The High-Status Compassion Bias

When and Why do People Assist High- and Low-status Victims?

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Abstract

Does the social status of victims in emergencies play a role in bystanders' compassionate orientations towards them? In this thesis, I examine the hitherto unexplored proposition that bystanders may be more inclined toward expressing compassion in favor of victims who signal high (rather than low) social status. I tested this novel thesis in six experiments that systematically varied the social status of victims of fabricated emergencies and afterward measured their compassion to investigate whether the expression of this emotion was stronger for higher (relative to lower) status victims. In doing so, I considered a variety of situational and individual difference factors that could enable (or constrain) a compassion bias favoring victims from high-status backgrounds.

In the first empirical chapter (3), I showed that participants (N = 436) reported higher compassionate intentions toward victims of a terror attack that were described as coming from a high-status (vs. low-status) background, while also providing *indirect* evidence that cost calculations may play a role in this process. In the second empirical chapter (4), I directly investigated the cost-calculus caveat and explored the role of ideological persuasions. The initial experiment in Chapter 4 (N = 273) showed that even participants with an egalitarian ideology do sometimes succumb to the high-status compassion bias, but this occurs when the cost of doing so is trivial for them: a trend that was largely replicated in a

subsequent experiment in that chapter (*N* = 288). The final empirical chapter (5) explored the role that threat appraisals might play in the process, testing the idea of whether high-status victims will continue to benefit from a compassion bias even when they seem threatening to bystanders. In the three experiments (*N* = 1,373) reported in Chapter 5, I showed that threat appraisals undermine a compassion bias favoring victims from both high and low-status backgrounds.

Hence, overall, the preponderance of the evidence across Chapters 3-5 affirms the existence of compassion bias favoring victims from high-status backgrounds, although they also do outline important situational and individual difference factors that can sometimes eliminate or even reverse this trend. This is an important contribution in terms of not only theoretical advancements (i.e., helping to show that status plays a role in compassion during emergencies) but also practice (e.g., it could be useful in the training of frontline emergency responders).

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Chapter 1:

An Introduction to the Status Compassion Bias

"Compassion is biased; concern is biased; and even cost-benefit reasoning is biased. Even when we try hard to be fair, impartial, and objective, we nonetheless tend to tilt things to favor the outcome that benefits ourselves."

(p. 50)

-Paul Bloom, *Against Empathy*, 2016

As Bloom (2016) notes, compassion can be influenced by many things, even (maybe especially) in ways that may not always be reasonable or logical. Sometimes, people may be more likely to experience greater compassion for someone, and subsequently, assist them over others that objectively need it more. In 2015, for instance, after the news of the attack in Paris broke, *#PrayForParis* quickly swept social media platforms, with 99 hashtags used per minute on Twitter, with a massive outpour of users expressing compassion for the Paris victims (Kuang, 2015). Cities around the world also lit up the colors of the French flag in solidarity (Kassam, 2015), and Facebook activated the Safety Check feature which, until the Paris attack, had only been used for natural disasters to let people's loved ones know they were unharmed (Chappellet-Lanier, 2015).

Meanwhile, a similar attack on Beirut a few hours prior to the Paris attack received significantly less solidarity on the internet (only 4 hashtags

for Beirut per minute; Kuang, 2015), causing neither a Safety Check feature on Facebook to be triggered nor eliciting global solidarity (Barnard, 2015). This raises the question of why, out of two similar attacks that occurred within hours of each other, only one activated such widespread compassion (Ajaka, 2015). One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that Paris and Beirut differ in perceived societal status: with Paris seen as having a higher status (and thus advantaged) relative to the lower-status Beirut (the disadvantaged).

Motivated by the seemingly uneven compassion towards advantaged and disadvantaged victims in real-world situations, I aimed to investigate the potential effect of a victim's perceived social status on people's willingness to express compassion for them, as well as why this status bias may emerge in some contexts, but not in others. In doing so, this thesis aimed to address two related problems:

a) Whether onlookers of a victimization are more likely to express greater compassion for a victim of a higher- than a lower status. That is, I wanted to find out whether a high-status compassion bias exists, to begin with.
b) And, if a high-status compassion exists, what the ideological basis for it might be, as well as the conditions under which this bias is most visible, attenuated, or even reversed.

In this chapter, therefore, I briefly introduce and discuss the more established (and related) literature on prosocial behavior, with an emphasis on the importance of a victim's social status in shaping subsequent compassionate expressions (e.g., helping intentions). Later, I consider

factors that could explain the emergence of a status-based compassion bias. For the sake of simplicity and narrative flow, I will suspend a discussion of the operational definitions of the key concepts of status and compassion, as used in this thesis, until Chapter 2.

1.1 What Motivates Compassionate Intentions?

Compassionate assistance is an important facet of human behavior, and the experience and/or expression of this emotion is not necessarily tied to a single cause. Emerging research has shown, for instance, that compassionate expressions (such as helping) can be influenced by numerous factors. These include, but are not limited to, the avoidance of guilt or shame (La Ferle et al., 2019), a desire to achieve monetary rewards (Batson & Shaw, 1991), or simply as a result of reciprocal exchanges whereby obtained or expected favors from others engender prosociality in people (Gouldner, 1960). Other research has also shown that even the victim's identity markers (their attire; Carvalho et al., 2019; their relation to the person; Saulin et al., 2019; their age; Klettke & Mellor, 2018) can affect the degree of compassion a victim elicits.

Importantly, the present literature suggests the potential for a number of these situational and identity-related factors may sometimes interact in ways that explain compassionate expressions towards victims. The aim of the current thesis is not to rehash and/or re-examine all the factors known to play a role in peoples' compassionate expressions. Rather, the thrust of this thesis is more narrowly focused on how compassionate orientations could be affected by an aspect of a victim's social identity – e.g., their social status.

As Batson et al. (2011) argue, people are often compassionate towards those in need due to multiple factors, and such factors may conflict from time to time. For instance, empathic motivations to assist someone more than another person may conflict with the helper's sense of justice (see Batson et al., 1995). To reach a compromise between motivations, people may look for ways to justify whichever motives take precedence. Prioritizing motives, however, could be tricky, especially during emergencies where the need for immediate assistance to victims may require quick decision-making. It is entirely possible, therefore, that one way people might overcome such a decisional dilemma could be to pay attention, whether consciously or not, to a victim's identity that could permit inferences about the victim(s)' social status (and consequent deservingness) to be drawn (Mattan et al., 2017). That is, a victim's social status may affect onlookers' conclusions of which sorts of victims are *more worthy* of compassion in an emergency.

In the specific instance described above, I propose that people may be more compassionate toward victims who are perceived to be high in social status and that this should elicit a greater tendency to soothe their predicament (e.g., by offering to assist them) relative to victims from a lower status background. This proposition is compatible with extant perspectives in the literature. Firstly, following the rules of reciprocal exchange (Gouldner, 1960), it is potentially a worthier investment to help powerful people because they are better resourced to reciprocate such gestures more so than the powerless. This reasoning is also consistent with reciprocal altruism, a line of research under evolutionary psychology that

similarly highlights the benefits of compassionate expressions towards higher-status victims relative to lower-status victims (see Goetz et al., 2010; Penner et al., 2005, for reviews).

Secondly, and at the ideological level, people may be more compassionately oriented towards those in superior positions because such individuals are perceived to be more competent (Fiske et al., 2002) and, therefore, more *deserving* of support. That is, it may seem unwise to "*waste"* one's compassion on those who may be perceived as lacking the competence to get back on their feet, especially in light of the limited level of support that bystanders are often constrained to provide in an emergency. Even evidence from non-emergency settings where people may be less pressured to make snap judgments about worthiness also reveals a greater tendency for teachers to attend to, and assist, students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds more than they do for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (e.g., Batruch et al., 2017). In short, a high-status compassion privilege aligns with people's self-interests (either materially, ideologically, or symbolically), even when the higher-status helpee is an outsider (outgroup member) rather than kin (or ingroup member, Owuamalam & Rubin, 2014; Täuber & van Leeuwen, 2012; van Leeuwen et al., 2011; Hopkins et al., 2007).

The idea that a victim's social valuation can bias people's willingness to assist others is not entirely new, based on what is known about the role of social identities in the process. Although social status was not formally examined, past research on a range of social identity groups shows, for example, that people generally feel less compassion for those in

disadvantaged groups (e.g., homeless people, drug users, HIV-positive individuals, sexual assault survivors, and overweight individuals; Gillmor et al., 2014; Batson et al., 2002; Batson et al., 1997; Crocker et al., 1993), especially if they are also perceived to be culpable for their misfortune (Gillmor et al., 2014; Batson et al., 2002; Batson et al., 1997; Crocker et al., 1993). However, the commonality in the foregoing examples is that the social identities in question are often the targets of a social stigma (a low-status conferring attribute). In short, it is not at all difficult to imagine, based on the foregoing examples, that signals of a victim's social standing could similarly bias onlookers' compassionate orientations towards such targets, even during an emergency.

This is not to say that people will always assist others during an emergency for self-interested or identity-related considerations. After all, many accounts of altruism have been observed where people have chosen to help others, even when no clear identity signals or benefits arose (e.g., Romano et al., 2017). There have been times, too, in which people have assisted a disadvantaged group or person, even over those from higher status backgrounds (Nadler, 2008; Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Nadler, 2002). These occurrences, however, should strengthen (not weaken) a resolution to establish the reality of a high-status compassion bias, and to then try to unpack the conditions under which such a tendency could be reversed in manners that are consistent with patterns reported elsewhere in the literature (Palmer et al., 2022; Fernandes et al., 2021; Seinen & Schram, 2006; Solomon et al., 1982).

These two primary goals are by no means trivial, yet, to my knowledge, much of the literature has not offered a systematic exploration of the aims underlying the current thesis. Indeed, understanding why and when compassion biases occur can help with the development of interventions to reduce (even curb) their occurrence, so that compassionate assistance to victims (especially in an emergency) is driven more by an assessment of need rather than perceived social status. In short, the current research aims to bridge the theoretical and empirical vacuum concerning the two goals outlined earlier.

1.2 Moderators of Compassion for Low- and High-status Victims.

Although there could be many different determinants of compassion bias favoring victims from high-status backgrounds, I discuss below three moderators included in the thesis that may help explain its occurrence.

1.2.1 Cost of compassion

Compassionate intentions often run on a cost-reward system (Brown, 2016; Penner et al., 2005), where people are less likely to assist others if the benefits are outweighed by the potential personal costs of doing so. Böhm et al. (2018) showed that people were less likely to assist refugees the higher the individual cost of doing so was. Other research has corroborated Böhm et al. (2018) across a variety of contexts (Dong, 2015; Yanay & Yanay, 2008). That is, the likelihood of a bystander expressing compassion towards victims increases when:

a) the perceived cost of intervening is reduced relative to the potential reward (see Willer et al., 2015; Perlow & Weeks, 2002),

b) there are minimal consequences for *not* helping (such as negative emotional response, both by the bystander and other onlookers; e.g., Dovidio et al., 1991).

In short, when a compassion-eliciting emergency is too costly for people, then they may feel reluctant to sacrifice their self-interest to help others, especially in contexts where the helpee in question is a stranger, rather than kin or close friend (Stewart-Williams, 2007).

Until now, however, very little research attention (if any at all) has been paid to how a *helpee's/victim's* status identity could impact the cost calculus of compassionate assistance. As I have argued elsewhere, one way of deciding whether to offer compassionate assistance to a stranger, for instance, might be to pay attention to whether the victim is worthy of help. It, then, seems intuitive that considerations over the cost of compassion may factor into bystanders' judgments about deservingness. In this thesis, I sought to establish whether a victim(s)' social status could influence people's decisions concerning costly versus uncostly compassionate assistance when the victim is perceived to be high (versus low) in social status.

1.2.2 (Anti-)egalitarianism and Compassion

An assumption of the high-status compassion bias is that people should be more willing to respond compassionately towards high- (versus low-)status victims because the former may be seen as more *deserving* than the latter, due to deeply entrenched meritocratic norms across societies. Meritocracy assumes that people achieve powerful positions in society because they worked hard for them and therefore that they are deserving of rewards that come with success (Littler, 2017; see also Cuddy et al., 2008). Because meritocratic beliefs are often associated with a more conservative (rather than a liberal) orientation (Pratto et al., 1994), it seems plausible to assume that compassionate expressions could also be influenced by (anti-)egalitarian proclivities, especially when an assessment of a victims' social status is signaled during an emergency.

Although Lucas and Kteily (2018) did not examine the link between a merit-based ideology and compassion *in an emergency context*, these authors nonetheless demonstrated that anti-egalitarians (known to be particularly positive towards merit-supporting societal hierarchies) showed more compassion for a higher-status group compared to their egalitarian counterparts. It is based on this evidence that I anticipated that a high-status compassion bias could also be limited to bystanders who lean towards an anti-egalitarian ideology, even in an emergency. Unlike Lucas and Kteily (2018), however, I considered, in addition, how the cost of compassion might moderate this ideology-based effect.

1.2.3 Identity-threat Appraisals and the Pursuit of Intergroup Distinctiveness

With inspiration from social identity principles, particularly the intergroup distinctiveness threat thesis (Jetten & Spears, 2003), I posited a potential identity-threat caveat to the occurrence of a high-status bias in certain situations. Below, I briefly introduce the intergroup distinctiveness threat caveat (Jetten & Spears, 2003; Spears et al., 2002), before moving on to discuss how the experience of this threat may undermine compassion for high-status (versus low-status) victims.

According to social identity principles, people's self-image is often determined through membership in social groups that provide its members with a source of self-esteem, especially when such identities are positively valued. That is, people have a vested reputational need to maintain (or strive to achieve) a positively valued identity, particularly when such regard is sufficiently distinct (or unique) to allow members to bask in the reflected glory of their ingroup. Hence, a need to see one's ingroup as being *positively distinct* from outgroups should be part and parcel of group membership (Brown & Abrams, 1986; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel et al., 1971).

One implication of the foregoing provision within the social identity tradition is that similarity between groups may pose identity challenges for group members, in that it compromises their ability to make a self-esteem-boosting contrast with an outgroup, and this may not be tolerated as a result. Jetten and Spears (2003) argue, for example, that group members who perceive too much similarity between their group and a relevant

outgroup, may experience a threat to their distinct group identity. This, in turn, is assumed to activate identity threat appraisals that motivate group members to establish or reaffirm group boundaries (see also Tajfel, 1982). Intergroup distinctiveness, therefore, is an important function of people's social identity, and as such, can affect intergroup transactions (e.g., compassionate exchanges), especially in contexts that blur or ambiguate group boundaries (i.e., distinctions).

To the extent that bystanders become mindful of (intergroup) similarities that undermine their social identity in some way, then it seems possible that they may react to this threat in a negative way, even if (or especially when) the victim is high in status (e.g., by downplaying or withholding compassion). In other words, to the extent that the immediate context shifts attention from social status to an identity-threatening attribute of the victim (here, similarity), then this may cause the primacy of status-based considerations in the cost-worthiness calculus to recede while allowing image-redeeming considerations to take the front seat. Although some studies have examined the implications of identity threat appraisals on compassionate expressions to victims (Owuamalam & Matos, 2021), none yet, has examined the role of victims' status positions in tandem with the identity-threat process, and a further aim of the current thesis is to close this gap.

In short, an important caveat assumed in this thesis is that the motivation to alleviate identity threats may sometimes conflict with the proposed high-status compassion bias. Ordinarily, based on the proposed high-status compassion bias, one should expect participants to be more

compassionately oriented toward a higher-status relative to a lower-status victim. However, and based on the social identity caveat around distinctiveness threat, it is entirely possible that this high-status compassion could be eliminated or even reversed if identity-threatening similarity cues are salient to bystanders in certain contexts.

1.3 Thesis Overview

In this introductory chapter, I have provided the theoretical basis for expecting a high-status compassion bias, while touching on three moderators that could constrain its occurrence (i.e., the cost of compassionate intentions, (anti-)egalitarian views, and identity threat appraisals). In Chapter 2, therefore, I shift attention to operational definitions, ethical and methodological considerations. Next, in Chapter 3, I present the first experimental test of the central proposition – high-status compassion bias. Here, I examine the effect of status on people's compassionate intentions towards victims of a fabricated emergency (in the shape of a bombing attack), while investigating how cost calculations could moderate the victim status effect.

In Chapter 4, I built on the evidence from Chapter 3 by exploring the generalizability of the victim status effect in a real-world setting, while also investigating how individual differences in (anti-)egalitarian worldviews can moderate a high-status compassion bias amidst costs considerations. Chapter 5 discusses how identity threat appraisals toward a victim could explain the absence (or reversal) of a high-status compassion bias following a hate crime emergency and in an inter-sexual orientation status context. Chapter 6, then, provides a summary of the findings, and a

general discussion of the contributions to the literature on compassion (and prosocial behavior broadly), while suggesting future directions.

Chapter 2:

Definitions, Methodological, and Ethical Considerations

Before proceeding, it is important to first unpack the specific definitions of social status and compassion central to the thesis, as well as discuss the ways in which these concepts were operationalized. This is important given the myriad of ways in which status and compassion have been defined and measured in psychological research. That is, depending on which aspect of these concepts research may be discussing, the definition – and therefore, how status and compassion are measured – can vary, and this might affect the outcome and interpretation of the relevant study.

Hence, in this chapter, I will first define social status and compassion as they are used in the current thesis and I will then discuss the manner in which they have been operationalized across studies and my rationale for adopting such an approach. Given the particular focus on a quasi-minimal group approach in the empirical chapters that follow, I will briefly discuss the classical minimal groups paradigm in social psychological research, and how (and why) I adapted this approach to induce inter-status group categorizations for the (high- and low-status) victims. I end by discussing the ethical considerations that were undertaken before data collection took place.

2.1 Defining and Operationalizing Victim Status

Diemer et al. (2013) defined social status as "the higher order construct representing an individual or group's *relative* position in an economic-social-cultural hierarchy" (p. 79, emphasis added). Crucially, Diemer et al. (2013) argued that, because social status is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, comprised of both subjective and objective aspects, it makes it all the more critical to specify which types of status are being focused on since objective and subjective social status can have divergent effects on the same outcome (e.g., Kim et al., 2021). As such, it is important to clearly establish which aspect of social status is being measured and included in psychological research.

