when analyzed with the non-transformed version of political orientation. Other than that, the pattern of results remains the same when analyzed with the transformed and non-transformed version of political orientation.

1.43, 0.50], $p = .339$. The simple slopes within the no privilege awareness conditions were not statistically significant. Figure 3 shows a graph of this three-way interaction.

Testing the coder's character evaluation of the participant yielded a marginally statistically significant three-way interaction, $b = 0.91$, $SE = 0.52$, 95% CI [-0.14, 1.96], $p = .088$, but this interaction did not meet the traditional threshold for statistical significance. The participant's character evaluation of the confederate was also not predicted by the three-way political orientation X privilege condition X construal level interaction, $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.72$, 95% CI [-1.40, 1.51], $p = .942$.

Discussion

Contrary to my hypotheses, construal level did not interact with privilege awareness and collective self-esteem on participants' reactions to privilege awareness. Research on privilege awareness indicates that people may try to distance themselves from the idea of privilege as a way of coping (e.g., claiming they suffer from more hardships than most members of their privileged group, as shown in Phillip and Lowery's (2015) article). Construal Level Theory (CLT) suggests that the more psychologically distant an idea, the more abstract it is, whereas concepts that are psychologically closer are construed in more concrete terms. Theory would indicate that when privilege is construed in a psychologically distant manner (i.e., more abstract), one would be less likely to react defensively, and more likely to react in a prosocial, guilt-driven manner. On the other hand, when privilege is thought about in a psychologically close manner, theory would suggest that people may react more defensively due to the potentially threatening nature of being called privileged combined with the psychological closeness of the allegation. However, results from the present study do not support this theory.

One potential explanation for the lack of support for the hypotheses may be due to details of the construal level manipulation. In this study, the privilege statements designed to get participants to reflect on their privilege were differently phrased in a way that was intended to reflect and reinforce the construal level with which they had just been primed. In doing so, participants who had been primed with a close construal mindset read privilege statements that were phrased as I-statements, whereas those who had been primed with a distant construal mindset read statements that were phrased as group-level statements. While this manipulation was intended to simply reinforce the construal level mindset, it is possible that it also introduced psychological processes associated with the *person-group discrimination discrepancy* phenomenon (Crosby, 1984; Taylor et al., 1990). According to this concept, people are more likely to believe that their group is discriminated against than they are to believe that they themselves are subject to discrimination. This same notion has been applied to privilege, and research shows that people are more likely to think of their group as privileged than they are to think of themselves as privileged (Postmes et al., 1999). It is possible that, by differentiating whether participants read about privilege phrased as I-statements or group-statements, this person-group discrepancy effect was introduced which could have conflicted with the construal level manipulation. Participants in the close construal condition (who were asked to read I-statements), may have been more likely to compare themselves to their group as a whole (men), instead of drawing the intended comparison between men and women. If so, the very privilege awareness manipulation would have been different for those in the close condition in comparison to those in the distant condition in a way that may have overridden the construal level mindset with which they were just primed.

Furthermore, while identification with the ingroup has been shown to be a predictor of reactions to privilege awareness, many of these studies have focused on White privilege, and identification with one's White racial identity (e.g., Branscombe et al., 2007; Powell et al., 2005). The cultural climate in the United States has rendered White the default race, and too strong of a sense of White identification can be toxic. Indeed, recent research has found that a greater sense of White identity is associated with far-right extremism (Bai, 2020). There is seemingly a high correlation between White identity and political orientation, therefore past findings that ingroup (White) identification is predictive of reactions to privilege awareness may serve a proxy for political orientation predicting these reactions. On the other hand, a strong identification with one's gender may have less of a negative connotation than a strong identification with one's White identity, so it is possible that it is not the strength of the identification with the ingroup that is predictive of defensiveness or collective guilt, but rather the type of ingroup with which one is identified (e.g., White vs. male) that determines the reaction.

Moreover, conservative ideology has been shown to be correlated with social dominance orientation (Pratto et al., 1994). Social dominance orientation, broadly speaking, is the degree to which people like and prefer inequality between groups to exist. Given this, it is unsurprising that political orientation was such a strong predictor in the current study and interacted with the privilege and construal conditions to predict reactions to privilege awareness. Results from the current study indicate that, when primed with psychological closeness, liberal participants who were made aware of their privilege were more likely to report higher levels of collective guilt, whereas conservative participants were more likely to report lower levels of collective guilt. This aligns with the previously mentioned research on political orientation and social dominance

orientation in that conservative people would be expected to express less prosocial reactions to privilege awareness than more liberal people. While it is logical that political orientation interacted with privilege awareness and construal condition to predict reactions to privilege awareness, it is nonetheless noteworthy that ingroup identification did *not* predict reactions to privilege awareness, despite being such a highly supported predictor in past studies. This is certainly an area in which more research should be conducted to clarify when social identity would be expected to predict reactions to privilege awareness.

Limitations and Future Directions

Limitations cannot be discussed without first addressing the national and global circumstances in which these data were collected. These data were collected in the fall of 2020 and the winter of 2021 in the midst of alarming coronavirus spikes. Additionally, the 2020 presidential election was underway, as well as a multitude of social movements and unrest regarding Black Lives Matter, hate crimes towards Asian Americans and many more. In short, the notion of privilege had likely been at the forefront of many people's minds, which may have contributed to the unexpected results of this study. If the idea of privilege was salient in many people's minds, it would have been difficult to adequately create a condition in which participants were not aware of their privilege. Thus, in addition to the reasons listed above, the social climate in which the data were collected may have greatly contributed to the lack of anticipated findings in this study.

Furthermore, at this time in the United States' history, political attitudes are extremely polarized. Seemingly many topics these days have become politicized as either representing a left or a right issue and in the present social and political climate, there are clear expectations for how liberals and conservatives should feel about and react to topics such as privilege. The results

from the current study that show political orientation is a robust predictor of reaction to privilege awareness may be relevant to the United States but may not be generalizable to populations in other countries and cultures where political ideology is less central to people's identity. It is possible that, if this study were to be conducted in a different country in which the connotation of political orientation was less polarizing, the political orientation may not have accounted for as much of the variance, and could have allowed the effects of ingroup identification, privilege awareness and construal to come through.

A side effect of conducting this study during the COVID-19 era meant that all data needed to be collected online. The original study design involved an interaction with a female confederate and the participant, but unfortunately this had to be removed from the study design due to logistical challenges including many last-minute cancellations, no-shows, or participants simply dropping out of the study once they reached the interpersonal interaction aspect of the experiment. As such, I was unable to collect data related to the interaction with the female confederate for all of the participants and instead had to switch to conducting the study without the live interpersonal interaction. An original goal of this study was to investigate the ways in which privilege awareness can influence how people interact with outgroup members, which is still an idea worthy of investigation. This is a particularly important area of research because, as the idea of privilege continues to be discussed in society, we need to have an adequate understanding of how these discussions can influence interpersonal interactions.

Investigating the effects of privilege awareness on interpersonal interactions would ideally be conducted with in-person interactions (as opposed to online web-based interactions), because that would allow researchers to collect more behavioral measures (such as body language and non-verbal cues) in addition to the participant's and confederate's perception of the

interaction. Research that could provide insight on effective (and ineffective) ways of broaching the topic of privilege, while simultaneously maintaining appropriate and productive interpersonal interactions, would translate well to real-world settings. After all, in our perpetual goal of working towards a society that is more accepting and better equipped to effectively acknowledge and address issues regarding privilege, it is crucial that we understand the ways in which privilege can be discussed in a productive manner. That way, as the notion of privilege continues to be brought up in the office or on social media, people can better know how to engage with the subject in a way that avoids the counter-productive defensive reaction but instead allows for a meaningful conversation between peers.

Conclusion

While the present study was unable to demonstrate that construal level interacts with privilege awareness and male identity to predict responses to privilege awareness, there is some indication that the way in which privilege is construed may influence how people respond. As researchers, it is important that we understand what contributes to different reactions to privilege awareness so we can establish effective ways of discussing privilege. In a society in which privilege greatly impacts people's lived experiences, it is crucial that those who hold such privileges are able to confront what it means to have a privileged identity. An inability or unwillingness to acknowledge one's own privileged identity will only further remove us from the goal of a more equitable and enriched society. After all, people cannot begin to use their privileged positions to effect positive change if they are not first willing and able to acknowledge what it means to hold privilege.

References

- Adams, J. S. (1965). Inequity in social exchange. In L. Berkowitz (ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 267-299). Academic Press
- Bai, H. (2020). Whites' racial identity centrality and social dominance orientation are interactively associated with far-right extremism. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *59*, 387-404.
- Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A. M., & Heatherton, T. F. (1994). Guilt: An interpersonal approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, *115*(2), 243–267. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.115.2.243>
- Branscombe, N.R., Slugoski, B., & Kappen, D.M. (2004). The measurement of collective guilt: What it is and what it is not. In *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives* (21). Cambridge University Press.
- Branscombe, N. R., & Doosje, B. (2004). *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Branscombe, N. R. (1998). Thinking about one's gender group's privileges or disadvantages: Consequences for well-being in women and men. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *37*(2), 167–184.
- Branscombe, N. R., Schmitt, M. T., & Schiffhauer, K. (2007). Racial attitudes in response to thoughts of White privilege. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *37*(2), 203–215. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.348>
- Brown, R., González, R., Zagefka, H., Manzi, J., & Čehajić, S. (2008). Nuestra culpa: Collective guilt and shame as predictors of reparation for historical wrongdoing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *94*(1), 75.
- Crosby F. The denial of personal discrimination. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *27*, 371-386.

- Davey, L. M., Bobocel, D. R., Son Hing, L. S., & Zanna, M. P. (1999). Preference for the Merit Principle Scale: An individual difference measure of distributive justice preferences. *Social Justice Research, 12*(3), 223–240. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022148418210>
- Iyer, A., Leach, C. W., & Crosby, F. J. (2003). White Guilt and Racial Compensation: The Benefits and Limits of Self-Focus. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*(1), 117–129. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167202238377>
- Knowles, E. D., & Lowery, B. S. (2012). Meritocracy, self-concerns, and whites' denial of racial inequity. *Self and Identity, 11*(2), 202–222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2010.542015>
- Lickel, B., Steele, R. R., & Schmader, T. (2011). Group-based shame and guilt: Emerging directions in research. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 5*(3), 153–163. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00340.x>
- Lowery, B. S., Knowles, E. D., & Unzueta, M. M. (2007). Framing inequity safely: Whites' motivated perceptions of racial privilege. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 33*(9), 1237–1250.
- Luhtanen, R., & Crocker, J. (1992). A collective self-esteem scale: Self-evaluation of one's social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 18*(3), 302–318.
- Mallett, R. K., & Swim, J. K. (2007). The influence of inequality, responsibility and justifiability on reports of group-based guilt for ingroup privilege. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 10*(1), 57–69.
- McIntosh, P. (2003). *Understanding Prejudice and Discrimination*. McGraw Hill.