Research typically differentiates between objective and subjective measures as the two main components of social status, and these tend to serve different functions in research. For example, objective measures of social status (e.g., socioeconomic status) allow researchers to discern a person's (or group's) position in society based on objective indicators of power, social position, and resources (such as household income, education level, occupational prestige; Diemer et al., 2013; Diemer & Ali, 2009). Subjective social status, on the other hand, measures a person's *assessment* of their own (or others') social standing or prestige *relative* to other people in society (Rubin et al., 2014). This perceived status is inferred from many intersecting factors, both including objective indicators as well as more intangible factors (e.g., their social identities' historical prestige relative to others in society; Mattan et al., 2017; Diemer et al., 2013).

Indeed, the perception of differences in subjective status between social groups is often based on the internalization of societal beliefs towards these groups (i.e., stereotypes) which makes this type of status particularly pervasive and enduring. For instance, the marginalization and oppression of certain social minorities such as the LGBTQ+ community, Native Americans, and African Americans, is often justified with negative stereotypes; the Lavender Scare[1], Manifest Destiny[2], and slavery[3] represent only a few examples of extreme oppression that were based and justified on deep-seated stereotypes that painted gay, Native and Black individuals respectively as low in status due to their perceived "unnatural", "uncivilized" and "incompetent" natures (see also Fiske et al., 2002). It is precisely *because* subjective social status is more enduring (and particularly resistant to disconfirming information – Monteith et al., 1998; Macrae et al., 1994), that it often exerts a more significant and reliable influence on people's attitudes and behavioral intentions relative to objective status (e.g., Rubin et al., 2014).

[1] The Lavender Scare was the witch hunt of gay individuals during the 1950s, when McCarthyism and anti-Communist rhetoric were in full effect in the United States, resulting in the mass firing of gay people in American government positions on the basis that homosexuality was considered unnatural, and that gay individuals were more "susceptible" to blackmail and thus, a threat to national security, despite contemporary research showing otherwise (Toops, 2013; James, 2012).

[2] "Manifest Destiny" was a phrased coined in 1845 which expressed the American ideology of the time that the United States was destined (by providence of God) to expand its territory through the destruction of the native population, who were deemed uncivilized and inferior (Lubragge, 2012; History.com Editors, 2010).

[3] Many of the justifications for slavery were rooted in the belief that Africans were barbaric, uncivilized and unable to care for themselves, and thus slavery was beneficial for them to escape their "savage" lives. A lot of the "Anti-Tom" pro-slavery propaganda of the time, therefore, focused on the seeming superiority of the White race, and portrayed Black individuals as lazy, ill-mannered, violent and childish, and White slave drivers and colonists as patient parent-figures teaching them how to be civil (Smith, 2017; see also Edwards, 1819).

Hence, in this thesis, I focus on the subjective status of the victim(s) in a helping/emergency, relying on societal perceptions (or beliefs) regarding the social standing of a victimized person or group as inferred through the social prestige ascribed to the groups the victim(s) are part of. Given that social status cues are often inferred by attending to people's social identity, merely highlighting a victim's status-conferring identity (e.g., by raising the salience of a victim's nationality as in Chapters 4); or gendered sexual orientation as in Chapter 5) should correspondingly accentuate the salience of their social status, in the absence of other social markers that could confound this deduction (and vice versa - see Freeman et al., 2011). As Ásta (2018) puts it, "Each of us has a lot of features and *only some of them matter socially in a particular context* […] A feature is socially significant in a context in which people taken to have the feature get conferred onto them a social status" (p. 3, emphasis in italics added).

Importantly, I focused on the *comparability* aspect of subjective social status as the main form in which victim status differences were operationalized. Put simply, a victim was considered higher (or lower) in status only *in relation* to another group but, on the same comparison dimension (Tajfel, 1982). For example, it would be *insufficient* to have a lower-status condition be a victim with low socio-economic status, and a higher-status condition be a victim described as White (which would typically be ascribed a high social status), as these are not immediately comparable social identities. This is not to imply that certain groups are *absolutely* inherently inferior or superior to others; rather, when I refer to a group as lower in status, I am speaking to the relative status position that

has been *ascribed* to these groups by virtue of certain socio-cultural and/or historical power structures.

Using this approach, the social status of victims was manipulated through the description of the groups they belonged to. Table 2.1 summarizes the social categorizations used in each chapter to heighten the salience of victim status, which are further detailed in their specified chapters. To further ensure confidence in the status differentiations between the victim status conditions, and also to help disentangle the specific concept of social status from any other intersecting issues that may be brought about by group identification (e.g., racism, anti-gay attitudes), a direct measure of perceived victim status was included across all studies that served as an assumption check. This status check indicator was measured on a 5-point scale from -2 (*definitely low status*) to +2 (*definitely high status*) across all studies.

It is worth emphasizing, however, that the focus was on *relative* rather than *absolute* status differences between the comparison targets. For instance, if the high-status victim was rated as significantly higher on the scale than the low-status victim, the victim status manipulation was considered to have been effective, even if the lower-status victim's status rating fell on the positive side of the scale. In short, this approach (i.e., the operationalization of status differences in relative [rather than absolute] terms) offered a more realistic assessment of the relative status considerations that underpinned this research program.

2.2 The Quasi-Minimal Group Approach

As mentioned in the previous section, most of the research presented in this thesis focused on status differences based on real-life intergroup distinctions. However (and as shown in Table 2.1), the very first experiment induced victim status using an adapted rationale based on the minimal groups paradigm (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel et al., 1971). In this section, I will briefly introduce the history of this paradigm, its original protocol, and how it has been used over the years within established intergroup helping research. I will then go on to discuss the modifications that I made to the classic minimal group paradigm and the reasons for them.

The minimal groups paradigm is a methodology used to study the minimum requirements for observing inter-group biases and discrimination between groups that have been categorized on a trivial (i.e., minimal) basis. It is typically used to study the effect of social categorization processes that are unconfounded by pre-existing biases and conflicts found in real-life intergroup relations. This paradigm follows social identity principles (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel, 1970), specifically, the argument that people derive much of their self-esteem through the social groups they identify with, and one easy way to maintain (or seek) a positive and distinct identity may be to express ingroup bias (or favoritism). Tajfel et al. (1971) posited (and later demonstrated) that merely making people's awareness of their membership, in one group or another, enlists the process of group comparisons that may be enough to induce a sense of differences and consequent conflict between groups, even when the relevant groups are

artificially (or experimentally) created in the lab (see also Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The classical minimal groups protocol was introduced by Tajfel et al. (1971), which described two experimental procedures. The first procedure, which is still used as the typical minimal groups paradigm to this day (e.g., Halabi et al., 2021b, 2021a), asked participants to estimate the number of dots that flashed on a screen, ostensibly to study types of visual judgment. Participants were then supposedly assigned as "global" or "specific" perceivers depending on the "score" they received. In reality, the assignations had been entirely random. In the second protocol, participants were asked to choose their favorite painting between a series of Klee or Kandinsky paintings, but as before, participants were assigned in the "Klee group" or "Kandinsky group" randomly. In both studies, participants were asked to then assign monetary rewards to other participants (either another "ingroup" member or an "outgroup" member).

The results showed that participants tended to award more money to ingroup members than outgroup members, even when there was no conflict or realistic competition between them (i.e., they could assign the highest allotted reward to both ingroup and outgroup members; it was not a question of choosing to assign money to one or the other of the groups). Thus, demonstrating that even without conflict, intergroup comparisons and consequent discrimination can still occur, and this was truly revolutionary because it showed, for the first time, that a realistic competition for resources was not a necessary condition for discriminatory tendencies in

intergroup relations, as previously thought (under the Realistic Conflict Theory; Sherif et al., 1961).

This classical minimal groups paradigm has been used in recent research with consistent findings. Research by Halabi, Nadler, and co. has consistently demonstrated inter-status biases even within minimal group paradigms where the status of groups is induced. Nadler and Halabi (2006), for instance, presented participants with the dot estimation task, but also told participants that global perceivers typically had higher integrative abilities (thus, assigning global perceivers a high status relative to specific perceivers). The findings showed that participants (who were all assigned to the low-status specific perceiver group) were less happy to receive help from a high-status outgroup member (particularly when status relations were perceived as unstable versus stable). Similarly, Halabi et al. (2021b, 2021a) used this same minimal groups paradigm to induce inter-status comparisons and found that this inter-status bias in receiving help from a high-status outgroup member can be moderated by feelings of control or trust for the outgroup, even when said inter-status relations are trivial (or minimal).

The literature, therefore, demonstrates how status comparisons can still be present even within intergroup relations that have been manipulated in a laboratory setting, and specifically within inter-status helping relations. Following this rationale, I decided to adapt a minimal groups approach in two ways in order to test the presence of a potential high-status favoring compassion bias without such an effect being confounded by pre-existing intergroup biases (which is the main benefit of using such a paradigm). The

crucial change in my approach to the minimal groups paradigm and previous usages of it, however, is that I intended to induce status-group categorizations of victims that were presented to participants for a response, rather than manipulating participants' own status per se. I chose this approach because the main goal of the current thesis is to test how bystanders/participants responded to low- and high-status victims, rather than their own status groups relative to a status-outgroup (as was the focus of the previously discussed research, i.e., the intergroup helping as status relations model; Nadler, 2008; Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Nadler, 2002).

As such, the "quasi-minimal groups" approach that I employ in part of this thesis, focuses on inducing group categorizations between two victimized targets independent of the participants' own social groups or status. Nevertheless, the rationale for this approach is consistent with the traditional minimal groups paradigms in that simply categorizing two victims under two comparable groups within their fabricated society, and describing one as having more prestige (relative to others within this fabricated society) should also be enough to induce inter-status relations between the victims.

The other way this "quasi-minimal groups" approach was employed in the thesis involved using status differences based on real social groups (e.g., via nationality; see Chapter 4, or gendered sexual orientation; see Chapter 5). I reasoned that simply *presenting* two victims should be enough to activate inter-status differences. A similar quasi-minimal groups approach, for instance, was used in Halabi et al. (2016): they asked Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews their perceptions of offers of assistance from Israeli

Jews to Israeli Arabs. Simply asking participants to consider hypothetical offers of assistance between these two social groups was enough for participants to demonstrate intergroup biases. In short, the idea here is that simply presenting participants who differ in social status should be sufficient to activate a status-based perception, judgment, and consequent intentions (e.g., intentions to offer compassionate assistance to victims). I will go into further detail on the full procedure within the relevant chapters.

2.3 Defining and Operationalizing Compassion

As with social status, compassion as a concept has been defined and examined in numerous ways (see also, Gilbert, 2019; Goetz et al., 2010, for reviews). For example, Goetz et al. (2010) defined compassion as a subjective *feeling* that arises after witnessing a misfortune, whereas other definitions view compassion more as the motivation (or *intention*) to alleviate said misfortune, with the display of empathetic concern as merely a *byproduct* of such a motivation (c.f. Gilbert, 2019, 2017, 2005). As such, there is much debate on how exactly to define and incorporate the concept of compassion in psychological research. While the experience of compassion can influence the display of empathetic concern, for instance, via helping behavior (Weng et al., 2015; Batson et al., 2002), it is not always the case that helping behavior is rooted in empathetic concern (e.g., van Leeuwen & Zagefka, 2017; Täuber & van Leeuwen, 2012; Hopkins et al., 2007), or that compassionate attitudes and emotions (e.g., pity) always translate into action (Ajzen, 1991).

In the current thesis, the term of "compassion" was used to describe people's willingness to assist victims rather than the broader term of "prosocial intentions" for two reasons. Firstly, the label of compassion is more readily known and understood than prosocial intentions by most people, which would allow for easier dissemination of the thesis to a wider audience that may not necessarily be an expert in social psychology. Secondly, the underlying basis of the high-status compassion bias is that a victim's low status may activate more passive forms of compassionate sentiment (e.g., pity) while high-status victims may activate more activate forms of sentiment (e.g., empathic concern) due to their perceived differences in "worthiness". Nevertheless, *intentions* are more proximal predictors of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991) than sentiments, as well as more readily observable and operationalizable compared to self-reported ratings of emotions. For these reasons, this thesis adopted a narrower approach, largely measuring compassion via people's *intention or willingness* to help or alleviate the suffering of others, with the emotional component being more of a byproduct of such intentions (Gilbert, 2019, 2017, 2005).

Therefore, the main dependent variables of compassion in the present research focus on participants' compassionate intentions to assist low vs. high-status victim(s) in need. Because compassionate intentions manifest in various forms, I aimed to maximize ecological (even convergent) validity in the results that I obtain by adopting a multifaceted approach to tapping this central dependent variable. For instance, in the context of a terrorist attack (such as the one presented in Chapter 3),

advocacy intention, in terms of willingness to circulate information about the tragedy to a potential audience of helpers (e.g., in terms of raising aid/donations), might be a more useful operationalization of compassionate intentions than perhaps placing one's self in harm's way via direct first-aid to victims (also given ethical and practical constraints to adopting the latter approach).

However, in other contexts (e.g., intentions of helping a student that is unable to enroll in an essential course due to an administrative error; see Chapter 4), the foregoing form of assistance might take a back seat, making room for a different operationalization (e.g., pleading with the respective authorities to allow the student to enroll on the course). Thus, while all the research in this thesis focuses on compassionate intentions to assist the victims in some shape or form, its measurement largely followed the constraints imposed by the reality of the specific event being considered.

A final advantage of the current focus on compassionate intentions is that effects on this construct ought to be less variable across studies than perhaps an actual behavior might be. If, for example, actual monetary donations are the consistent measure of compassion to the needy, regardless of the context, then in some studies, and for some participants, the offer of money may not be realistic simply because they cannot afford it. But this does not necessarily mean that such participants may not nurse an intention to assist the victims in other ways that are different from financial support (for example, helping to increase the publicity of a victimizing event, so that it is seen by more people that do have the means to help). See Table

2.1 for a summary of the operationalizations of compassionate intentions used per chapter.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Thorough ethical considerations were undertaken prior to any data collection during the program. As such, the research presented in the current thesis received ethics approval from the Science and Engineering Research Ethics Committee (SEREC) at the University of Nottingham, Malaysia. All participants were given as much information as possible without potentially biasing their responses prior to the start of the experiments, in which case they were given the choice to provide informed consent digitally through the online surveys on Qualtrics' online platform. Participants were reminded that this was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without any penalization. They were further reminded of this at the end of the survey during the debrief as well. As such, any incomplete surveys were deemed as having dropped out and were subsequently discarded before the data were collated and analyzed. Moreover, the data were password-protected and only accessible by me, and my primary supervisor.

Another ethical consideration was that certain experiments required specific demographics, and as such, participants were asked to present demographic information that may be sensitive for the participants (e.g., the research presented in Chapter 5 required the responses from only heterosexual individuals to test the intergroup processes outlined in the chapter's goal of investigation). While a benefit of online questionnaires is the increased anonymity and privacy participants get, nevertheless,

participants were given the option to not provide such information (i.e., by selecting "prefer not to say" under the options) if they were not comfortable with this. They were further reminded that their information would be entirely protected and confidential and that they could withdraw their responses if they wanted. As before, any responses that chose not to disclose this information or chose to withdraw their responses after this were discarded before aggregating and analyzing the data.

Finally, given the potentially distressing nature of the present research (via severe forms of victimizations, as seen in Chapters 3 and 5), especially when participants would be led to believe that the victimizations were real, an important aspect of the ethical considerations was to prevent any long-lasting distress on the participants. Hence, participants were fully debriefed at the end of each experiment, specifically being told that the articles describing an attack and the victims supposedly involved were, in actuality, fictitious:

> *"Please note that the news article you read and victims of the attack, including the descriptions of the victim you saw, were fictitious and fabricated by us in order to see how a victim's descriptions can affect someone's compassion towards them. As such, none of the details in the victim descriptions are representative of the victims."*

They were also provided with contacts to relevant helplines and the main investigators (myself, and my supervisor) if they still had any lingering concerns regarding the study that they had participated in. These precautions allowed for full ethics approval of the research. Below, I have summarized the ethics identification numbers of the approved ethics applications:

Ethics Application Identification Number: **ASMD101117**
Research it covered: Experiments 1-3 (Chapters 3-4). This initial application covered the basic theoretical background of the high-status compassion bias and the exploration of ideological costs on people's compassion for a high- versus low-status victim.

Ethics Application Identification Number: **ASMD250919**
Research it covered: Experiments 4-6 (Chapters 5). This second ethics application sought to expand the previous ethics approval in order to cover the topic of sexual orientation and gender expression (which is a sensitive area within the context of Malaysia), and identity-threat appraisals (Chapter 5).

Table 2.1.

Outline of all experiments across the empirical chapters of the thesis.

	Experiments	Victim Status Context	Dependent Variable(s)
Chapter 3	1	Induced status	Compassionate intentions to assist the victim(s) (as measured via willingness to disseminate information on their behalf)
Chapter 4	2 3	Nationality	Compassionate intentions to assist the victim(s) (as measured via willingness to assist a student facing course enrollment challenges)
Chapter 5	4 5 6	Gender expression, sexual orientation	Compassionate intentions to assist the victim(s) (as measured via willingness to assist a victim of a hate crime)

Chapter 3:

The Reality of a High-Status Compassion Bias: Does it Exist?

Are people more likely to express greater compassion towards victims from a higher (vs. lower) status background? In this chapter, I provide an initial test for such a compassion bias, proposing that onlookers' compassionate expressions would be greater when a victim is from a higher (than a lower) social status background. To do so, participants were to indicate their compassionate intentions on behalf of low- and high-status victims of a terrorism-related incident via a willingness to publicize the event on social media audiences to maximize the reach of such charitable appeals.