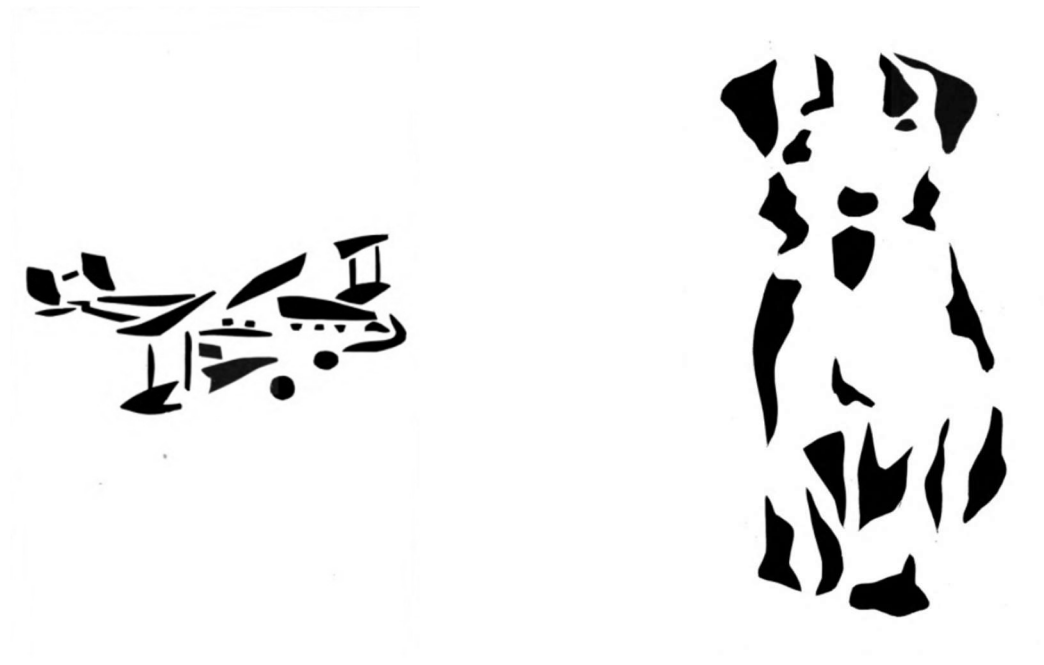
- Peetz, J., Gunn, G. R., & Wilson, A. E. (2010). Crimes of the past: Defensive temporal distancing in the face of past in-group wrongdoing. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 36*(5), 598–611.
- Phillips, L. T., & Lowery, B. S. (2015). The hard-knock life? Whites claim hardships in response to racial inequity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 61*, 12–18.
- Postmes, T., Branscombe, N. R., Spears, R., & Young, H. (1999). Comparative processes of personal and group judgements: Resolving the discrepancy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76*, 320–338.
- Powell, A. A., Branscombe, N. R., & Schmitt, M. T. (2005). Inequality as ingroup privilege or outgroup disadvantage: The impact of group focus on collective guilt and interracial attitudes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 31*(4), 508–521.
- Pratto, F., Sidanius, J., Stallworth, L. M., & Malle, B. F. (1994). Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*(4), 741–763.
- Street, R. (1931). *A Gestalt Completion Test: A study of a cross section of intellect*. Teachers College.
- Swim, J. K., & Hyers, L. L. (1999). Excuse me—What did you just say?!: Women’s public and private responses to sexist remarks. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 35*(1), 68–88.
- Swim, J. K., & Miller, D. L. (1999). White guilt: Its antecedents and consequences for attitudes toward affirmative action. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25*(4), 500–514.

- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of inter-group conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of inter-group relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Taylor, D. M., Wright, S. C., Moghaddam, F. M., & Lalonde, R. N. (1990). The personal/group discrimination discrepancy. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *16*, 254-262.
- Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2010). Construal-level theory of psychological distance. *Psychological Review*, *117*(2), 440–463. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018963>
- Walster, E., Berscheid, E., & Walster, G. W. (1973). New directions in equity research. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *25*(2), 151.

Appendix A: Tables and Figures

Figure 1.

Sample items from the Gestalt Completion Task (Street, 1931).



Participants assigned to the distant construal condition would identify these as a plane (left) and dog (right), whereas those assigned to the distant construal condition would count 25 shapes (left) and 20 shapes (right).

Figure 2.

Interaction Plot of Political Orientation X Privilege Condition X Construal Level Condition on Collective Guilt.

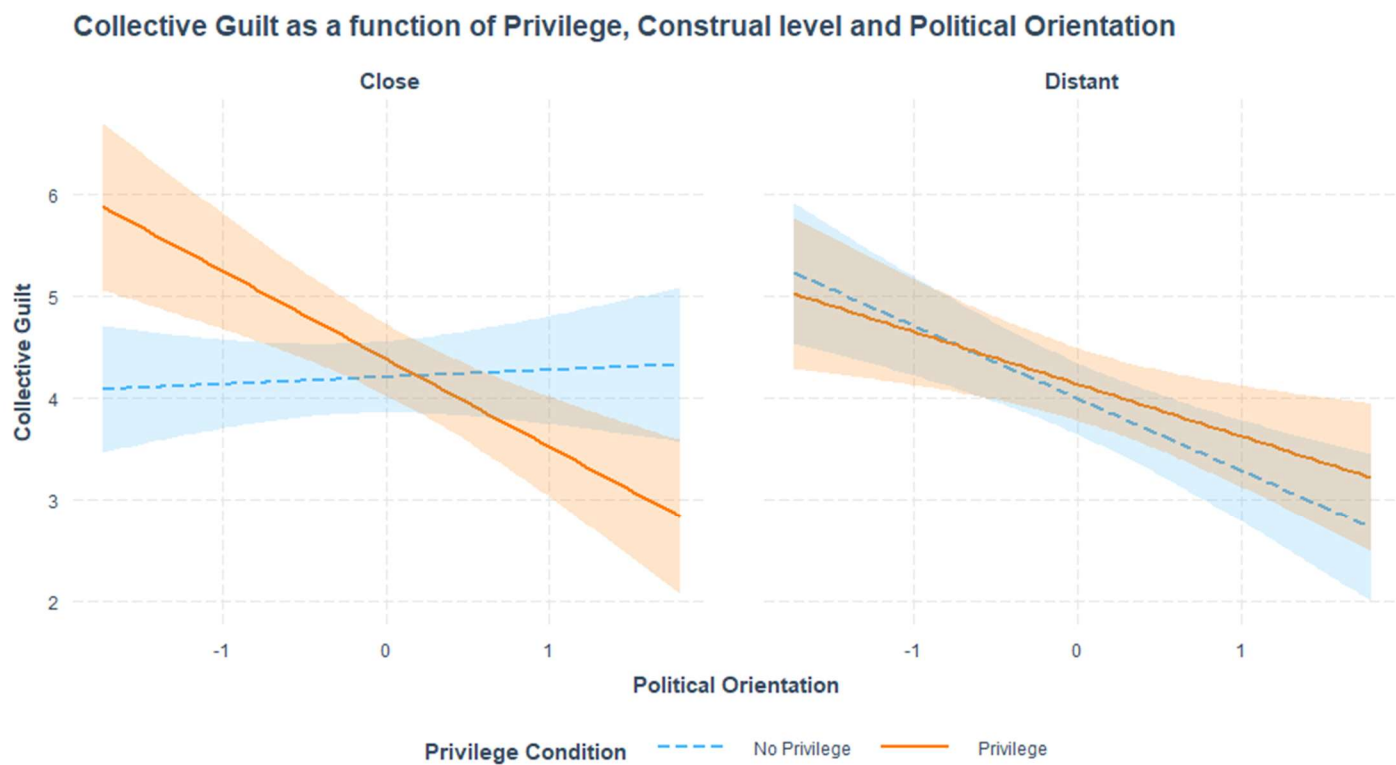


Figure 3.