As stated in Chapter 2, this approach to measuring compassion is more *intentional* in orientation, but also highly relevant in the context of terror emergencies, because social media platforms are rapidly becoming a major avenue for compassionate expressions for victims (e.g., Boulianne et al., 2018; Brady et al., 2017; AZCentral, 2016; Devichand, 2016; Bogart, 2015; Fatkin & Lansdown, 2015; Purcell, 2014; Lee & Hsieh, 2013; Martin, 2013a, 2013b). In short, a willingness to share information on behalf of victims represents an important means of capturing people's compassionate advocacy towards those in need of help, especially amongst the generation represented in the current study (university students).

While social media advocacy for victims is a relatively new and easy way to help victims at little or no monetary cost to oneself (Coleman & Blumler, 2009), online sharing as a form of helping is not entirely free from risk. Sharing information on social media, even those messages that might be presumed to be positive can often expose oneself to online harassment when such messages (or intentions behind them) are misunderstood (even deliberately misconstrued). This risk is not entirely uncommon, with many people having experienced or witnessed online harassment (i.e., "trolling"; Pew Research Center, 2018b; Duggan, 2017). Indeed, the risk of being harassed, potentially on the basis of a misconstrued message, is particularly rife on social media platforms with larger audiences, and the presence of online “trolls” on social media pages dedicated to commemorating those that have passed (e.g., Alexander, 2014; Phillips, 2011) speaks to this online harassment risk even in spaces created after tragic events. This is, in part, due to the relatively downgraded sense of accountability offered by the size of such groups relative to smaller, more closely-knit groups (or face-to-face interactions) where people are more likely to know one another (i.e., deindividuation effect; Barlett et al., 2016; Zimmerman & Ybarra, 2016; Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2012; Postmes & Spears, 2002; Postmes et al., 2001).

In this situation, participants may be more cautious in their advocacy when it comes to *large* social media audiences, implying that increased advocacy in this context, despite the potential risk to themselves, can be informative as to how far one is willing to go for victims who come from a high versus a low-status background. That is, people might feel

reluctant to expose themselves to unnecessary risks on a victim's behalf, especially when the potential reputational benefit of engaging in such "prosocial" action is uncertain. This is why a large audience would be especially ideal for delineating status-related effects on compassionate expressions, given that the potential personal costs of such advocacy may be deemed reasonable only when people believe it was worthwhile, to begin with.

One way to resolve the foregoing dilemma, therefore, may be by considering the caliber of victims for whom it might be worth sticking one's neck out for in large public audiences. Here, I anticipated that it might be "worth" the trouble if the victim is perceived as *deserving*, and social status cues provide an easy and immediate heuristic on which snap decisions about worthiness can be based (Stangor, 2014, p. 553; Macrae et al., 1994). Outside of a large online forum that potentially amplifies the personal cost of compassionate expressions/intentions, I speculated that strategic image-management concerns should not play a visible role when the advocacy is directed to a more closely-knit network (potentially of friends, family, or at least "known others"). Hence, small (even medium) sized social media audiences offer a theoretically informative baseline to which the high-status compassion bias anticipated in larger audiences can be compared to.

Following the proposed high-status compassion bias, I anticipated that participants should be more willing to engage in compassionate advocacy on a victim's behalf (e.g., by sharing the story to as wide a social media audience as possible, to maximize the degree of attention and

support directed to the victims) when such victims cue onlookers/bystanders to high (rather than low) social status. Furthermore, this high-status favoring compassion bias should be most visible when a social media audience is large. To operationalize victim status, I experimentally induced a sense of social status using an adaptation of the classic minimal group approach (Tajfel et al., 1971; see Chapter 2 for a more in-depth discussion on this methodological approach): That is, by providing descriptions of the victims that depicted them either as high versus low in social status based on the societal prestige allegedly accorded to people from their community.

3.1 Experiment 1

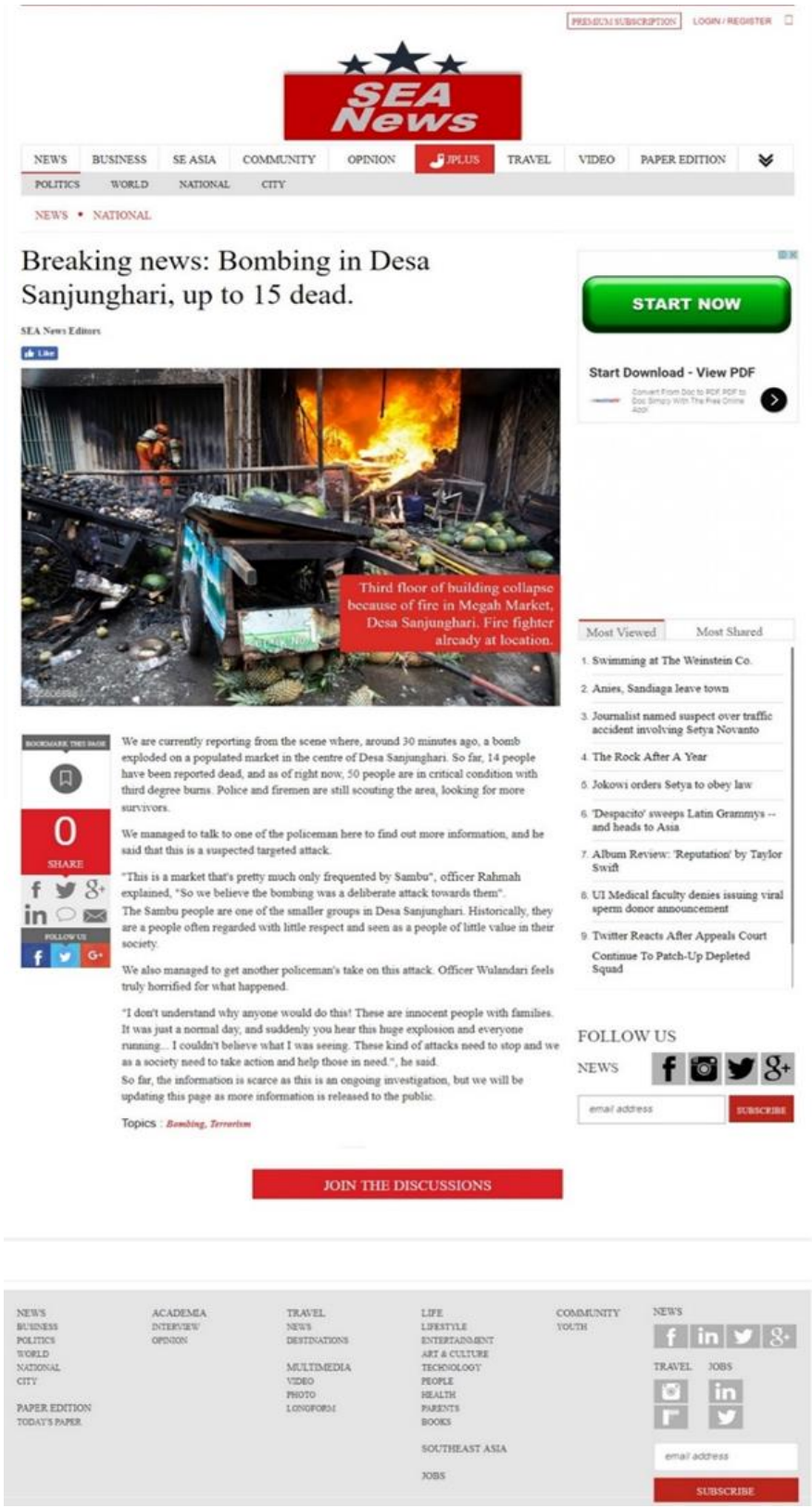
3.1.1 Methodology

Design and participants. Four hundred and thirty-six individuals in Malaysia (139 men, 293 women, 2 participants were nonbinary or agender, and 2 participants did not state their gender; M_{age} = 25.29 years, SD_{age} = 9.71 years) were recruited using a snowball sampling approach (see Appendix A for a full demographic summary). Participants were randomly assigned to a 2 (victim status: *low status* vs. *high status*) x 3 (audience size: *small* vs. *medium* vs. *large*) mixed design, with the former (victim status) being a between-subject factor, while the latter (audience size) was a within-subject variable. A post-hoc power sensitivity analysis confirmed that the sample size was adequate, in that it should achieve a power of 98% for the key 2-way interaction, given a small effect size of f = .10; even if alpha is set at .03.

Materials and procedure. The current approach was inspired by the anecdotal observations that I reported in Chapter 1, in which social media users tended to commiserate with victims of the 2015 Paris (France) terror attack more than they did with victims of a similar incident in Beirut (Lebanon, e.g., via social media advocacy - measured by the uneven number of Twitter hashtags per minute in favor of Paris victims; Barnard, 2015; Kuang, 2015). To begin with, participants in the current study were presented with a cover story that I used as the victimization treatment; they were introduced to a charity fund, *the SEA Terror Survivors Charity*, which ostensibly focuses on aiding survivors of terrorist attacks around the Southeast Asian region. Participants were led to believe that the charity had recently designed a web crawler that searches the internet for any breaking news regarding terrorist attacks in order to expedite aid for the victims. Participants were subsequently led to expect the web crawler to present them with breaking news of a terror attack that it detected in the SEA region. In reality, all participants were shown a pre-fabricated news article designed to look like a typical online news site (see Figure 3.1 for an example of what participants saw).

Figure 3.1.

An example (for the low-status condition) of how the news article presented to participants in Experiment 1 looked like.



To enhance the credibility of the cover story, participants were shown a "loading screen" (see Figure 3.2) that lasted 5 seconds prior to the news article that they subsequently read, which represented the time it ostensibly took the web crawler to scout the web for the article.

Figure 3.2.

Screenshot of the prefabricated loading screen participants saw prior to the news article in Experiment 1.

Victim status induction. I used an adaptation of the classic minimal groups paradigm (Tajfel et al., 1971) in order to manipulate the level of prestige that was purportedly accorded to the victims' social identity. In short, the minimal groups paradigm argues that simply categorizing people into groups (no matter how trivial the groups are) is enough to create a sense of intergroup differentiation (and intergroup bias) in people. While traditional experiments using this paradigm focus on social categorization between groups of *participants* (e.g., by putting participants themselves

into different groups), the current approach focuses on an intergroup differentiation of the targets of participants' compassion along status lines (e.g., either as a disadvantaged or advantaged group). I reasoned that merely inducing victim status via their social background should be sufficient to create status effects in people's expression of compassionate intention based on numerous classical and recent examples adopting a similar minimal group approach (Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Tajfel et al., 1971; see also Chapter 2 for a more in-depth discussion of the usage of the minimal groups paradigm in social psychological research and its relevance in the current thesis).

Importantly, inducing status via fabricated social identities, as I do here, reduces the potential for other group processes (such as ingroup favoritism, and so on) to confound the interpretation of the intended effects. Of course, understanding how other processes could influence the predicted high-status compassion bias is also important, but the intention in this initial study was to keep tight control over other potentially important influences so that emergent patterns could be neatly tied to the single process envisaged here. The article that participants read discussed a bombing that targeted the "Sambu people" who were part of a cultural group in the fictitious town of Desa Sanjunghari in which the event purportedly took place. In a *low-status condition*, the Sambu people were described as a minority group with little prestige in their society:

> *"[…] The Sambu are one of the **smaller** groups in Desa Sanjunghari. Historically, they are a people often regarded with **little respect** and seen as a **people of little value** in their society […]"*

Conversely, in a *high-status condition* the same Sambu victims were described as a highly respected majority group within their society:

> *"[…] The Sambu people are one of the **bigger** groups in Desa Sanjunghari. Historically, they are a people often regarded in their society with **great respect** and seen as a **people of great prestige** […]"*

Manipulation checks. Participants were also asked to rate how high or low in status they thought the Sambu victims were viewed within their society to ensure they attended to the victims' status. This was measured with a 5-point scale (-2 = *definitely low status*; +2 = *definitely high status*).

Compassionate advocacy on the victims' behalf. After reading the article and attention checks, participants were given the opportunity to share the news article on social media to help raise awareness and aid for the victims at the end of the study. Although the primary focus of the current investigation was on the effect of victim status on bystanders' compassion towards victims, I took the opportunity to also examine how the unique contextual features of the social media platform might further structure the anticipated status effects. Specifically, I speculated that having participants consider the size of different social media audiences could engender strategic image- and risk-management considerations that could

determine the degree to which people may be willing to advocate on the victims' behalf.

Participants were also presented with some information regarding two possible Facebook groups that they could launch their advocacy at (i.e., via the sharing news about the terror incident, see Appendix B). These two Facebook groups were originally intended to prime participants to their resource potential, thereby enabling strategic advocacy (i.e., I had anticipated that they may target a highly resourced platform [e.g., comprising of senior citizens with more to spare] more than a relatively less-resourced platform comprising of individuals with much fewer means, like students). However, this manipulation did not make a difference in participants' responses and was dropped from further consideration as a result.[4]

Specifically, for both Facebook groups, participants were asked to indicate their willingness to share the news they had just read (i.e., the terror attack) and information about a charity campaign on behalf of the victims imagining that the platform was small, medium, and large-sized (see Figure 3.3 for the measure presented to participants). The classification of social media platforms as small (vs. medium, and large) was determined through Dunbar and co.'s research on the average group size for humans (i.e., Dunbar's number; Dunbar, 2016; Konnikova, 2014; Zhou et al., 2005;

[4] Running the mixed ANOVA with group type (resourceful group vs. unresourceful group) as the second within-subjects variable revealed that group type did not have a significant main effect on compassionate advocacy, $F(1, 434) = 2.48$, $p = .116$, $\eta^2 = .01$, nor did it qualify status, $F(1, 434) = .37$, $p = .543$, $\eta^2 < .01$, or the main audience size x victim status interaction, $F(1, 434) = .62$, $p = .538$, $\eta^2 < .01$.

see also Dunbar, 1993). It has been consistently reported that the average person has a social group/network of about 150 (what would be considered intimate friends and family, even extending to casual friends). More recent research has expanded on this (especially through a social media lens) and demonstrated that the size of one's social network can expand incrementally up to 1500, with around 200-300 still being considered within the scope of "casual friends", while around 500 included acquaintances, and over 900 up to 1500 is considered the maximum social network capacity that people can remember (Dunbar, 2016; Zhou et al., 2005).

Figure 3.3.

Audience size measure presented to participants in Experiment 1.

This social network size classification is more or less corroborated by Facebook users' opinions on what would count as small, medium, or large. Patel (2017), for instance, describes a Facebook group with 200 members as "decent," while 500 members is considered a "critical mass" in which the group will start to grow faster. In another post, a group of around 1000 members is considered a large enough group (Patel, 2018). Therefore,

and loosely following the foregoing guidelines, I determined that a small Facebook group could contain about 150-350 members, followed by a medium group (550-750), and a large group (950-1150+).

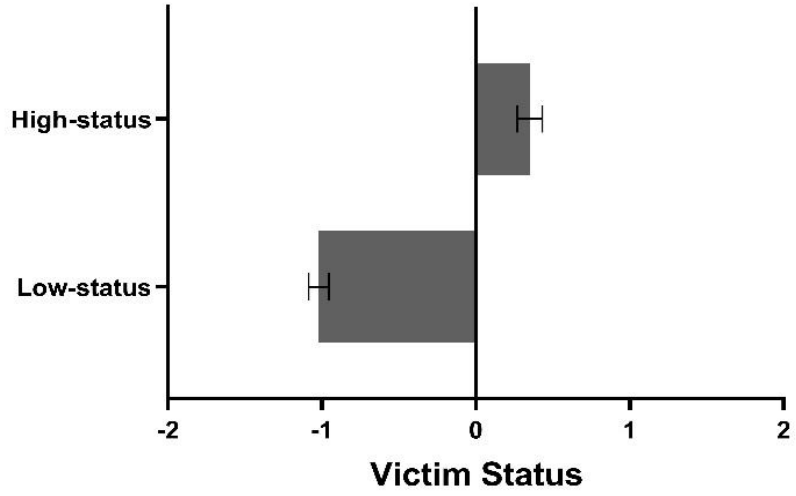
The audience size measures were aggregated into three measures of audience size (small [150 and 350 members], $\alpha = .95$; medium [550 members and 750 members], $\alpha = .96$; large [950 and 1150 members], $\alpha = .96$), based on 2 repeated measurements for each audience size and for each Facebook group (i.e., each audience size condition comprised 4 measures). All three measures used a 7-point scale and measured participants' advocacy orientation via a willingness to share the article on behalf of the victims via the relevant platforms. Higher scores reflected a greater willingness to advocate on behalf of the victims.

3.1.2 Results and Discussion

Preliminary analyses. An independent samples *t*-test confirmed the effectiveness of the victim status manipulation, showing that perceived status was accentuated amongst participants in the high-status victim condition compared to those in the low-status victim condition, $t(434) = 13.13$, $p \leq .001$, 95% *CI* [1.16, 1.57] (see Figure 3.4). In short, these results validated the victim status manipulation, by showing that the same Sambu people were perceived to be higher in status when described as such, compared to when the description depicted them as being low in social status.

Figure 3.4.

Participants' status ratings for the low- vs. high-status victim conditions from Experiment 1.



Note. Error bars are standard errors.

Main analysis. To establish the reality of a status-based compassion bias specifically predicting a high-status favoring orientation, and to check whether this is structured by the size of the audience as I anticipated, I ran a 2 (victim status: *low status* vs. *high status*) x 3 (audience size: *small* vs. *medium* vs. *large*) mixed ANOVA. Here victim status was the between-subjects variable, while audience size was the within-subjects factor. Assuming the high-status compassion bias thesis has a basis in reality, then participants should express a greater intention to advocate on the victims' behalf by disseminating news of the tragic event to a greater degree when cued to the high- (rather than low-) status background of the

victims, and this trend should be especially visible when the target audience is large rather than small (or even medium).

First, audience size had a significant main effect, $F(1.17, 503.54) = 6.02$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Interestingly, and contrary to the trend one might expect when the cost of helping is high, participants were *more* (not less) likely to share the news article on behalf of victims to the large audience platform ($M = 4.68$, $SE = .09$) than to the medium ($M = 4.59$, $SE = .08$) or small ($M = 4.50$, $SE = .08$; see Table 3.1 for pairwise comparisons) audience platforms.