Interaction Plot of Political Orientation X Privilege Condition X Construal Level Condition on the Confederate's Character Evaluation of the Participant.

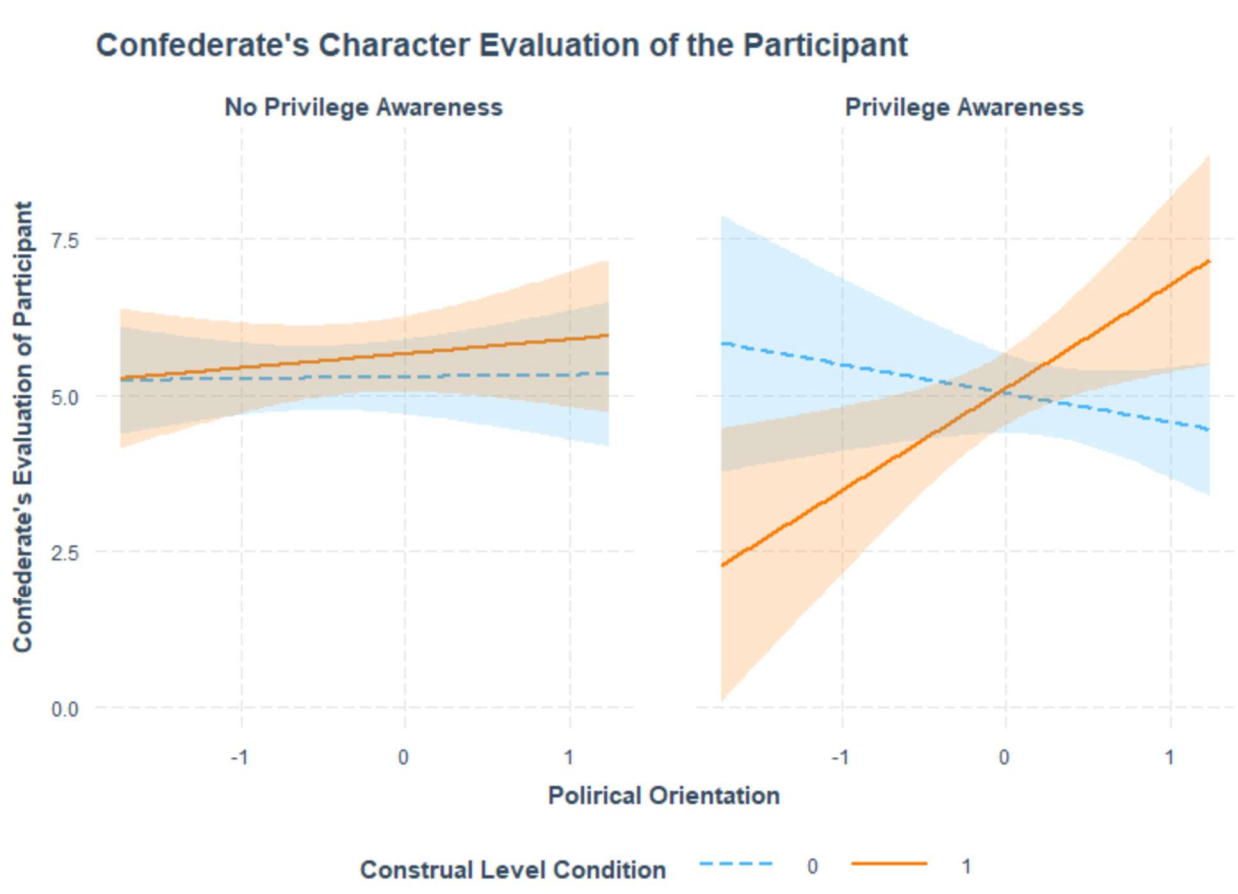


Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for all Self-Report Measurements.*

Measure	Privilege Awareness				No Privilege Awareness			
	Close Construal (n = 64)		Distant Construal (n = 61)		Close Construal (n = 61)		Distant Construal (n = 60)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Collective Self-Esteem	4.39	1.44	4.52	1.36	4.31	1.38	4.55	1.32
Statement Agreement	5.42	0.49	5.26	0.96	5.39	0.62	5.3	0.93
Modern Sexism	4.98	1.29	4.8	1.32	5.21	1.23	4.83	1.38
Collective Guilt	4.07	1.51	3.99	1.59	4.21	1.33	4.33	1.53
Collective Shame	3.88	1.46	3.90	1.85	3.92	1.66	4.01	1.74
Whole Group Accountability	3.94	1.39	3.76	1.65	4.10	1.48	3.90	1.55

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for the Ratings of the Quality of the Interpersonal Interaction and the Character Evaluation of the Participant and Confederate.*

Perspective	Privilege Awareness				No Privilege Awareness			
	Close Construal		Distant Construal		Close Construal		Distant Construal	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Quality of Interaction								
Participant	5.53	1.05	5.47	0.78	6.00	0.83	5.44	0.83
Confederate	5.13	1.37	4.86	1.29	4.91	1.44	5.56	1.44
Coder	4.47	0.95	4.45	0.57	4.49	0.57	4.69	0.72
Character Evaluation								
Participant	5.45	0.72	5.40	0.78	5.92	0.67	5.58	0.87
Confederate	5.23	1.13	5.02	0.90	5.10	1.04	5.46	0.80
Coder	4.82	0.62	4.81	0.42	4.84	0.55	4.89	0.42

Note. Participant, Confederate, and Coder scores on Quality of Interaction indicate the perceived quality of the interaction from each respective perspective. Participant scores on Character Evaluation represent participant's evaluation of the confederate. Confederate and coder scores on character evaluation represent the confederate's and coder's evaluations of the participant.

Table 3.

Results from the Hierarchical Regression Testing the Effects of Collective Self-Esteem, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Modern Sexism.

Predictor	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2
Intercept	1.08	0.81	0.00	.48	1.16	0.81	0.00	.49	1.08	0.82	0.00	.49	1.16	0.83	0.00	.49
Age	-0.02	0.03	-0.04		-0.02	0.03	-0.04		-0.02	0.03	-0.04		-0.03	0.03	-0.05	
Political Or.	0.45	0.04	0.61		0.43	0.04	0.59		0.43	0.04	0.59		0.43	0.04	0.59	
Sexual Or.	0.10	0.05	0.09		0.09	0.05	0.08		0.09	0.05	0.09		0.09	0.05	-.09	
SES	0.08	0.04	0.11		0.09	0.04	0.11		0.09	0.04	0.11		0.08	0.04	0.11	
Race	-0.02	0.03	-0.03		-0.02	0.03	-0.03		-0.01	0.03	-0.03		-0.02	0.03	-0.03	
PMP	0.12	0.10	0.06		0.11	0.10	0.05		0.12	0.10	0.06		0.11	0.10	0.05	
Privilege Cond.					0.13	0.13	0.05		0.21	0.18	0.00		0.25	0.62	0.09	
Construal Cond.					0.04	0.13	0.02		0.12	0.18	0.10		0.48	0.58	0.18	
CSE					0.08	0.07	0.06		0.07	0.11	0.05		0.10	0.13	0.08	
Priv*CL									-0.16	0.26	-0.05		-0.16	0.26	-0.22	
Priv*CSE									0.07	0.13	0.09		-0.01	0.18	-0.01	
CSE*CL									-0.03	0.13	-0.05		-0.11	0.17	-0.15	
Priv*CL*CSE													0.15	0.26	0.17	

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status. PMP = Preference for Merit Principal. CSE = Collective Self-Esteem and was z-scored for these

analyses. Priv = Privilege condition: 0 = No privilege awareness; 1 = Privilege awareness. CL = Construal level condition, 0 = close; 1

= distant. Bolded values indicate statistical significance at the .05 level.

Table 4.

Results from the Hierarchical Regression Testing the Effects of Collective Self-Esteem, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Collective Guilt

Predictor	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2
Intercept	7.36	1.13	0.00	.20	7.51	1.14	0.00	.21	7.40	1.16	0.00	.22	7.39	1.17	0.00	.22
Age	-0.03	0.04	-0.06		-0.04	0.04	-0.06		-0.04	0.04	-0.06		-0.04	0.04	-0.06	
Political Or.	-0.03	0.05	-.38		-0.32	0.05	-0.39		-0.33	0.05	-0.39		-0.33	0.05	-0.39	
Sexual Or.	-0.10	0.07	-0.08		-0.10	0.08	-0.09		-0.10	0.08	-0.08		-0.10	0.08	-0.08	
SES	0.06	0.05	0.07		0.06	0.05	-0.07		0.06	0.05	0.07		0.06	0.05	0.07	
Race	-0.06	0.04	-0.10		-0.06	0.03	-0.09		-0.06	0.04	-0.09		-0.06	0.04	-0.09	
PMP	-0.30	0.04	-0.12		-0.31	0.15	-0.13		-0.30	0.15	-0.13		-0.30	0.15	-0.12	
Privilege Cond.					0.18	0.18	0.06		-0.23	0.25	0.08		-0.23	0.25	0.08	
Construal Cond.					-0.12	0.07	-0.04		-0.06	0.25	-0.02		-0.06	0.25	-0.02	
CSE					0.08	0.09	0.05		-0.01	0.16	-0.01		-0.02	0.18	-0.01	
Priv*CL									-0.11	0.36	0.03		-0.11	0.36	-0.03	
Priv*CSE									0.20	0.18	0.09		0.21	0.26	0.09	
CSE*CL									0.00	0.18	0.00		0.01	0.25	0.00	
Priv*CL*CSE													-0.01	0.36	0.00	

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status. PMP = Preference for Merit Principal. CSE = Collective Self-Esteem and was z-scored for these analyses. Priv = Privilege condition: 0 = No privilege awareness; 1 = Privilege awareness. CL = Construal level condition, 0 = close; 1 = distant. Bolded values indicate statistical significance at the .05 level.

Table 5.

Results from the Hierarchical Regression Testing the Effects of Collective Self-Esteem Privilege Awareness, Construal Level, and Covariates on Whole Group Accountability.

Predictor	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2
Intercept	7.01	1.37	0.00	.06	7.05	1.39	0.00	.06	6.98	1.40	0.00	.07	7.07	1.41	0.00	.07
Age	-0.06	0.04	-0.09		-0.06	0.04	-0.10		-0.06	0.04	-0.09		-0.06	0.04	-0.10	
Political Or.	-0.16	0.06	-0.17		-0.17	0.07	-0.18		-0.17	0.07	-0.19		-0.17	0.07	-0.19	
Sexual Or.	-0.05	0.09	-0.04		-0.06	0.09	-0.05		-0.05	0.09	-0.04		-0.05	0.09	-0.04	
SES	0.02	0.07	0.02		0.03	0.07	0.03		0.02	0.07	0.02		0.02	0.07	0.02	
Race	-0.03	0.05	-0.04		-0.03	0.05	-0.04		-0.03	0.05	-0.04		-0.03	0.05	-0.04	
PMP	-0.24	0.17	-0.09		-0.25	0.18	-0.09		-0.24	0.18	-0.09		-0.25	0.05	-0.09	
Privilege Cond.					0.22	0.22	0.06		0.20	0.30	0.06		0.20	0.30	0.06	
Construal Cond.					0.01	0.21	0.00		0.01	0.30	0.00		0.00	0.30	0.00	
CSE					0.03	0.11	0.02		-0.24	0.19	-0.14		-0.19	0.22	-0.11	
Priv*CL									0.04	0.43	0.01		0.04	0.43	0.01	
Priv*CSE									0.24	0.22	0.10		0.15	0.31	0.06	
CSE*CL									0.32	0.22	0.13		0.23	0.30	0.10	
Priv*CL*CSE													0.19	0.44	0.05	

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status. PMP = Preference for Merit Principal. CSE = Collective Self-Esteem and was z-scored for these analyses. Priv = Privilege condition: 0 = No privilege awareness; 1 = Privilege awareness. CL = Construal level condition, 0 = close; 1 = distant. Bolded values indicate statistical significance at the .05 level.