Table 3.1.

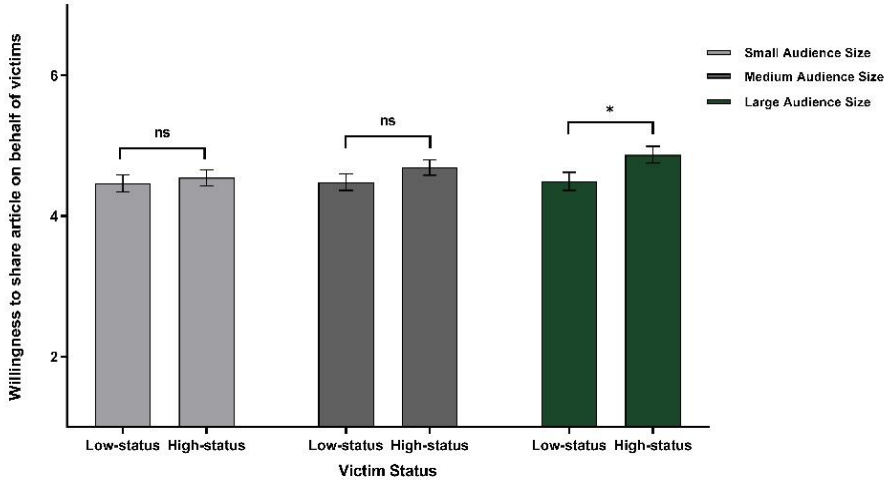
Pairwise comparisons of participants' compassionate advocacy on behalf of victims on a small, medium, and large social media audience (see Experiment 1).

Audience Size comparisons		*p*	*d*Cohen 95% *CI*
Small	Medium	.052	[-.165, .001]
	Large	.011	[-.315, -.041]
Medium	Large	.008	[-.167, -.025]

While victim status did not significantly influence compassionate advocacy on the victims' behalf overall, $F(1.17, 503.54) = 1.99$, $p = .159$, $\eta^2 = .01$, it did interact with audience size to influence advocacy intentions, $F(1.17, 503.54) = 4.24$, $p = .034$, $\eta^2 = .01$ (Greenhouse-Geisser corrected). Indeed, when I decomposed this 2-way interaction, by examining the simple main effect of victim status on compassionate advocacy on the victims' behalf, I found that the anticipated high-status compassion bias was limited to the *large* audience, $F(1, 432) = 4.59$, $p = .033$, $\eta^2 = .01$, but was absent when the audience was small, $F(1, 432) = .24$, $p = .627$, $\eta^2 = .01$ and medium-sized, $F(1, 432) = 1.63$, $p = .202$, $\eta^2 = .01$ (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5.

The effect of the victims' perceived social status on participants' willingness to share an article to increase awareness and aid relief on behalf of the victims on a small vs. medium vs. large social media group (see Experiment 1).



Note. Error bars represent standard error at 95%.

Summary of findings. These findings provide initial support for the high-status compassion bias, showing that people more readily expressed a greater intention to offer compassionate advocacy on behalf of victims of the same terror incident when described as high (rather than low) in status, especially when the stakes ostensibly seemed high enough. That is, the theorized high-status compassion bias was present *only* when the audience size was large, but not when it was small or medium. This indicates that the high-status compassion bias may not always occur, manifesting perhaps only when the cost considerations tilt the "perceived worthiness" scale in favor of people from elevated social backgrounds.

These findings complement the existing literature in showing that social status matters when it comes to prosocial behavior toward others (see Mattan et al., 2017, for a review). Specifically, this preliminary evidence for a high-status compassion bias expands on our understanding of outgroup helping, by showing that, although compassionate expressions are sometimes directed towards people of lower-status backgrounds, often for reputational reasons (e.g., Nadler, 2008; Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Nadler, 2002), certain cost considerations may tilt the scale in favor of helping people from higher-status backgrounds.

3.2 Chapter Conclusions

This initial empirical chapter was intended to provide preliminary evidence for the reality of a high-status compassion bias in a context where compassionate intentions are likely to have been strong. Here, people were more willing to engage in social media advocacy on behalf of victims of a terror emergency that were described as belonging to a high-status (relative

to the low-status) background when the cost of doing so apparently seemed high.

The current finding that cost considerations might play a role in a high-status compassion bias is preliminary, but it also raises the question of the kind of individuals that may be particularly prone to it. Indeed, it has been suggested that people respond differently to the issue of perceived worthiness depending on whether or not they hold egalitarian worldviews, and this may likely have an impact on the extent to which compassion is directed towards high- vs. low-status individuals. Given anti-egalitarians' orientation towards meritocracy and deservingness (e.g., Pratto et al., 1994), it is possible to speculate that such individuals may prioritize assistance to victims that they perceive to be *deserving* of such help (i.e., those from high-status backgrounds that signal competence).

In contrast, egalitarians may prioritize assistance or activism in the service of social equity and justice when this could lead to social change. This means that egalitarians may ordinarily orient towards a low- rather than a high-status compassion bias. Although these diverging patterns of prosociality have already been demonstrated in the West where egalitarian norms are strong (see Lucas & Kteily, 2018), very few (if any at all) of the relevant pieces of evidence have been collected in a non-Western context when egalitarian norms are relatively less strong (e.g., in Malaysia).

Experiment 1 also did not address the issue of cost considerations formally, and this is all the more important to tease out, in light of the counter-intuitive main effect of audience size (informal operationalization

of cost calculations) suggesting that compassion was actually stronger (not weaker) in conditions that should have dampened it (Scheffer et al., 2021; Böhm et al., 2018; Dovidio et al., 1991; Shotland & Stebbins, 1983). An alternative explanation for the patterns under the large audience size condition could be tied to social image motivations. After all, presenting a compassionate image towards as large an audience as possible could be seen as an easy way to improve one's social reputation. Given that I had not included a manipulation check to ensure that audience size was a manipulation of cost, I could not be sure that the patterns presented in Experiment 1 pertained to cost considerations, as theorized.

Thus, in the subsequent chapter, I examined more deeply the role that egalitarianism might play in compassionate intentions towards high- and low-status victims when cost considerations are more cleanly and formally operationalized. I reasoned that a worthiness-induced high-status favoring bias ought to be most visible amongst those likely to hold strong "meritocratic" beliefs, especially; (a) when the personal cost of expressing compassion is high, and; (b) in those societies that are highly reverent of authority (like Malaysia). In such societies, even those with a more egalitarian orientation might be biased in favor of high-status victims, so long as the tension between their need to uphold societal standards and their own personal values are not severe.

In short, the next chapter directly addresses two shortcomings of the current chapter, namely: (a) the role that ideology might play, especially when; (b) cost considerations are on the minds of potential help-givers.

Chapter 4:

(Anti-)egalitarianism, Cost Considerations, and Compassion Bias

The present chapter formally extends the previous exploration of the perceived cost of compassionate advocacy on behalf of low- versus high-status victims, while examining the role egalitarianism might play in the process. As postulated in the previous chapter, anti-egalitarians may be more likely to express the expected high-status compassion bias relative to egalitarians. This is because egalitarians are often driven by the desire to *eliminate* inequality and to ensure that people are treated equitably. A high-status privilege, however, would emphasize the inequality in compassion given to the disadvantaged and the advantaged. Hence, one means by which egalitarians might attempt to close this compassion gap may be to express a positive bias in favor of a low-status victim. In a recent (Western) demonstration of these patterns, for example, Lucas and Kteily (2018) consistently demonstrated that egalitarians reported greater compassion for disadvantaged groups relative to the advantaged.

In particular, people who hold anti-egalitarian values are often custodians of tradition and meritocratic principles: a hierarchal system in which privileges are given only to those who deserve them (Littler, 2017; Knowles et al., 2009; Pratto et al., 1994). Indeed, studies have shown, for instance, that anti-egalitarians often endorse meritocratic beliefs that favor people who are presumed to be deserving of them (Littler, 2017; Tan,

2008), and their support is often motivated by the desire to enhance and maintain social hierarchies (Knowles et al., 2009; Pratto et al., 1994). Hence, strong anti-egalitarian values should correlate with a compassion bias in favor of high-status victims because they are the ones ordinarily presumed to be competent (see Cuddy et al., 2008) and, therefore, may be seen to be more *deserving* of assistance than their less competent lower-status counterparts by anti-egalitarians. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Lucas and Kteily (2018) also demonstrated across several studies that anti-egalitarians indicated greater compassionate intentions toward the advantaged.

However, Lucas and Kteily (2018) did not examine whether such ideology-induced compassion biases can be generalized to a non-Western context (like Malaysia). But there is reason to expect a different pattern of results within a Malaysian context, where compliance to cultural norms (such as the high-status privilege norm) might be more important than the Western context in Lucas and Kteily (2018), and which might potentially conflict with personal values that Malaysian egalitarians may hold. Past research has shown that the norm prescribing high-status privilege is more prevalent in Asian societies (e.g., Park et al., 2013) and, because interdependence (or collectivism) potentially amplifies conformity pressures in this culture (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), one might expect that even people with strong egalitarian credentials may succumb to this dominant societal norm.

4.1 The Role of Perceived Cost of Compassionate Expression

One way of examining the potential norm-value conflict that may pressure Malaysian egalitarians to favor high-status victims in their compassion is perhaps to consider the personal cost of expressing compassion in a way that may conflict with their personal equity beliefs. Because Malaysian egalitarians may be caught between, (a) the pressure to maintain valued social relationships via conformity to cultural norms, and; (b) adherence to their personal equity beliefs, then perhaps such individuals might follow the convention *only* when it does not come at a great cost to them. After all, people often act in their self-interests (Tajfel et al., 1971), and the balance between the need to satisfy one's need for affiliation (via "fitting in") and the need to uphold one's personal moral values is likely resolved by weighting the potential cost of choosing one need over the other in a given situation.

The argument here is rooted in the cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1962): the cost of upsetting the societal equilibrium by going against a high-status privilege norm inherent in one's culture is probably higher than the cost of downgrading one's personal values in order to fit into a culture that stresses social connectedness and harmony (Hofstede et al., 2010; Hofstede, 1993). Because of this, even egalitarians in an interdependent culture like Malaysia may be willing to permit their ideological values to take a back seat and to embrace the normatively prescribed high-status privilege in their culture.

In short, unless the perceived personal costs are high, one might expect Malaysian egalitarians to either adhere to their equity principles by, (a) expressing greater compassion to the low-, rather than the high-status victim in line with Lucas and Kteily (2018), or; (b) expressing equivalent levels of compassion to the low- and high-status victims. If the perceived personal cost is low, then it is entirely conceivable that Malaysian egalitarians may choose to abide by the high-status privilege norm in their society by expressing greater compassion for high- relative to low-status victims.

In contrast, expressing greater compassion towards high-status victims should not pose a value threat to Malaysian anti-egalitarians because such norms align with their own hierarchy and merit-based ideological worldviews. Moreover, anti-egalitarians are also more likely than egalitarians to "double down" on their beliefs when their views are threatened in some way (see Nam et al., 2013; McCright & Dunlap, 2011; Iyengar et al., 2008; Festinger, 1962). Hence, anti-egalitarians should be most motivated to re-assert their personal values by paying attention to deservingness cues (such as via the social status of a victim) when cost considerations may be high, especially in societies that are more accommodating of their worldview. That is, they should not find it difficult to express greater compassion toward a higher- than a lower-status victim in societies that already prescribes high-status privilege. If, the cost consideration is low, however, then anti-egalitarians may relax, showing either: (a) a much-attenuated high-status compassion bias, or; (b) no bias at all.

4.2 Experiment 2[5]

To test the foregoing ideas, I used a pre-existing inter-status context based on the perceived status that tends to be ascribed to different nationalities. Specifically, Nigeria is often perceived to be *relatively* lower in social status compared to either Malaysia or Britain (Owuamalam & Matos, 2019; see also Owuamalam & Rubin, 2017). Hence, in the current experiment, participants were presented with a Nigerian student (lower status), versus a Malaysian student (intermediate status), or a British student (higher status), who experienced a module enrollment error. The idea was to see whether a cue to this victim's social status (via their nationality) influenced compassionate orientations in a meaningful way (or at least in ways that conformed to the high-status compassion bias thesis). That is, based on the compassion bias thesis, Malaysian participants should more readily assist a victimized student whose nationality *cues* people to perceive high-, rather than low-, social status. This status-based compassion bias should also be visible amongst egalitarians, provided the cost of expressing this emotion is *low* for them. In contrast, their anti-egalitarian counterparts should be readier to express compassion for high- (relative to low-) status victims when the perceived cost is *high*.

4.2.1 Methodology

Design and participants. The eventual sample of 273 Malaysian students that were enrolled at the University of Nottingham in Malaysia were recruited via a snowball sampling method (155 women, 118 men;

[5] The findings reported in Experiment 2 now appear in the *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* (see Owuamalam & Matos, 2019).

M_{age} = 19.66 years, SD_{age} = 1.37 years; see Appendix A for a full demographic summary). A mixed design was used, in which social status (the between-subjects variable) was manipulated via the nationality of the purported victim: (1) Nigeran (*low-status outgroup*); (2) Malaysian (*intermediate-status ingroup*), and; (3) British (*high-status outgroup*). Cost of assisting the victim was the within-subjects variable, and anti-egalitarianism was measured and added in the design as a moderating covariate (more on these two variables later). As such, the design was a 3 (victim nationality: *Nigerian [low status]* vs. *Malaysian [intermediate status]* vs. *British [high status]*) x 2 (cost considerations: *uncostly* vs. *costly*) x 2 (egalitarian ideology: *egalitarians* vs. *anti-egalitarians*) mixed design.

Previous research informed the use of these nationalities to manipulate social status: For example, Owuamalam and Rubin (2017) found that Malaysians perceive the British as being higher in status relative to their own Malaysian ingroup, and Africans as being lower in status relative to Asians. To ensure that the manipulation elicited the desired state and that participants were particularly mindful of the social status of the victim's national identity, as before, a manipulation check was included after the exposure to this manipulation. Their willingness to offer (uncostly and costly) assistance to the student was then subsequently measured.

Materials and procedure. After reading the information sheet and providing basic demographic information, participants were randomly assigned to one of the three victim status conditions where they read a cover story of the victimized student (see Appendix C for details). In the

cover story, participants were informed of a Student X (a UK-based student), who was denied enrollment into a university module that they had pre-registered for prior to arriving at the University of Nottingham's Malaysia campus, as part of the university's international mobility (exchange) program. Although participants were told Student X's name was masked for confidentiality reasons, Student X's name was removed to avoid any inference of status from other social categories (e.g., gender) that could potentially muddle the interpretation of the eventual findings. Participants then completed the 5-point single item status-awareness measure ("what degree of social status do you think people in society would ascribe to Student X's nationality?"; where -2 = *low status*, +2 = *high status*) to ensure participants were especially mindful of this information when responding to the subsequent measures.

Compassion (via intentions to assist the victim). Participants' compassion was tapped with regards to their willingness to assist the victim, and this was measured with two items: In the first measure, participants were asked to imagine themselves as the module convener and to decide whether to accept or reject Student X onto the module. Given the highlighted limitation of Experiment 1 regarding the perceived (or lack thereof) cost manipulation (see Chapter 3's discussion for more details), the cost of assisting Student X was made more obvious to the participants. Specifically, participants were led to consider the possibility of other students complaining due to unfairness, ostensibly because the module convener has previously turned down similar requests from students on the grounds that there are no places left on the module. I reasoned that the

potential for students' complaints should accentuate the stakes for participants' impending decision (in their role as course convener) and, consequently, that this should:

a) Heighten egalitarians' attention to equity cues (i.e., social status) that then amplifies a value-norm conflict, leading to a resolve to act equitably as a compromise.
b) Amplify anti-egalitarians' attention to deservingness cues (i.e., social status, as per the high-status compassion bias thesis) leading to greater assistance towards the high- rather than lower-status victim.

In the second measure, participants were asked to imagine they were the teaching coordinator in Student X's department and to indicate their willingness to plead to the module convener on behalf of the student to allow enrollment. I did not envision that this type of assistance will be considered costly to the participants as the teaching coordinator would not bear the direct responsibility of denying or accepting the student onto the course. Hence any complaints by students are unlikely to have any meaningful consequences for them since they were merely acting as an intervening third party. On both measures, responses were provided on a 5-point scale (where, 1 = *definitely not*; 5 = *definitely yes*; see Appendix D), where higher scores indicated greater intentions to assist the victim. For the first analysis of victim status, these measures were subsequently merged

into a single measure for the sake of simplifying the analysis (r = .51, p < .001).[6]

To ensure that participants adequately perceived the assistance given as the teaching coordinator as less personally costly than the assistance given as the module convener, participants were asked to measure how costly they believed each type of assistance was on a 5-point scale (where, 1 = *not at all costly*, 5 = *very costly*). An independent-samples *t*-test confirmed this to be the case, with participants finding that helping as the teaching coordinator was less costly (M = 2.70, SD = 1.02) than helping as the module convener (M = 3.33, SD = 1.12), $t(272) = -7.43$, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [.39, .59].

Measuring (anti-)egalitarianism. Finally, (anti-)egalitarianism was measured using the 8-item short version from the hierarchy subscale of the Social Dominance Orientation scale (SDO: Pratto et al., 1994). See also Jost and Hunyady (2005) who operationalized this scale as an index of (anti-)egalitarianism, and have used it to measure this construct (e.g., Jost & Thompson, 2000). Higher scores on the SDO scale (a 7-point scale) indicate stronger anti-egalitarian values.