Table 6.

Results from the Hierarchical Regression Testing the Effects of Collective Self-Esteem, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Whole Group Accountability.

Predictor	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2
Intercept	4.91	1.26	0.00	.06	5.06	1.27	0.00	.06	4.98	1.28	0.00	.07	4.95	1.30	0.00	.07
Age	-0.02	0.04	-0.02		-0.02	0.04	-0.03		-0.01	0.04	-0.02		-0.01	0.04	-0.02	
Political Or.	-0.17	0.06	-.21		-0.18	0.06	-0.21		-0.18	0.06	-0.21		-0.18	0.06	-0.21	
Sexual Or.	0.03	0.08	0.03		0.03	0.08	0.02		0.03	0.08	-0.02		0.03	0.08	0.03	
SES	<i>0.11</i>	0.06	<i>0.12</i>		<i>0.10</i>	0.06	<i>0.12</i>		<i>0.10</i>	0.06	<i>0.12</i>		<i>0.10</i>	0.06	<i>0.12</i>	
Race	0.03	0.16	0.04		0.03	0.04	0.04		0.03	0.04	0.04		0.03	0.04	0.05	
PMP	-0.21	0.16	-0.09		-0.21	0.16	-0.09		-0.21	0.16	-0.08		-0.20	0.16	-0.08	
Privilege Cond.					-0.07	0.20	-0.02		-0.11	0.28	-0.04		-0.11	0.28	-0.04	
Construal Cond.					-0.11	0.20	-0.04		-0.14	0.28	-0.05		-0.14	0.28	-0.05	
CSE					0.08	0.10	0.05		-0.04	0.17	-0.03		-0.05	0.20	-0.03	
Priv*CL									0.08	0.40	0.02		0.08	0.40	0.02	
Priv*CSE									0.27	0.20	0.12		0.30	0.29	0.13	
CSE*CL									0.00	0.20	0.00		0.02	0.27	0.01	
Priv*CL*CSE													-0.04	0.40	-0.01	

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status. PMP = Preference for Merit Principal. CSE = Collective Self-Esteem and was z-scored for these analyses. Priv = Privilege condition: 0 = No privilege awareness; 1 = Privilege awareness. CL = Construal level condition, 0 = close; 1 = distant. Bolded values indicate statistical significance at the .05 level and italicized values indicate significance at the .10 level.

Table 7.

Results from the Final Hierarchical Regression Model Testing the Effects of Construal Level, Privilege Awareness, and Collective Self Esteem and Covariates on the Overall Quality of the Interpersonal Interaction.

Predictor	Participant's Perspective				Confederate's Perspective				Coder's Perspective			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2
Intercept	2.33	1.79	0.00	.28	-0.26	2.77	0.00	.26	2.30	1.57	0.00	.19
Age	0.08	0.05	0.23		0.09	0.07	0.19		0.07	0.04	0.25	
Political Or.	-0.01	0.11	-0.06		0.13	0.17	0.13		0.16	0.10	0.29	
Sexual Or.	0.01	0.11	0.01		0.40	0.18	0.39		0.07	0.10	0.13	
SES	0.06	0.08	0.22		-0.10	0.13	-0.13		-0.03	0.07	-0.07	
Race	0.03	0.05	0.19		-0.02	0.08	-0.04		0.00	0.04	-0.01	
PMP	0.32	0.24	0.17		0.39	0.37	0.18		0.08	0.21	0.07	
Privilege Cond.	<i>-0.69</i>	0.40	-0.33		-0.52	0.62	-0.19		-0.28	0.35	-0.19	
Construal Cond.	-0.75	0.37	-0.29		0.70	0.57	-0.26		0.24	0.32	0.16	
CSE	0.15	0.22	0.05		<i>-0.60</i>	<i>0.34</i>	<i>-0.43</i>		-0.21	0.19	-0.28	
Priv*CL	0.67	0.53	0.15		-0.22	0.82	-0.07		-0.11	0.47	-0.06	
Priv*CSE	0.39	0.40	0.01		<i>1.08</i>	<i>0.62</i>	<i>0.39</i>		0.12	0.35	0.08	
CSE*CL	-0.34	0.32	-0.11		0.37	0.49	0.17		0.30	0.28	0.25	
Priv*CL*CSE	-0.76	0.70	-0.07		<i>-1.91</i>	<i>1.09</i>	<i>-0.35</i>		-0.05	0.61	-0.02	

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status. PMP = Preference for Merit Principal. CSE = Collective Self-Esteem and was z-scored for these analyses. Priv = Privilege condition: 0 = No privilege awareness; 1 = Privilege awareness. CL = Construal level condition, 0 = close; 1 = distant. Bolded values indicate statistical significance at the .05 level and italicized values indicate significance at the .10 level.

Table 8.

Results from the Final Hierarchical Regression Model Testing the Effects of Construal Level, Privilege Awareness, and Collective Self Esteem and Covariates on Character Evaluations During the Interpersonal Interaction.