4.2.2 Results and Discussion

Preliminary analyses. To confirm the assumptions that I make regarding social status, a one-way ANOVA was first conducted with the

[6] The collated compassionate items had a relatively low correlation, because one item tapped into uncostly assistance, while the other item tapped into costly assistance. I decided to collate them for the preliminary analysis for a simpler model to demonstrate a simple effect of victim status. Nevertheless, this should be noted and qualified with the effect of cost considerations, as shown in the main analyses of Experiments 2 and 3, which used these items separately.

nationality manipulation as the fixed factor and the perceived status measure as the dependent variable. Findings revealed a significant main effect of victim status, $F(2, 272) = 45.67$, $p < .001$: Specifically, the Malaysian victim's nationality was perceived as having a higher status relative to the Nigerian victim's nationality, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [.20, .64]. Moreover, both the Malaysian victim, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [-.84, -.40], and Nigerian victim, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [-1.25, -.82], were seen as significantly lower in status than the British victim (see Figure 4.1). Hence, the status manipulation was effective in accentuating a sense of social status in line with expectations.

Figure 4.1.

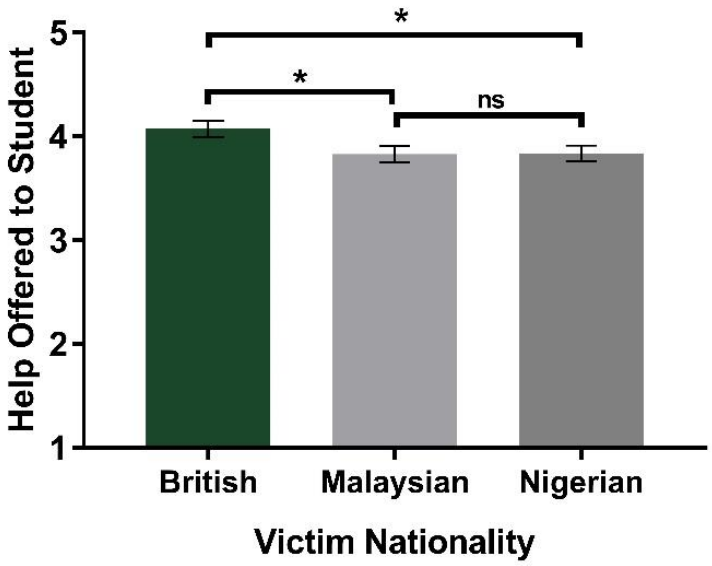
Ratings of the victims' perceived status from Experiment 2.

Note. Error bars are standard errors.

Main analysis. To address the key question of whether the high-status compassion bias exists within a nationality-based real group setting, a one-way ANOVA was run in which victim nationality was once again the independent variable while the collated measure of compassionate intentions was the specified dependent variable. Consistent with the high-status compassion bias thesis, results revealed a main effect of victim nationality, $F(2, 270) = 3.23$, $p = .041$: Participants were significantly more likely to offer assistance to the British student relative to the Nigerian lower-status student, $p = .030$, 95% *CI* [.02, .45], and even the intermediate-status Malaysian ingroup student, $p = .028$, 95% *CI* [.03, .46]. There was no difference in the readiness to assist the Malaysian and Nigerian victims, $p = .945$, 95% *CI* [-.22, .21] (see Figure 4.2). Hence, participants were much more inclined to help the higher-status victim, even overshadowing the otherwise overwhelming tendency for people to favor their own group (Levine et al., 2005; Tajfel et al., 1971).

Figure 4.2.

Participants' expressed willingness to assist the higher-status (British) victim relative to the intermediate-status (Malaysian) and lower-status (Nigerian) victims (see Experiment 2).



Note. ns = not significant; *$p < .05$. Error bars are standard errors.

I, then, sought to establish whether (anti-)egalitarians show a high-status bias and whether it manifests for such individuals when the cost of assistance was high versus low. Since people showed no difference in assisting the Malaysian victim relative to the Nigerian victim, these conditions were merged into a single lower-status victim condition for analytical parsimony. Hence, a 2 (victim status: *high [British student]* vs. *low [combined Nigerian and Malaysian students]*) x 2 (cost considerations) x 2 (egalitarian ideology) mixed ANCOVA was conducted, with the

unmerged uncostly (i.e., helping as teaching coordinator) and costly (i.e., helping as module convenor) measures of assistance as the repeated measures factor, while victim status was the between-subjects factor. (Anti-)egalitarianism was included as a moderating covariate.

Findings revealed a significant main effect of cost considerations, $F(1, 269) = 10.80$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$: corroborating past research on costly help (see Scheffer et al., 2021; Böhm et al., 2018; Brown, 2016; Dovidio et al., 1991; Shotland & Stebbins, 1983), but unlike Experiment 1, participants were more likely to assist victims when the cost of doing so was lower ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .78$) than higher ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .92$). This, then, provides some credence to the explanation given in Chapter 3 for why participants were more willing to advocate on behalf of the victims under the costly condition in Experiment 1 (mainly, they were not made explicitly aware of the costs). In the present study, however, the cost of helping under the costly condition (i.e., as the module convener) was stated to participants, and thus, a typical trend of compassionate assistance occurred.

There was also a significant main effect of (anti-)egalitarianism, $F(1, 269) = 16.32$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$, where the negative association between anti-egalitarianism and compassionate assistance ($r = -.25$, $p < .001$) suggests, consistent with previous Western evidence (e.g., Lucas & Kteily, 2018), that egalitarians were, on the whole, more likely to offer compassionate assistance than their anti-egalitarian counterparts. Furthermore, while victim status did not have a significant main effect, $F(1, 269) = 1.49$, $p = .240$, $\eta^2 = .01$, it did significantly interact with cost considerations, $F(1, 269) = 5.06$, $p = .025$, $\eta^2 = .02$: people were equally

likely to assist the low-status victim (M = 4.10, SD = .78) and high-status victim (M = 4.27, SD = .77) when the personal cost of doing so was low, $F(1, 269) = 2.92$, $p = .089$, $\eta^2 = .01$. However, and in accordance with the high-status bias, when the cost of assistance was perceived as high, participants were much more likely to assist the high-status (British) victim (M = 3.87, SD = .90) than the low-status (combined Nigerian and Malaysian) victim, (M = 3.57, SD = .91), $F(1, 269) = 7.01$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Importantly, this interaction was further qualified by (anti-)egalitarianism, $F(1, 269) = 8.11$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2 = .03$. To understand this 3-way interaction, I looked at the simple effects of victim status on participants' willingness to offer (un)costly compassion at high (M+1SD) and low (M-1SD) levels of (anti-)egalitarianism.

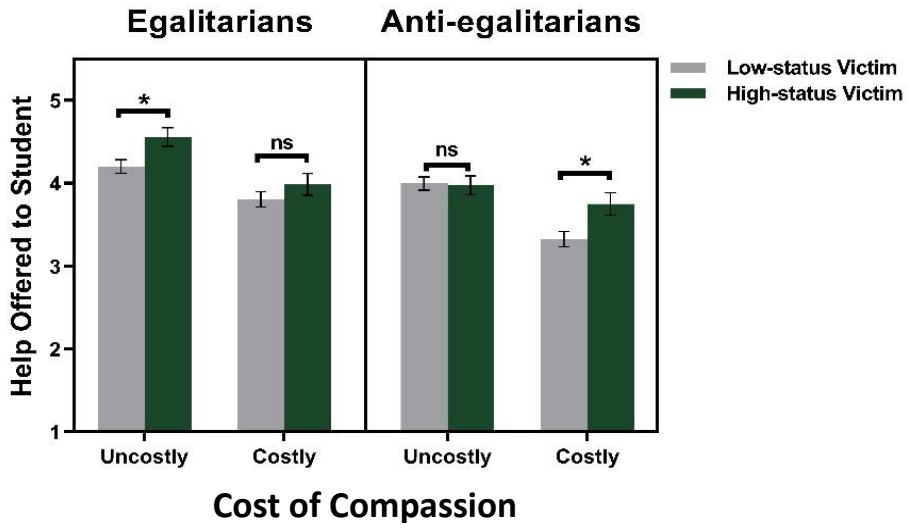
Egalitarians. As expected, Malaysian egalitarians were more likely to offer their assistance to the *high*-status victim relative to the lower-status victim when there was little to no cost for them to do so, $F(1, 269) = 6.62$, $p = .011$, $\eta^2 = .02$ (see Figure 4.3). However, when it was costly for them to adhere to the high-status privilege (i.e., the potential for students' complaints raising social justice concerns), egalitarians rose to their equity principles and expressed equal willingness to assist the high- and low-status victim, $F(1, 269) = 1.23$, $p = .269$, $\eta^2 = .01$ (see Figure 4.3).

Anti-egalitarians. Also consistent with expectations, Malaysian anti-egalitarians seemed to double down on the high-status compassion bias when the cost was *high* and assisted the high-status victim much more than the low-status victim, $F(1, 269) = 6.72$, $p = .010$, $\eta^2 = .02$ (see Figure 4.3). On the contrary, when the stakes were *low*, anti-egalitarians were less eager

to rise in defense of their traditional meritocratic principles, and largely expressed equivalent levels of readiness to assist the low- and high-status victims, $F(1, 269) = .02$, $p = .868$, $\eta^2 < .01$ (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3.

The effect of victim status on (anti-)egalitarians' willingness to assist a victim when the cost of helping was low or high for Experiment 2.



Note. ns = not significant; **p* < .05. Error bars are standard errors.

Summary of findings. Experiment 2 provides further evidence for the existence of a high-status compassion bias, even when real social identities that differed in their status connotations (rather than just being induced as in Experiment 1) were used. The high-status compassion bias in the current study is particularly striking, especially considering its manifestation even when a victim belonging to the participants' ingroup (i.e., Malaysian identity) was included. Here, based on social identity principles (see Tajfel & Turner, 1979), one would have expected some kind

of ingroup-favoring compassion orientation to thwart the high-status compassion bias - but it did not. Experiment 2's findings also demonstrate that a high-status compassion bias can still be present in relatively benign forms of victimization, not just when the level of victimization is relatively severe (like in Experiment 1).

Despite the compelling trends from Experiment 2, and the fact that I replicated the compassion cost effect from Experiment 1, amongst anti-egalitarians at least, there may still be lingering doubts over the replicability of the key effects, especially given the suggestion that complex interactions are often less replicable than main effects (Altmejd et al., 2019; Open Science Collaboration, 2015). Hence, I re-examined the predictions of Experiment 2 in a close replication.

4.3 Experiment 3

I recruited 288 Malaysian students (109 men, 179 women; M_{age} = 20.60 years, SD_{age} = 3.64 years; see Appendix A for a demographic summary) for the current study. A post-hoc power sensitivity analysis revealed that the sample size achieved a moderate observed power of 72%, given the effect size of, f = .15, and with the alpha set at .05. Since this was a direct replication of Experiment 2 (with the key difference being the use of a different cohort of student participants), the design of Experiment 3 was kept exactly the same: Participants were first given a description of the situation Student X was on, with Student X once again being described as either British (higher status), Nigerian (lower status), or Malaysian (intermediate status ingroup member). Participants were first asked to rate

the student's perceived social status before they reported their willingness to assist the student using the same measures from Experiment 2.

Participants also completed the same cost measure as in Experiment 2, which further confirmed that the manipulation of costly/uncostly help had worked sufficiently: participants thought the help given as the teaching coordinator was less costly than the help given as the module convener (*M* ± *SD*; 2.62 ± 1.14; 3.47 ± 1.18, respectively), $t(276) = -10.73$, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [-1.09, -.72]. Finally, the 8-item version of the Social Dominance Orientation scale was used to measure (anti-)egalitarianism (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$).

4.3.1 Results and Discussion

Preliminary analyses. Corroborating the findings in Experiment 2, a one-way ANOVA revealed, once again, a main effect of social status, $F(2, 285) = 38.67$, $p < .001$: Participants saw Student X as lower in status when described as Nigerian ($M = -.26$, $SD = .81$) relative to when the student was described as Malaysian ($M = .23$, $SD = .86$), $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [-.73, -.26], or British ($M = .79$, $SD = .82$), $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [-1.28, -.81]. Likewise, the student was rated as lower in status when described as Malaysian compared to when they were described as British, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [-.79, -.32].

Main analysis. As before, a one-way ANOVA was conducted with student nationality as the independent variable and the compassionate measure as the dependent variable. However, this time, student nationality did not have a significant effect on people's willingness to assist the

student, $F(2, 285) = .13$, $p = .878$: participants were seemingly willing to assist the student equally regardless of whether they were Nigerian ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .81$), Malaysian ($M = 3.98$, $SD = .70$) or British ($M = 3.94$, $SD = .69$; see Table 4.1 for posthoc comparisons).

Table 4.1.

Posthoc comparisons between nationality conditions from Experiment 3.

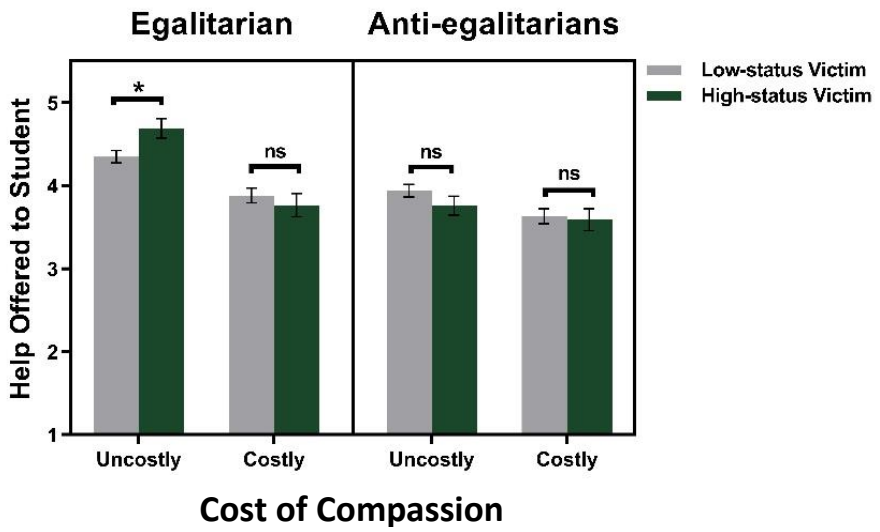
Student Nationality		*p*	*95% CI*
Nigerian	Malaysian	.627	[-.261, .157]
	British	.911	[-.220, .195]
Malaysian	British	.706	[-.168, .248]

Nevertheless, the Malaysian and Nigerian conditions were aggregated into a single condition of low-status as in Experiment 2, before running the 2 (victim status) x 2 (cost considerations) mixed ANCOVA, with (anti-)egalitarianism included as the moderating covariate. First, the main effects of (anti-)egalitarianism, $F(1, 284) = 21.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$, and cost of help were significant ($M \pm SE$; *low cost* = 4.18 ± .05; *high cost* = 3.72 ± .06), $F(1, 284) = 69.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .20$. Again, while victim status was not significant, $F(1, 284) = .01$, $p = .998$, $\eta^2 = .01$, crucially, and replicating the previous findings, victim status interacted with cost and (anti-)egalitarianism in a 3-way interaction, $F(1, 284) = 6.19$, $p = .013$, $\eta^2 = .02$. This interaction was again decomposed by looking at the effect of cost on participants' assistance towards the low- vs. high-status victim when their (anti-)egalitarianism was low (M-1SD) and high (M+1SD).

For egalitarians, the findings from Experiment 2 were replicated: Malaysian egalitarians were more likely to assist the high-status student, relative to the low-status student, only when the cost of doing so was *low*, $F(1, 284) = 5.84$, $p = .016$, $\eta^2 = .02$, but not when the cost was high, $F(1, 284) = .48$, $p = .488$, $\eta^2 < .01$ (see Figure 4.4). The patterns for anti-egalitarians from Experiment 2 were only partially observed, with regards to the uncostly (but not the costly) condition. That is, anti-egalitarians showed no discernable bias for either the low- or high-status victims, when the personal cost of helping was low, $F(1, 284) = 1.77$, $p = .185$, $\eta^2 = .01$ (replicating Experiment 2), but also when the cost of compassionate assistance was high, $F(1, 284) = .06$, $p = .803$, $\eta^2 = .01$ (contrary to Experiment 2; see Figure 4.4). Hence, Experiment 3 was able to replicate 3 out of the 4 key simple contrasts from the 3-way interaction that was reported in Experiment 2.

Figure 4.4.

The replicated effect of victim status on (anti-)egalitarians' willingness to assist a victim when the cost of helping was low or high for Experiment 3.



Note. ns = not significant; *$p < .05$. Error bars are standard errors.

So why is there a discrepancy in the results across Experiments 2 and 3? Given that Experiment 3 was a close replication of Experiment 2, the reason for the discrepancy in the findings for anti-egalitarians across the studies may more likely lie in individual differences across the two samples. Specifically, it may be that the sample for Experiment 3 was less representative of the (anti-)egalitarian spectrum than Experiment 2. That is, there might have been an over-representation of egalitarians given the sampled population of university students and an under-representation (if at all any) of anti-egalitarians. To examine this possibility, I first conducted a post-hoc one-sample *t*-test for Experiments 2 and 3, to check whether the mean (anti-)egalitarianism score was significantly lower than the "neutral"

midpoint on the scale (i.e., 4). This was indeed the case: the mean score was significantly lower than 4 for both Experiment 2, $t(272) = -15.05$, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [-1.14, -.88], and Experiment 3, $t(287) = -14.90$, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [-1.12, -.86]. This outcome could explain the more robust findings for egalitarians across the two studies, but it crucially does not explain the mixed evidence for anti-egalitarians.

When I investigated further, I found that at +1*SD* above the mean (which represented anti-egalitarians) the average SDO score for participants in this category was slightly higher in Experiment 3 (+1*SD* = 4.14) than in Experiment 2 (+1*SD* = 4.10), although this difference was not statistically significant. However, crucially, the SDO scores of the presumed anti-egalitarians in Experiment 3 also did not significantly deviate from the scale's midpoint of 4 (a point on the scale indicating neutrality - i.e., "undecideds"), $t(137) = -.71$, $p = .476$, 95% *CI* [-.16, .08]. This pattern of results may help to explain the mixed evidence across both studies because it is entirely conceivable that the reaction of the "undecideds" may sometimes mirror the behavior of anti-egalitarians (as in Experiment 2), at times neutral (as in Experiment 3), or could follow the pattern of responses characteristic of egalitarians because it is almost impossible to judge who they are. Of course, it may be possible to extend the current probe to -/+2*SD* of the relevant moderator, but this is less than ideal for two reasons:

a) There are only 51 participants in Experiment 3, and 38 in Experiment 2 within the +1*SD* range. Hence, a probe at -/+2SD is unlikely to be meaningful because it would rely on a tiny

sample of the intended demographics, with the potential to raise further questions about the power of simple effect tests.

b) Even if one could generate a handful of people within the +2*SD* band across these experiments, there is still an issue of equivalent egalitarians to compare with, since -2*SD* of mean SDO in both experiments will result in a value less than the lowest point on the actual SDO scale (i.e., < 1). This would mean zero number of extreme egalitarians to compare the few anti-egalitarians responses to.

Future replications should therefore aim to use a more representative (even a quota) sample that allows for the roughly equivalent occurrence of egalitarians and anti-egalitarians, perhaps by using a categorical measure of participants' political affiliation (e.g., asking participants to report whether they identify either as a conservative or a liberal) that has been shown to be a reliably strong predictor of egalitarian ideology (Wilson & Sibley, 2013; van Hiel & Mervielde, 2006).

4.4 Chapter Conclusions

Chapter 4 addressed the role of different ideological orientations and how these might interact with cost appraisals to influence people's compassionate assistance towards high- versus low-status victims. This evidence showed that anti-egalitarians may be more drawn to a high-status compassion bias when the potential cost to them is quite high, and this evidence corroborated a similar trend in Chapter 3. Having said that, it is important to note that the pattern in Chapter 3, when it comes to anti-egalitarians, was corroborated only in one of two experiments presented in

this chapter. While I looked at the large number of "undecideds" (those who scored close to the midpoint of the scale, i.e., 4) as a potential explanation for this, this narrative is, of course, speculative in nature, and should be taken with a grain of salt. Future research should, therefore, aim for a more representative sample that would allow equal depiction of egalitarians and anti-egalitarians.

Experiments 2 and 3 also revealed that Malaysian egalitarians may not always assist low-status individuals in line with their (personal) equity-based values (cf. Lucas & Kteily, 2018). Instead, the analyses demonstrated in both experiments that Malaysian egalitarians were willing to express a high-status compassion bias, going against their personal equity beliefs, but only when the cost to them was somewhat trivial. When the cost of a high-status bias is high, however, Malaysian egalitarians rekindled sensitivity to equity by showing no signs of bias toward high vs. low-status victims. This latter trend is striking when gleaned via the lens of some Western evidence (Lucas & Kteily, 2018) that typically report a greater bias in favor of low-status individuals and/or groups amongst egalitarians. That a low-status bias did not occur among egalitarians in this Malaysian context may have been due to potentially stronger societal influences within Malaysia's more collectivistic culture that may orient egalitarians towards a compromise between their personal values and the high-status privilege norm, rather than a more outright status-quo challenging orientation. Of course, such a cultural role is largely speculative due to the explorative nature of the role of (anti-)egalitarianism within this chapter. Nevertheless, these findings, particularly when considered hand-in-hand with Lucas and Kteily (2018),

provide a rather interesting image that is worth closer investigation in future.

Overall, the current analyses provided a generally successful picture of how ideological views can enlist cost considerations that sometimes cause a high-status compassion bias. Importantly, this chapter highlights the potential role that social pressures can play, at times, in people's compassionate orientation when the status of victims is factored in. In particular, this pressure to conform to society's expectations may have led Malaysian egalitarians to *sometimes* favor the high-status victim, when a standard expectation for such individuals would have been the expression of greater sympathy for the disadvantaged.

A lingering question, however, is to what extent the high-status compassion bias would be evident in a context where the *higher*-status victim poses some kind of threat to the potential helper/bystander? For example, and as I discuss at length in the next chapter, certain identity challenges (e.g., threat to social distinctiveness via concerns over men's masculinity) may enlist image-management considerations that may thwart an orientation towards a high-status favoring compassion bias in certain compassionate contexts. I consider these issues in the next chapter.

Chapter 5:

Do Identity-Related Threat Appraisals Matter?

So far, my thesis has examined the existence of a compassion bias based on the social status of individuals needing compassionate assistance, whilst also examining how the cost of expressing such intentions, as well as ideological leanings, might moderate this event. Results have largely shown a bias favoring high-status victims that are sometimes constrained by a cost-based trade-off between peoples' ideological values and the wider value orientation of the society in which they live. However, are there situations when this high-status favoring compassion bias could be *reversed*, so that compassion is expressed to a greater extent towards people from lower-status backgrounds? In this chapter, I consider the role that threat appraisals might play in shaping people's status-based compassionate expressions. The guiding principle here is that situations may arise in which a higher-status helpee/victim poses some degree of (identity-based) threat to potential interveners that could then disincentivize the ordinary tendency towards a high-status compassion bias.

One context in which threat appraisals are likely present (e.g., those tied to social identity) relates to inter-sexual orientation transactions, especially in relations between heterosexual men and victimized gay individuals. This context was chosen for three reasons: (a) the gay context is one in which masculine and feminine gender expressions are often

salient, and; (b) such gendered status-defining categorizations can threaten heterosexual men (e.g., Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2019; Salvati et al., 2016; Glick et al., 2007), often; (c) with diverging reactions (attitude/behavior-wise) from heterosexual men (i.e., gendered status indicators in gay men sometimes enhance [and at other times deflate] positive attitudes toward masculine [vs. feminine] exemplars, Owuamalam & Matos, 2021; see also Glick et al., 2007). This mixed evidence creates a unique (even rigorous) context in which to investigate the applicability (vs. limits) of a high-status compassion bias, precisely because it is a situation in which gay victims with status-conferring attributes (e.g., masculine characteristics) can be expected to pose greater identity challenges to heterosexual men (see Owuamalam & Matos, 2021).

In short, the argument here is that heterosexual men may sometimes downplay their compassion towards victimized gay men because such individuals exhibit (high) status conferring masculine attributes that make them *indistinguishable* from heterosexual men. The speculation is that such outcomes may be tied to heterosexual men's need to restore a *distinct* and valued masculine identity. In the next section, I discuss why masculine and feminine gay men might be respectively accorded high and low social status, to begin with, prior to considering the potential threat that may be tied to these identities.

5.1 Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation as Status-Defining Attributes

Research has shown that gay men tend to be categorized into different subgroups that are often status-defining: that is, with regards to sexual orientation and gender expectations (see Kranz et al., 2017; Fiske, 2012; Clausell & Fiske, 2005). In a heteronormative society, the minority status of the gay identity already places gay men in a relatively lower-status position compared to their heterosexual counterparts. But the (traditional) gender expectations often conflated with sexual orientation norms add a further status-defining attribute. While masculinity is typically associated with competence and elevated social status (Fiske, 2012; Clausell & Fiske, 2005; Ridgeway, 2001), femininity is typically not, and is often ascribed to women (and gay men; see Blashill & Powlishta, 2009), who are historically placed at the lower rung of the status ladder (e.g., James, 1997; Erikson, 1984). Femininity is also associated with a trait often attributed to people in relatively weaker and subordinated positions - warmth (Fiske, 2012; Cuddy et al., 2008; Oldmeadow, 2007; Fiske et al., 2002).

It is precisely because compassion is a "warmth-related" attribute that potentially cues onlookers to (supposed) weakness, that heterosexual men might downplay its expression as a means of contrasting themselves away from the presumably more feminine (gay) outgroup when their masculine identity is threatened. After all, studies have shown that people tend to downplay aspects of their social identity that are threatened in some way (Owuamalam & Zagefka, 2011). But *how* does this occur, especially in light of the possibility that cues to gay men's masculinity could also

increase similarity perceptions in heterosexual men, and similarity is known to *encourage*, not dampen, compassion towards those in need (Oveis et al., 2010; Westmaas & Silver, 2006; Levine et al., 2005; Levine et al., 2002)? I discuss one reason for compassionate downplays in the ensuing section on distinctiveness threat.

5.2 Distinctiveness Threat and Downplaying of Compassion

It is tempting to assume that heterosexual men would be more compassionate towards gay victims with the high-status conferring masculine (rather than low-status conferring feminine) attribute, especially since they share the masculine identity in common. Indeed, such similarity-induced compassionate expression is actually not new as previous research has shown (see Levine et al., 2002). But in the context of (heterosexual and gay) sexual orientation relations, the experience of a unique type of identity challenge (i.e., masculinity threat) can cause heterosexual men to *downplay* their compassion towards gay exemplars who "dilute" what it means to be a (heterosexual and masculine) man. This is especially the case within the context of compassionate assistance because showing compassion may be seen as a weakness, distinctly reserved for the feminine kind (Owuamalam & Matos, 2021; Xiao et al., 2019; Diekman & Clark, 2015).

5.2.1 The identity-threat caveat of the compassion bias thesis

A central argument within social identity tradition (particularly the reactive distinctiveness thesis, see Jetten & Spears, 2003) is that too much similarity between one's social identity and an *outgroup* can undermine identity boundaries between one's social identity relative to the outgroup. This blurring of boundaries, then, can cause a backlash in the service of

restoring a positively distinct social image (Jetten & Spears, 2003; Spears et al., 2002). Gay men who exhibit the high-status conferring masculine attribute might be seen to be too *similar* to heterosexual men (in terms of masculinity), and this could threaten heterosexual men's uniqueness in this regard. This type of distinctiveness-induced threat is potentially absent (or somewhat attenuated) when heterosexual men are faced with gay men who exhibit the potentially lower-status conferring feminine attribute because, in this context, a clear distinction exists between what it means to be a "real" man versus a gay man.

The foregoing proposition is not without merit. For example, Storms (1978) and Laner and Laner (1979) have shown that gay targets with the high-status conferring masculine attribute, especially those that were coded as *hyper*-masculine, were less liked than feminine gay men, and even less liked than their (hyper-)masculine *heterosexual* counterparts. Indeed, Owuamalam and Matos (2021) directly tested the propositions derived from the reactive distinctiveness thesis and found a tendency for heterosexual men to downplay their compassion to a greater degree when cued to the high-status conferring attribute of masculinity (relative to femininity) of a victimized gay exemplar. Importantly, Owuamalam and Matos' (2021) evidence showed that a threat to heterosexual men's ability to claim a distinct masculine identity explained the downplaying of compassion for the higher-status masculine gay victim relative to a gay victim with the potentially status-deflating feminine attribute.

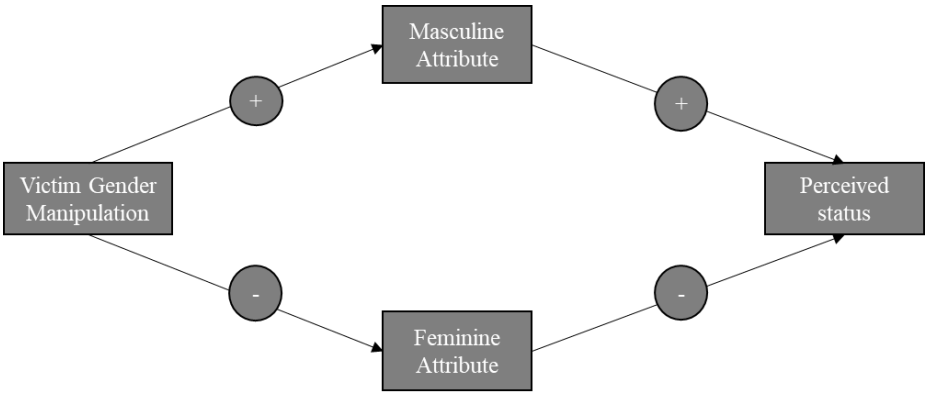
5.3 Summary of Assumptions and Hypotheses

Three studies (N = 1,373) were conducted to address the potential that the experience of distinctiveness threat reverses the high-status favoring compassion bias, at least in certain compassionate situations. To convincingly demonstrate this possibility, one needs to first show that an emergence of a high-status compassion bias is possible within the context of the victimization of gay individuals possessing the high-status conferring masculine (vs. feminine) attribute (Experiments 4-6). Secondly, one must show, too, that the experience of distinctiveness threat causes this tendency to reverse, especially amongst heterosexual men for whom a masculinity-based distinctiveness threat is relevant (Experiment 5-6).

A central assumption underlying the arguments in this chapter is that masculinity is an indicator of elevated social status, while femininity is an indicator of low social status. This assumption is supported by previous studies showing that the masculine gender is associated with higher status, which has been shown to predict competence, and a lack of warmth (see Clausell & Fiske, 2005; Fiske et al., 2002, pp. 893-897). I, therefore, used an adaptation of a gender expression manipulation developed by Glick et al. (2007) to investigate: (a) the extent to which this treatment intensifies salience of the high-status conferring masculine attribute (vs. the low-status conferring feminine attribute) and, subsequently, (b) the degree to which these status-conferring attributes either heighten (in the case of the masculine attribute) or undermine (in the case of the feminine attribute) the perceived status of a gay victim (see Figure 5.1 for summary of this conceptual model).

Figure 5.1.

Conceptual model of the potential effect of gender expression treatment of gay victims on perceived status via the status conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity (see Chapter 5).



Note. Victim gender expression manipulation: -1 = *stereotypically feminine*, 1 = *stereotypically masculine*.

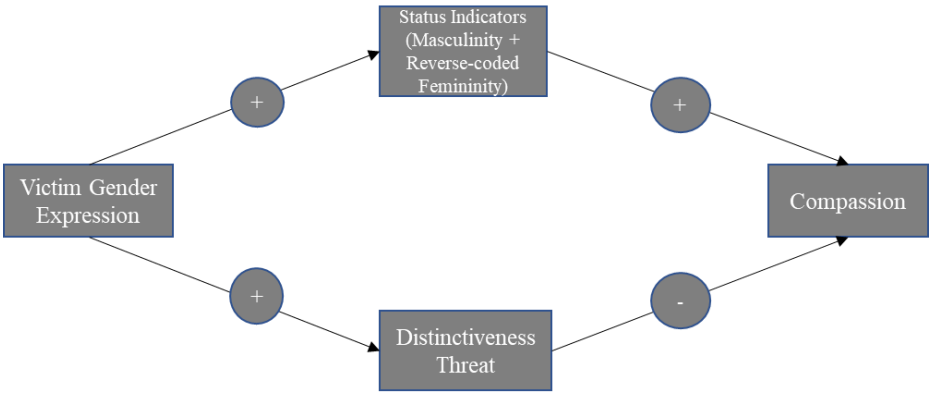
A further, and more central aim here, was to investigate whether the status-conferring attributes (i.e., masculinity/femininity) proximally explain an association between cues to a victim's gender expression and compassion for gay victims in ways that are consistent with the high-status compassion bias versus identity-threat caveat of the compassion bias thesis. I predicted that:

a) Cues to a victim's masculine gender expression should increase compassion for gay victims due to increased attention to the high-status conferring masculine attribute, whereas the low-status conferring feminine attribute should reverse the foregoing trend (based on the high-status compassion bias thesis, see Figure 5.2).

b) At the same time, cues to a victim's masculine gender expressions should decrease compassion for gay victims, provided people's (heterosexual men in particular) attention shifts to the threat induced by similarity to the ingroup (based on the identity-threat caveat of the compassion bias thesis, see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2.

Conceptual model of the effect of gender expression treatment of gay victims on compassion when the status conferring attributes of masculinity/femininity (reversed) and distinctiveness threat are mediators (see Chapter 5).



Note. Victim gender manipulation*: -1 = stereotypically feminine, 1 = stereotypically masculine.*

5.4 Experiment 4[7]

This initial study was conducted to first establish how heterosexual men and women differ in their compassionate orientations toward the feminine and masculine gay victims, via the mechanisms of increased attention to the status-conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity. Past research has demonstrated that gender differences in prosocial research tend to be more pronounced when the context primes gender roles (Xiao et al., 2019; Diekman & Clark, 2015). Heterosexual men generally pay more attention to the gender expression of other men than women do (particularly gay men; Herek & Capitanio, 1999; Kite & Whitley, 1996). Consequently, I expected the foregoing pattern of results to be especially visible amongst heterosexual men because they are the ones whose achievement-oriented socialization (see, Haines et al., 2016; Kachel et al., 2016; Gauntlett, 2008, for discussions) potentially accentuates their attention to signals of people's social standing.

In short, so long as heterosexual men's attention to the status-conferring attributes is uncontaminated by threat appraisals, they should express greater compassion to a masculine (relative to a feminine) gay victim, as per the high-status compassion bias thesis. When cues to victim status via masculinity are contaminated by concerns over identity-related distinctiveness, then one might expect heterosexual men to downplay their

[7] The data presented in Experiment 4 are based on a re-analysis of the one presented in a publication of ours that was featured in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior* (Owuamalam & Matos, 2020).

compassion for the higher-status masculine (versus the lower-status feminine) gay victim, as per the identity-threat caveat.

The proposition here is limited to heterosexual men since they are the ones likely to experience identity-based threat in the current context of gay/heterosexual relations. However, and on an exploratory basis, I was curious to see how the relevant treatments in this study would influence heterosexual women's compassionate expressions, also. It is not as straightforward how heterosexual women may respond to a high-status compassion bias within the present context, especially given their somewhat inconsistent attitudes towards gay men relative to heterosexual men (Cohen et al., 2009; Herek & Capitanio, 1999, 1996; Kerns & Fine, 1994; Kite & Deaux, 1987). On one hand, "femininity" is an ingroup-defining attribute, and women may be unwilling to accept its lower-status connotations, especially given the possibility that they should also be more motivated (in light of gender equity strives) to question the legitimacy of a reality in which femininity equates to low status (Spears et al., 2001).

On the other hand, heterosexual women might view stereotypically feminine gay men as a potential threat precisely because of this shared identity of femininity, which may enhance a high-status compassion bias in women, contrary to the expectations of heterosexual men under the identity-threat activations. As a result, one might expect to see either: (a) a low-status favoring bias (due to a shared sense of kinship); (b) no bias at all when it comes to heterosexual women's compassion for feminine (vs. masculine) gay victims (as seen in some of the literature: e.g., Cohen et al., 2009); or (c) even a high-status compassion bias.