Predictor	Participant Evaluation of the Confederate				Confederate Evaluation of the Participant				Coder Evaluation of the Participant			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	R^2
Intercept	2.77	1.61	0.00	.24	2.47	2.11	0.00	.18	4.27	1.21	0.00	.12
Age	0.07	0.04	0.23		0.05	0.06	0.15		0.05	0.03	0.26	
Political Or.	-0.04	0.10	-0.06		0.11	0.13	0.14		0.04	0.07	.10	
Sexual Or.	0.00	0.10	0.01		0.16	0.13	0.22		0.02	0.09	0.06	
SES	0.09	0.07	0.22		-0.12	0.10	0.19		-0.03	0.06	-0.10	
Race	0.06	0.05	0.19		-0.05	0.06	-0.13		-0.02	0.04	-0.11	
PMP	0.21	0.21	0.17		0.30	0.28	0.19		0.01	0.16	0.02	
Privilege Cond.	-0.51	0.36	-0.33		-0.31	0.47	-0.16		-0.05	0.28	-0.05	
Construal Cond.	-0.44	0.33	-0.29		0.45	0.43	0.23		0.05	0.26	0.05	
CSE	0.04	0.20	0.05		-0.22	0.26	-0.22		-0.13	0.15	-0.26	
Priv*CL	0.28	0.48	0.15		-0.24	0.63	-0.10		-0.03	0.37	-0.03	
Priv*CSE	0.02	0.36	0.01		0.51	0.47	0.26		0.06	0.26	0.06	
CSE*CL	-0.13	0.29	-0.11		0.30	0.38	0.19		0.12	0.21	0.15	
Priv*CL*CSE	-0.21	0.63	-0.07		-0.78	0.83	0.20		0.09	0.46	0.05	

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status. PMP = Preference for Merit Principal. CSE = Collective Self-Esteem and was z-scored for these analyses. Priv = Privilege condition: 0 = No privilege awareness; 1 = Privilege awareness. CL = Construal level condition, 0 = close; 1 = distant.

Table 9.

Results from the Multiple Regression Model Testing the Effects of Political Orientation, Privilege Awareness, Construal Level and Covariates on Collective Guilt.

Predictor	Estimates					Model Statistics		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Intercept	6.87	1.16	0.00	4.58, 9.16	< .001	5.33	< .001	.22
Age	-0.04	0.04	-0.06	-0.11, 0.03	.288			
Sexual Orientation	-0.09	0.08	-0.08	-0.24, 0.06	.248			
SES	0.06	0.05	0.07	-0.04, 0.17	.248			
Race	-0.05	0.04	-0.08	-0.13, 0.03	.191			
PMP	-0.33	0.15	-0.14	-0.62, -0.04	.027			
Political Orientation	0.07	0.17	0.05	-0.27, 0.41	.689			
Privilege Condition	0.18	0.25	0.06	-0.32, 0.67	.481			
Construal Condition	-0.21	0.25	-0.07	-0.70, 0.29	.413			
Political Or*Privilege Cond.	-0.93	0.26	-0.42	-1.44, -0.42	< .001			
Political Or*Construal Cond.	-0.78	0.24	-0.37	-1.25, -0.31	.001			
Privilege Cond*Construal Cond.	-0.04	0.36	-0.01	-0.75, 0.67	.917			
Political Or*Privilege Cond*Construal Cond.	1.31	0.36	0.37	0.42, 1.84	.002			

Note. SES = Socioeconomic Status. PMP = Preference for Merit Principal. Political orientation was z-scored for these analyses.

Privilege Condition was coded such that 0 = no privilege awareness and 1 = privilege awareness. Construal level condition was coded such that 0 = close and 1 = distant.

Appendix B: Materials and Measures

Demographics

With which gender do you identify?

Men

Women

Non-Binary

Other

How old are you?

What year are you in college?

With which racial group(s) do you identify?

White

Black

Native American

Asian

Latinx

Other

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

Gay/Lesbian

Bisexual

Pansexual

Asexual

Heterosexual/Straight

How would you describe your political orientation? *participants will be shown a slider scale and can move the scale to indicate anywhere between “Extremely Conservative” and “Extremely Liberal”*

How would you describe your socioeconomic status? *participants will be shown a ladder on Qualtrics and will indicate the rung on which they think they fall*

Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE)

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
Overall, my group membership as a man has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a man is an important reflection of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
That I am a man is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In general, being a man is an important part of my self-image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Filler Items to be used in addition to CSE

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
Overall, my group membership as a student has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a student is an important reflection of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
That I am a student is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In general, being a student is an important part of my self-image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, my group membership as an American has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being an American is an important reflection of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
That I am an American is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In general, being an American is an important part of my self-image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, my group memberships have very little to do with how I feel about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social groups I belong to are an important reflection of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The social groups I belong to are unimportant to my sense of what kind of a person I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In general, belonging to social groups is an important part of my self-image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Preference for the Merit Principal Scale

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
In the work organizations, each employee ought to be named employee of the month at least once, even if they are not deserving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In organizations, people who do their job well ought to rise to the top.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is wrong for an employee to give a job to someone they know without advertising the job to other candidates.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In life, people ought to get what they deserve.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The effort a worker puts into a job ought to be reflected in the size of a raise they receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When students are working on a group project, each member of the group ought to get the same grade regardless of the amount of effort each team member puts in.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Promotion decisions ought to take into account the effort workers put into their job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Members of a work team ought to receive different pay depending on the amount each person contributed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sometimes, it is appropriate to give a raise to the worker who most needs it, even if they are not the most hard working.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Qualifications ought to be given more weight than seniority when making promotion decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Between two equally smart students applying for the same job, the one who is the harder worker ought to always get the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When a bonus is given to a team for good performance, the money ought to always be divided equally among the group members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is never appropriate to choose which student to hire by how much the student needs the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People ought to be able to get away with poor quality work under certain circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If every person in an office has the same abilities, the promotion ought to always be given to the person who puts in the most effort.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Construal Level Priming – Gestalt Completion Task

Instructions (Distant Condition): *Recognizing pictures from its components has been shown to be an important perceptual process. This task will involve you looking at abstract pictures and trying to identify what the subject of the picture is. Please use the textbox below each picture to record what you think the picture is.*

Instructions (Close Condition): *Examining details of pictures has been shown to be an important perceptual process. This task will involve you looking at abstract pictures and counting the number of individual shapes in each picture. Please use the textbox below each picture to record the number of shapes you have counted.*



plane



dog



stove



baby



boat



cat



soldier



man on a horse



rabbit



locomotive



person on a bike



bearded man



person taking a photo

Privilege Statements

Privilege Statements – Male Privilege Awareness, Close Condition (I Statements)