5.4.1 Methodology

Participants. A total of 303 responses from American heterosexual men (N = 151) and women (N = 152) were collected for this initial study, which a power analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009) revealed should be enough to power the main analysis for each gender group, assuming an effect size of f = .16 similar to prior experiments (Cafri et al., 2010), and with the power set at 80%, and α = .05. Participants (M_{age} = 34.81 years, SD_{age} = 10.73 years; see Appendix A for more details) were recruited via Prolific's platform (www.prolific.co) and were compensated for their time (£5.00 per hour, pro-rated).

Design, materials, and procedure. Experiment 4 had a 2 (participant gender: *heterosexual men* vs. *heterosexual women*) x 2 (victim gender expression: *stereotypically feminine [lower status]* vs. *stereotypically masculine [higher status]*) between-subjects design. To investigate the effect of a gay victim's perceived social status on men and women's compassionate intentions towards them, participants were first presented with an extract of a CNN news report of the Orlando Pulse shooting that occurred in 2016, which had been fairly recent at the time of data collection (see Appendix E for the full extract). Participants then saw a brief vignette of a supposed survivor of the shooting, which had been ostensibly collected during an interview soon after the shooting had occurred. The gay victim's perceived social status was then manipulated through the description of the gay man as either stereotypically feminine or masculine. I adopted a similar method used in Glick et al. (2007) to manipulate the targets' status-conferring attributes via their

masculinity/femininity. In the *stereotypically masculine* (*higher status) condition*, participants read a description of a gay man with stereotypically masculine traits, hobbies, and ambitions:

> *"I am a 21-year-old gay man. [...] I was part of the football team, and adventure club back in college. I love repairing old cars because my father was a mechanic and he taught me everything he knew. Emm... I recently graduated with a combined major in business, with a minor in computer programming, and have just been accepted for an internship at Oracle Inc. I was aiming to rise to the top and probably become one of the company's chief executives at some point in the future, but I am not so sure with all the hate out there...."*

Conversely, in the stereotypically feminine (*lower status) condition*, the target's description emphasized traditionally feminine traits, hobbies, and occupations:

> *"I'm a 21-year-old, obviously gay. [...] I'd say that I'm a very neat person. I've also been told I'm too chatty by my friends. Oh, my, gosh, I really enjoy dancing and singing, so I'm currently taking singing, ballet, and freestyle dance lessons. In my spare time, I do hairdressing and some modeling here and there... which are fabulous by the way! Emm... I was aiming to pursue an acting career in*

Broadway, but I am not so sure with all the hate out there....”

Compassionate expressions. As discussed in Chapter 2, compassion was measured via participants’ willingness to assist the gay victim(s) that participants were exposed to. I used a 9-item scale (α = .84) developed in-house to tap this construct (e.g., “If the LGBTQ+ community needs my help, I want to offer it.”; “I feel at peace with myself knowing that I have the capacity to help the LGBT individuals fight hatred and discrimination against them if called upon to serve in this way”; see Appendix F for the full list of items). The responses were obtained on a 7-point Likert scale where higher scores indicated more compassion for LGBTQ+ victims.

Positive checks. In order to confirm that social status could be elicited via various sub-identities within the overarching gay identity, participants rated the gay victim they saw on how feminine/masculine they would be perceived by society (1 = *not at all feminine/masculine*; 7 = *very feminine/masculine*). Higher scores indicated stronger femininity/masculinity attributions to the victim. As before, a status check (-2 = *definitely low status*; +2 = *definitely high status*) was included to confirm the assumptions that I make regarding the status-conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity. That is, a heightened sense of the victim’s femininity should weaken social status perceptions, and an elevated sense of the victim’s masculinity should strengthen status perceptions.

5.4.2 Results and Discussion

Testing the status assumption. In order to confirm the prediction that cues to a victim's gender expression are indicative of the victim's elevated status (via masculinity) or reduced status (via femininity), I ran a mediational analysis using PROCESS (Model 4; Hayes, 2012), with the victim's gender expression (coded: -1 = *stereotypically feminine*; 1 = *stereotypically masculine*) as the independent variable. The presumed status-conferring attributes of perceived femininity and masculinity were included as mediators, while the perceived social status of the gay victim was the outcome variable. This model was estimated using 5000 bootstrap samples.

Results revealed that cues to the victim's gender expression were positively associated with perceived status, $\beta = 1.85$, $SE = .05$, $t(301) = 4.01$, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [.09, .28]: Participants who were exposed to the masculine gay victim reported an enhanced social status of the victim relative to those who were exposed to the feminine gay victim. But it is entirely likely that these status perceptions may have been driven by the prestige attached to the occupational aspirations in the vignettes that participants read, and, consequently, the effect of the gender expression cue itself does not provide conclusive evidence that the specific status-conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity were responsible for this main effect.

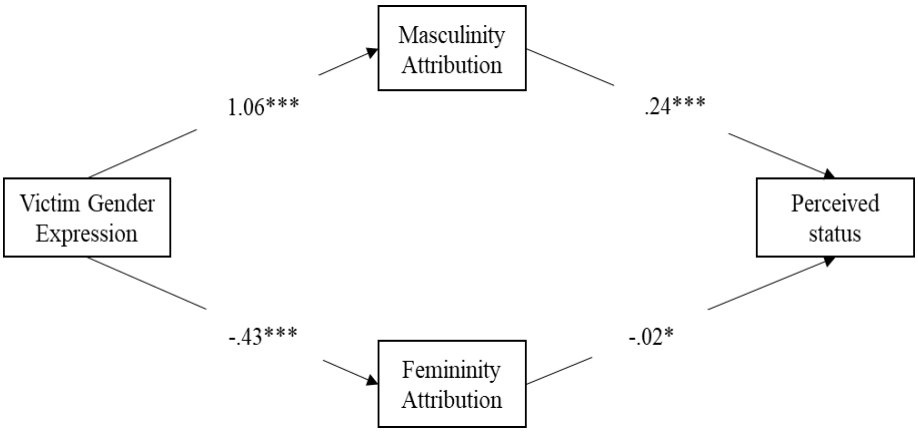
To unpack these issues, I examined the indirect effects of cues to the victim's gender expression on the perceived status of the victim via the specific status-conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity. This

type of analysis is able to identify the reliability of mechanisms presumed to underlie the main effect when these are assessed. Accordingly, a reliable indirect effect (β_{IE}) is established if zero lies outside the upper and lower limits of the corresponding bootstrapped 95% confidence interval (*CI*) for the estimate that quantifies the mediated effect.

Corroborating the status assumption, results revealed that cues to the victim's gender expression were positively associated with the status-conferring masculine attribute, $\beta = 1.06$, $SE = .08$ $t(301) = 13.07$, $p < .001$, 95% *CI* [.90, 1.22], but inversely associated with the status-deflating feminine attribute, $\beta = -.43$, $SE = .12$, $t(301) = -3.68$, $p = .001$, 95% *CI* [-.66, -.20]. Importantly, the status-enhancing masculine attribute *explained* the enhancing effect of cues to the victim's (masculine) gender expression on perceived status, $\beta_{IE} = .24$, $SE = .04$, 95% *CI* [.15, .33] (see Figure 5.3). Meanwhile, the opposite mechanism via the status-deflating femininity attribution explained the *dampening* effect of cues to the victim's femininity on perceived status, $\beta_{IE} = -.02$, $SE = .01$, 95% *CI* [-.05, -.01] (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3.

The effect of gender expression of gay victims on perceived status via the status-conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity from Experiment 4.



Note. *$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$

Given the focus on gender effects in this first study, I also decided to run, on an exploratory basis, a moderated mediational analysis (model 15, PROCESS; Hayes, 2012) to test whether heterosexual women in particular contested these status appraisals. After all, femininity is a vital aspect of self-definition for (many) women, and this might cause them to hold divergent associations (relative to men) when it comes to femininity-related status attributions. This is because people ordinarily tend to favor their social identities (Tajfel et al., 1971), especially in a situation like a gender context, where women might view the status connotations as being illegitimate (Spears et al., 2001). Contrary to this assumption, however, the analysis revealed largely similar trends for both heterosexual men and

women when participant gender was factored into the model (see Appendix G for a summary of the model). In short, both men and women acknowledged that masculinity was a status-enhancing attribute, while femininity was not construed as such, either by heterosexual men or women.

Testing Hypothesis 1. To test whether the status-enhancing attribute (i.e., masculinity) increases compassionate expression towards gay victims (and vice versa for status-attenuating cues - femininity), I ran a moderated mediation using Model 15 on PROCESS (Hayes, 2012) in SPSS. The victim's gender expression was included as the independent variable (coded as, -1 = *stereotypically feminine*; 1 = *stereotypically masculine*), while the two status-conferring attributes (femininity and masculinity) were the mediators. Compassion was the outcome variable. Gender has been shown to be a reliable predictor of compassionate orientations, with women performing better than men in this regard (Xiao et al., 2019; Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983). So, as well as testing the specific predictions concerning heterosexual men, I also explored the extent to which women's responses mirrored (or differed from) those provided by men, if only to be used as a baseline for contextualizing the anticipated effects amongst heterosexual men.

As such, participants' gender (coded as, 1 = *heterosexual men;* 2 = *heterosexual women*) was included as the moderator between the status-conferring attribute and compassion, to investigate whether the indirect effect of the gender expression treatment via the relevant mechanism operates in the same way (or differently) for men and women. I used 5000

bootstrap samples for this moderated-mediation analysis and, as before, a reliable conditional indirect effect is evident if zero lies outside the upper and lower bounds of the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval (*CI*). Full model results are shown in Figure 5.4.

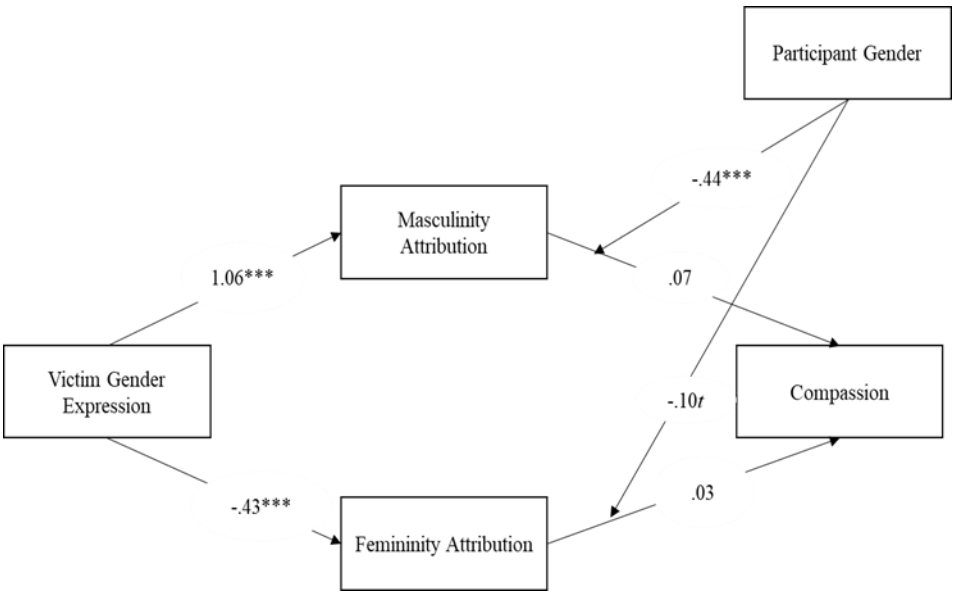
Results showed that, while cues to the victim's gender expression did not have a significant direct effect on compassionate expression towards the victim, β = -.05, *SE* = .06, *t*(295) = -.73, *p* = .468, 95% *CI* [-.17, .08], participants' gender qualified this null effect in a significant victim gender expression x participant gender interaction, β = .35, *SE* = .13, *t*(295) = 2.73, *p* = .007, 95% *CI* [.10, .60]: Women did not differ in their compassion towards the gay victims, β = .13, *SE* = .09, *t*(295) = 1.42, *p* = .156, 95% *CI* [-.05, .30]. Meanwhile, consistent with the identity-threat caveat of the high-status compassion bias, heterosexual men downplayed their compassion for the masculine (vs. the feminine) gay victim, β = -.22, *SE* = .09, *t*(295) = -2.43, *p* = .016, 95% *CI* [-.40, -.04].

Because this latter effect might have come about due to identity threat, I reasoned that a more diagnostic test of the high-status favoring bias should reveal that compassion is greater for the higher-status masculine (vs. the lower-status feminine) gay victim when the effect of the gender expression treatment passes through the victim's masculinity attributions (while this high-status bias should be reversed via their femininity attributions). This was indeed the case, although the predicted compassion boosting effect of victim gender expression via the status-enhancing masculinity attributions was restricted to heterosexual men, β_{CIE} = .31, *SE* = .08, 95% *CI* [.14, .46], but was reversed for heterosexual women, β_{CIE} = -

.16, *SE* = .08, 95% *CI* [-.32, -.01]. Again, consistent with a high-status favoring bias, cues to the victim's gender expression caused compassion to decrease amongst heterosexual men via the status-attenuating mechanism of femininity attributions, β_{CIE} = -.03, *SE* = .02, 95% *CI* [-.08, -.01], while this indirect effect was absent amongst heterosexual women, β_{CIE} = .01, *SE* = .02, 95% *CI* [-.02, .05] (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4.

The effect of gender expression of gay victims on heterosexual men and women's compassion via the status conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity (see Experiment 4).



Note. Victim gender expression: -1 = stereotypically feminine, 1 = stereotypically masculine; Gender: 1 = men; 2 = women

$^{t}p < .06$; ***$p < .001$

Summary of key findings. Experiment 4 investigated whether or not a high-status compassion bias would emerge within an intersexual orientation context that has the potential to trigger threat appraisals amongst heterosexual men. Results showed that a high-status favoring compassion bias is possible even in the current context of intersexual relations where identity threat emanating from an increased similarity between heterosexual men and masculine gay men were likely to undermine men's compassionate expressions. Interestingly, the results also revealed that outside the specific status-enhancing mechanism of masculinity, heterosexual men *downplayed* their compassion when cued to the masculine (vs. the feminine) gender expressions of a gay victim. Hence, cues to the victim's gender expression may trigger other mechanisms (e.g., identity-threat appraisals) that could engender the mixed pattern of results for heterosexual men in this study.

To be sure that distinctiveness threat played a role in these processes, however, it is important to directly quantify and separate it from the other processes that are evidently enlisted by the gender cue treatment. Consequently, I designed a follow-up experiment in which distinctiveness threat was directly measured, to investigate whether: (a) the compassion boost via the status-enhancing masculine attribute remains (as predicted by the high-status compassion bias thesis), while; (b) compassion downplay is observed via a distinctiveness threat route. I will save a discussion of the gender moderation effects for the general discussions in this chapter.

5.5 Experiment 5[8]

5.5.1 Methodology

Design and participants. Guided by the sample size estimation for Experiment 4, I recruited 400 American heterosexual men (M_{age} = 32.60 years, SD_{age} = 9.26 years; see Appendix A for more demographic information) via Prolific academic (www.prolific.ac). I estimated this should be enough to power the main analyses of Experiment 5, assuming 80% power, and an effect size of, f = .16, when the alpha is set at .05. Here, as in Experiment 4, the victim's gender expression treatment was the between-subjects independent variable, with status-conferring attributes (via masculinity/femininity) and a newly incorporated distinctiveness threat measure, as mediators.

Materials and procedure. The victimization induction was similar to the approach used in Experiment 4, where participants read an adapted news article regarding the 2016 Pulse shooting before they were presented with a purported survivor of the attack (see also Owuamalam & Matos, 2020). However, since then, more information on the Pulse shooting has come to light that may suggest that the shooting was not necessarily a premeditated attack against the LGBTQ+ community (Coaston, 2018; Crookston, 2018). Hence, the public's perception of the shooting may have moved away from a clear-cut anti-gay sentiment to a somewhat more mixed view of the underlying motivations (Lowder, 2018). Because of this, the present manipulation described a different hate crime which

[8] The data for Experiments 5 and 6 are based on a reanalysis of the data presented in Owuamalam and Matos (2021).

emphasized clearer anti-gay motivations. Participants were first presented with an adaptation of an *Independent* news article describing a shooting of a group of gay men coming out of a bar:

> *"A gunman who attacked and shot a group of gay men coming out of a gay bar has been jailed. Although the victims survived due to immediate medical response, many of them were left severely injured after sustaining multiple gunshot wounds during the assault just after midnight on August 24. Carlisle Crown Court heard that the victims were subjected to 'crude' and 'disgusting' taunts that included 'dirty fags' and told that 'men shouldn't be together'. The group initially shrugged off the insults and walked away... but then received repeated gunshots in the lower torso. Another victim was knocked to the floor, following several shots in the leg. […] Judge Peter Davies, who oversaw the trial, said: 'This was an outrageous incident against the LGBT community. These people were defenseless, and [the gunner] attacked these men simply because they were in same-sex relationships.'"*

The extract also included the title of the article ("*Gay club-goers shot during homophobic attack*") and the author of the original news article (McGlasson, 2017), to increase the credibility of the attack. Next, the victim gender expression manipulation was kept as close as possible to the one described in Experiment 4: participants were presented with a description of a supposed survivor of the attack, "Mr. M", ostensibly

obtained from an anonymous interview conducted for a charitable appeal meant to put a "human face" to the victims of the attack. As in the previous study, the gay victim was described either as a stereotypically feminine gay man (i.e., a *low-status-conferring* description) or a stereotypically masculine gay man (i.e., a *high-status-conferring* description).

To enhance the credibility of the victimization context, a line at the end of the vignettes referencing the attack was also included, stating that: "… the doctors said if I hadn't gotten to the hospital in time, I could have died… I almost lost my boyfriend and my friends… why would somebody do that?" I expected merely presenting participants with an outgroup member that was similar to their own social identity (i.e., a masculine gay victim) should be sufficient to induce identity threat motivations, in addition to an increased focus on the status-conferring attribute of masculinity, following Spears et al. (2002).