<i>You will now read through a series of statements relating to men. Please read through the statements carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I can walk alone at night and not be afraid that I will be sexually harassed or sexually assaulted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If I were to be victimized, I probably wouldn't have to justify myself (e.g., defend what I was wearing).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can succeed without other people being surprised by my accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do not have to deal with unwanted attention being constantly drawn to my appearance (such as how attractive I am).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can assume that my opinion will be taken under serious consideration while having conversations with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In the work field, I would be more likely to receive a promotion than a female coworker.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can assume that my gender will not be seen as a liability when working with others in a group setting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I make mistakes, people generally do not attribute my mistake to my gender.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can be assertive without being called "bossy" or "bitchy."	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I am mistreated, I can assume that the reason has nothing to do with my gender.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Privilege Statements – Male Privilege Awareness, Distant Condition (group statements)

<i>You will now read through a series of statements relating to men. Please read through the statements carefully and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
Men in general can walk alone at night and not be afraid of being sexually harassed or sexually assaulted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When men are assaulted, they generally do not have to justify themselves (e.g., defend what they were wearing).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men can succeed without other people being surprised by their accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men do not have to deal with unwanted attention being constantly drawn to their appearance (such as how attractive they are).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men can assume that their opinions will be taken under serious consideration while having a conversation with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In the work field, men are more likely to receive promotions than their female coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men can assume that their gender will not be seen as a liability when working with others in a group setting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When men make mistakes, people generally do not attribute their mistake to their gender.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Men can be assertive without being called “bossy” or “bitchy.”	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When men are mistreated, they can assume that the reason has nothing to do with their gender.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Privilege Statements – No Privilege Awareness, Close Condition (I Statements)

<i>You will now be presented with a series of statements relating to people in general. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I like going on walks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I typically wear clothes that I like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am proud of my accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like to feel good about my appearance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I appreciate it when others consider my opinion in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I enter the work force, I will probably get promoted at some point.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy working with others in a group setting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't like making mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am always assertive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I am mistreated I tend to get upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Privilege Statements – No Privilege awareness, Distant condition (Group Statements)

<i>You will now be presented with a series of statements relating to people in general. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
People like going on walks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People typically wear clothes that they like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People tend to be proud of their accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People like to feel good about their appearance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People like it when others consider their opinions in conversations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Most people get promoted at some point in their career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People typically like to work with others in a group setting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People don't like making mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
People in general are always assertive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When people are mistreated they tend to get upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Modern Sexism Scale

<i>Read through the statements regarding sexism in America and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
Discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the United States.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Women often miss out on good jobs due to sexual discrimination.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner in the media.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
On average, people in society treat husbands and wives equally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is easy to understand the anger of women's groups in America.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is easy to understand why women's groups are still concerned about societal limitations of women's opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Collective Guilt Scale

<i>Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I feel guilty about men's harmful actions towards women.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel guilty about the negative things other men have done to women.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe I should help repair the damage caused to women by men.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel regret for some of the things men have done to women.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can easily feel guilty for bad outcomes brought about by men.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sometimes I feel guilty because of the benefits that being a man brings me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would feel guilty if I had thought that I had behaved in a sexist manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Collective Shame Scale

<i>Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I feel ashamed of how others might think about men because of the harm inflicted against women.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel bad because many people think poorly of men because of how they are treated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel ashamed when I think of the negative way in which men are perceived by the world because of how some men treat women.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Whole Group Accountability Scale

<i>Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
If a group harms members of another group, then the whole group should feel guilty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A group ought to be held responsible for the actions of its members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can see holding people responsible for the actions of its members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Whole groups, like individuals, ought to be held accountable for their actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think that members of a group are accountable for what others in their group do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Desert Island Task

























Instructions in Qualtrics: *For this experiment, you will be partnered up with someone on Zoom and asked to work through an activity with them. You will need to be in a quiet space where you can allow Zoom to access your camera and microphone. When you are ready, please click the Zoom link below. DO NOT EXIT OUT OF YOUR QUALTRICS TAB*

Instructions in Zoom *distributed via chat*: *Hello. We are interested in evaluating the quality of interactions people are able to have in online spaces. You will be given a simple activity to work through with your partner. For this activity, you and your partner will need to imagine that you are going to be stranded on a desert island together and you need to choose 12 people to bring with you. You will be provided with a photo and brief description of 24 different people and must take turns choosing someone you would like to come with you to the deserted island. Please*

explain your decisions. You will have 5 minutes to complete the task, after which you will get further instructions on how to finish the experiment.

Descriptions of Desert Island people:

Please choose a total of 12 people with whom you would like to bring to a deserted island.

							
Elementary Schooler	Accountant	Artist	College Student	Middle Schooler	Photographer	Retired Army Veteran	College Professor
							
Model	Middle School Teacher	CEO	WNBA Athlete	Lawyer	Quilt Shop Owner	Financial Advisor	Veterinarian
							
Writer	Software Engineer	Astronaut	Manager	Social Media Influencer	Musician	Doctor	Stay-at-home Mom

Quality of Interaction Questionnaire – Given to the participant and confederate

<i>Please think about the activity you just did and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
I liked my partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would interact with this person again if given the chance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My partner seemed to like me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel like my partner listened to what I had to say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My partner did not seem interested in what I had to say	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think my partner liked what I had to say	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My partner seemed to defer to what I had to say	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, I think the interaction went well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, I think the interaction went poorly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall, I think the interaction could have gone better	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

You will now be asked to rate your interaction partner on a variety of characteristics.

<i>Think about the person with whom you just interacted and rate the extent to which you think each of the following characteristics describes them.</i>	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sexist	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nervous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Why do you think the interaction went the way that it did? For example, if you think the interaction went poorly, what about it was poor? If you think it went well, what about it went well?

Funnel Debriefing Questionnaire

You will now be asked a few questions about your experiences in the studies you just participated in. When responding to these questions, please consider all three sections of the experiment that you participated in, not just the most recent part of the experiment.

Did any of the tasks affect what you did on any of the other tasks? If so, please explain.

What do you think the purpose of these studies were?

Did any part of these studies seem strange or suspicious to you? If so, please explain.