Compassion. After reading the vignette, participants completed an adapted version of the measure used in Experiment 4 that taps into participants' help intentions. Here, I expanded the measure to also include participants' willingness to assist the specified gay victim, rather than his wider community only. Hence, half of the items tapped into intentions to assist the victim, and the other half tapped intentions to assist gay men in general ("If Mr. M [gay men] need[s] my help, I want to offer it"; "I feel at peace with myself knowing that I have the capacity to help Mr. M [gay men] fight hatred and discrimination against them if called upon to serve in this way; see Appendix F for the full list of items). Participants' responses across the items toward gay men and the gay victim were largely identical,

as shown by a strong inter-item reliability coefficient (α = .91). Responses were collected on a 7-point scale, where higher scores indicate greater compassion towards the victim.

Status-conferring attributes. The same masculinity and femininity measures described in Experiment 4 were used in the current study. As in Experiment 4, the 5-point perceived status measure (-2 = *lower status*, 2 = *higher status*) was also included to test the status assumption I make with regard to the status-conferring attributes.

Distinctiveness threat.[9] To directly test the mediational role of distinctiveness threat on heterosexual men's compassion for higher- versus lower-status gay victims, a 2-item measure developed in-house was included (see also Owuamalam & Matos, 2021), which tapped into participants' masculinity-specific distinctiveness threat in relation to the gay victims. The items were: (1) "A distinction between gay men like Mr. M and straight men is often too difficult to make", and; (2) "As a straight man, I sometimes question my own masculinity when I come across gay men like Mr. M." These items were aggregated into a single measure of distinctiveness threat (r = .25, $p \leq .001$).[10]

[9] A novel experimental manipulation of masculinity threat (see Appendix H for a detailed description of the manipulation) was included in the original protocol for Experiment 5. However, this manipulation did not affect the measured manipulation checks in the expected way - it did not lead to a statistically different report of feelings of distinctiveness threat towards the victims, $t(398) = .48$, $p = .633$, 95% *CI* [-.19, .31], nor did it interact with the victim gender conformity manipulation, $F(1, 396) = 1.25$, $p = .264$, $\eta^2 \leq .01$. Because of this, I considered the manipulation to be unreliable, and as such I controlled for the noise potentially created by this variable in the subsequent analyses presented in Experiment 5.

[10] While the correlation between the two distinctiveness threat items was low, running the analysis with the items separately yielded similar results for both items (see Appendix L for model summary). As such, I went ahead and collated them into a single-index measure of distinctiveness threat, as planned.

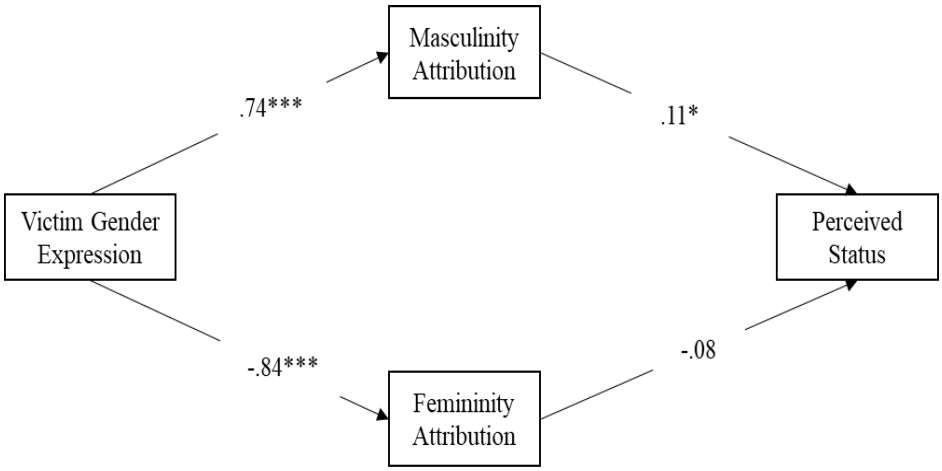
5.5.2 Results and Discussion

Testing the status assumption. To be sure that the victim gender expression treatment elevated status perceptions via the status-conferring attributes, I repeated the mediation model (Model 4 on PROCESS) described in Experiment 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples. The victim gender expression treatment was the independent variable, while the measure of perceived status was the outcome variable. The findings revealed that victim gender expression was positively associated with the status-enhancing attribute of masculinity, $\beta = .74$, $SE = .05$, $t(394) = 15.33$, $p \leq .001$, *95% CI* [.65, .84], but negatively associated with the status-attenuating attribute of femininity, $\beta = -.84$, $SE = .05$, $t(394) = -17.63$, $p \leq .001$, *95% CI* [-.93, -.75] (see Figure 5.5).

Indirect effects analyses revealed that while the presumed status-deflating feminine traits did not significantly explain reductions in status attributions following cues to the gay victim's gender expression, $\beta_{IE} = -.08$, $SE = .06$, *95% CI* [-.19, .03], the status-enhancing attribute of masculinity reliably did so, and in the expected opposite direction, $\beta_{IE} = .11$, $SE = .05$, *95% CI* [.01, .21] (see Figure 5.5). That is, once again, participants' enhanced status perceptions with regard to the victim were swayed by their attention to the masculine (but not the feminine) attributes that they were cued to.

Figure 5.5.

The effect of gender expression of gay victims on perceived status via the status conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity from Experiment 5.



Note. Victim gender expression: -1 = stereotypically feminine, 1 = stereotypically masculine.

*$p < .05$; ***$p < .001$

Testing Hypotheses 1 and 2. I ran a mediational analysis using Model 4 on PROCESS (Hayes, 2012) with the path from the victim gender expression (coded, -1 = *feminine gay victim*; 1 = *masculine gay victim*) to compassion being mediated by the status-conferring attribute of masculinity (as per Hypothesis 1) and distinctiveness threat (as per Hypothesis 2). For analytical parsimony, I collated the masculinity and femininity (reverse-coded) measures into a single composite of the status-conferring attribute of masculinity[11] as both these measures were strongly

[11] Nevertheless, running the mediation with the masculine and feminine attributes separate revealed expected patterns, with the status-elevating attribute of masculinity positively

correlated (r = .78, p < .001). Again, 5000 bootstrap samples were used for this analysis.

Results showed that, although victim gender expression did not have a significant direct effect on compassion, β = -.12, *SE* = .07, t(394) = -1.68, p = .095, *95% CI* [-.25, .02], it had a positive association with both mediators: (i.e., with the status-conferring attribute, β = .79, *SE* = .04, t(394) = 18.27, p < .001, *95% CI* [.71, .88], and with distinctiveness threat, β = .34, *SE* = .06, t(394) = 5.61, p < .001, *95% CI* [.22, .46]; see Figure 5.6). Importantly, the indirect effects via both mechanisms/mediators supported both the high-status compassion bias thesis, as well as its identity-threat caveat:

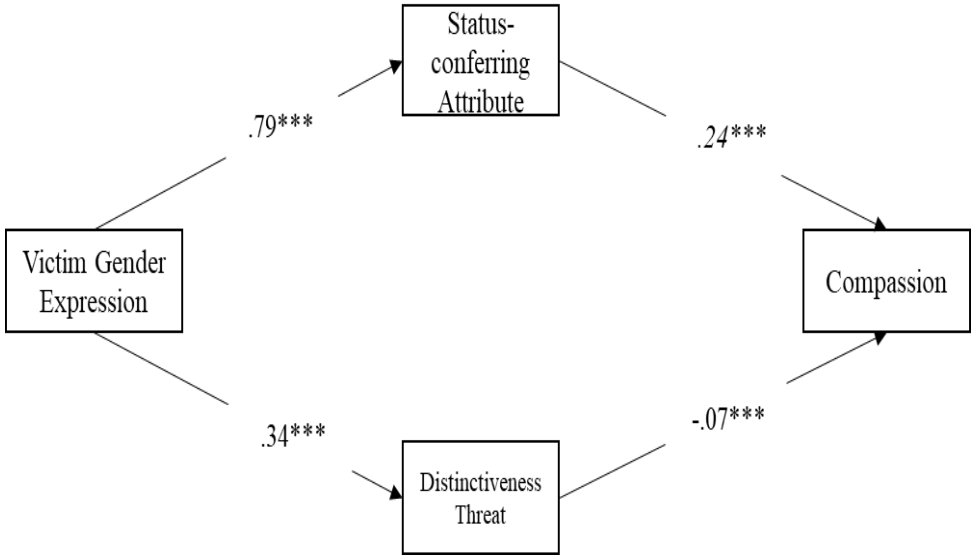
a) Firstly, supporting the high-status favoring bias, the status-conferring mechanism of masculinity explained a positive effect of the victim's gender expression on heterosexual men's compassion for the gay victim, β_{IE} = .24, *SE* = .05, 95% *CI* [.15, .35] (see Figure 5.6). That is participants who were cued to the victim's masculine (vs, feminine) attribute saw a boost in compassion for the victim that was specifically tied to the salience of this status-conferring attribute than anything else.
b) Conversely, and consistent with the identity-threat caveat, the self-reported experience of distinctiveness threat caused heterosexual men to downplay their compassion for the gay victim when cues to their masculine (relative to feminine)

predicting compassion, while femininity negatively predicted compassion, as per the high-status compassion bias (see Appendix I).

gender expression were made salient, β_{IE} = -.07, *SE* = .02, *95% CI* [-.11, -.03] (see Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6.

The effect of gender expression of gay victims on compassion when the status-conferring attribute and distinctiveness threat are mediators (see Experiment 5).



Note. Victim gender expression: -1 = stereotypically feminine, 1 = stereotypically masculine. Status-conferring attribute: combined perceived masculinity + reverse-coded perceived femininity

***$p < .001$

Summary of key findings. The high-status favoring compassion bias was, again, found in the current replication via the status-enhancing attribute, in addition to providing direct evidence for the threat mechanism responsible for the reversed (low-status favoring) compassion effect that I observed amongst heterosexual men in Experiment 4. But are the foregoing processes – especially the distinctiveness pathway to compassion – limited to gay victims? Previous research has shown that *feminized* heterosexual men can also threaten heterosexual men's masculine identity (Owuamalam & Matos, 2021; Iacoviello et al., 2020; Martínez et al., 2015), and the question raised by this observation is whether or not such identity challenges could similarly dampen compassion for feminized heterosexual men. That is, I examined whether identity-threat appraisals could also *enhance* a high-status favoring compassion bias when the spotlight is on a feminized *heterosexual* male victim (low status) relative to a masculine heterosexual male victim (high status). I address this issue in the final experiment.

5.6 Experiment 6

5.6.1 Methodology

Design, participants, and materials. The responses of 670 American heterosexual men (M_{age} = 32.12 years, SD_{age} = 9.02 years; see Appendix A)[12] were collected from Prolific Academic for this final study. The design used in the present study was similar to those described in the

[12] I estimated I would require at least 310 participants per sexual orientation condition following similar conditions from Experiments 4 and 5 (effect size of f = .16, with 80% power, and the alpha set at .05).

previous two studies with a few alterations. Firstly, participants were presented with the news extract involving the fictional shooting from Experiment 5, and then the victim gender expression treatment (see Experiment 5's methodology discussion for more details). Participants were subsequently presented with a supposed extract of an interview of a survivor which, as before, cued participants to the victim's status-attenuating attributes (via their stereotypical femininity) or their status-enhancing attributes (via their stereotypical masculinity).

Because this final study also looked at the sexual orientation of the victim as a way to test whether threat appraisals present for a low-status (vs. high-status) ingroup victim would encourage (rather than dampen) a high-status compassion bias, the language of the news extract and the victim vignettes was altered to further cue participants to the victims' sexual orientation. In the *heterosexual victim conditions* (N = 335), the news extract merely described a random shooting with no mention of the victim's sexual orientation. In the *gay victim conditions* (N = 335), the extract was just as it appeared in Experiment 5, specifically mentioning that the victims had been shot due to their sexual orientation.

Further distinguishing between the gay and heterosexual conditions, the gay victim vignettes were just as they were in the previous studies, with the victims describing themselves as gay men: "I'm a 23-year-old *gay* man, ummm, I live with my *boyfriend*…". In the heterosexual victim conditions, the victim vignettes started with, "I'm a 23-year-old man, I live with my *girlfriend*, umm…" (italicization added here to emphasize the differences). Because of the "default" nature of heterosexuality (and the general lack of

awareness of bisexuality/pansexuality in society; Movement Advancement Project, 2016), merely describing the heterosexual victim as a man with a girlfriend should be a sufficient and more natural way of cueing participants of the victim's heterosexuality. Aside from this distinction, the vignettes for the victims were kept as close to the previous vignettes used as possible.

Thus, the present study had a 2 (victim sexual orientation: *gay [lower status]* vs. *heterosexual [higher status]*) x 2 (victim gender expression: *stereotypically feminine [lower status]* vs. *stereotypically masculine [higher status]*) between-subjects design. This allowed for a more nuanced exploration of the high-status compassion bias in such a way that allowed me to test both the similarity assumption underlying the identity-threat caveat of the high-status compassion bias, as well as the posited expectations that, when threat appraisals are absent for a high-status victim, the high-status compassion bias would thrive. After the manipulations, participants completed a revised version of the previous compassion measure from the previous studies (see Appendix F; α = .88). For the heterosexual victim condition, the items did not refer to the victim's sexual orientation, rather, it referred to the victim by their anonymous name, "Mr. M" (e.g., "If Mr. M needs my help, I want to offer it").

As before, the femininity, masculinity, and victim status measures were included after the main dependent variable. Preliminary analyses revealed the expected patterns, with participants rating the masculine gay and heterosexual victims as higher in status than the feminine gay and

heterosexual victims (see Appendix J for a summary of the preliminary analyses). Similar to the analysis conducted for Experiment 5, femininity (reverse-coded) and masculinity were collated into a single measure of a status-conferring attribute of masculinity given their strong correlation, r = .78, p < .001. Higher scores indicated higher masculine attributions.

Distinctiveness threat and perceived similarity. I again unpacked two key assumptions underlying the identity-threat caveat by measuring distinctiveness threat with the two items described in Experiment 5. The two items were kept the same for the gay victim conditions, but where slightly adjusted for the heterosexual victim conditions so that they did not mention "gay men" (i.e., "A distinction between men like Mr. M and 'real' men is often too difficult to make", and; "I sometimes question my own masculinity when I come across men like Mr. M."), in addition to a measure of perceived similarity. The distinctiveness threat explanation assumes that it is the perception of too much overlap (similarity) between the outgroup and ingroup that causes distinctiveness threat to increase (not similarity to fellow ingroup members). Hence, ingroup similarity perceptions should *increase* rather than reduce compassion for masculine (versus feminine) heterosexual male victims, in accordance with the social identity tradition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel et al., 1971).

Thus, I measured this latter variable (perceived similarity) with two items: (a) "How similar do you think you are to Mr. M?" (where, 1 = *not at all similar*, 7 = *very similar*), and (b) the Overlap of Self, Ingroup, and Outgroup (OSIO) measure (Schubert & Otten, 2002). The OSIO scale assesses perceived similarity pictorially, where participants are shown two

circles (one representing the participant, the other representing "Mr. M") in varying levels of overlap (see Figure 5.7). Participants then selected how much their circle overlapped with the one designated for "Mr. M". These two measures of ingroup/outgroup similarity were subsequently merged into a single index of perceived similarity to the victim ($r = .64$, $p < .001$)[13]. To be sure that intergroup distinctiveness is occurring due to similarity, one must find that increased similarity to the masculine gay victim also increases distinctiveness threat feelings, thus leading to a reduction in compassion for the victim. Conversely, increased similarity to the masculine heterosexual victim (high-status ingroup member) should not activate feelings of distinctiveness threat for that victim.

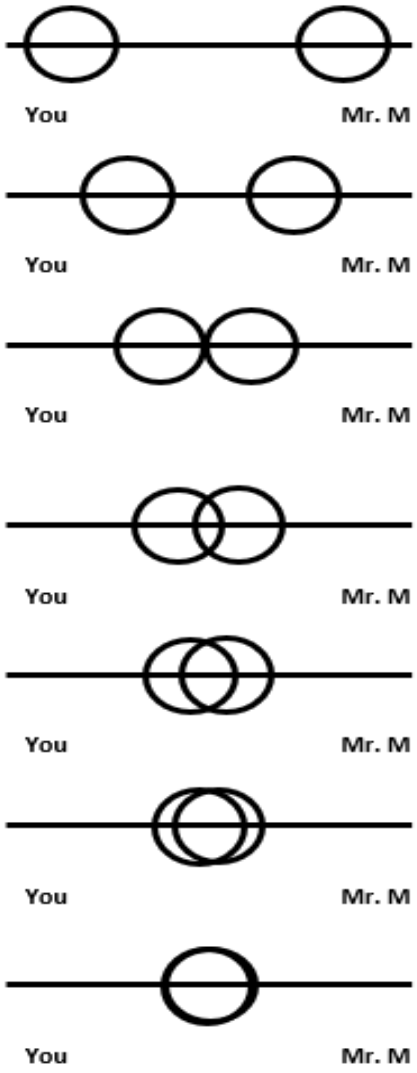
[13] While the similarity check and OSIO measure had a relatively low correlation, they had similar patterns when the mediational analysis was run with them separately (see Appendix L for model summary). As such, they were collated as planned into a single index of perceived similarity.

Figure 5.7.

Shubert and Otten's (2002) Overlap of self, ingroup, and outgroup (OSIO) measure adapted for the current context, including the instructions presented to participants (see Experiment 6).

Below, you will see two circles aligned on a horizontal line. The left circle represents you, while the right circle represents Mr. M. The overlap of the circles represents how much you think your identity overlaps with Mr. M's. For instance, if you think you and Mr. M have nothing in common and thus there's no overlap, then you would select the first image. If you think you and Mr. M are very similar, then select the last image.

Please select the image that represents the best how much your identity overlaps with Mr. M's.

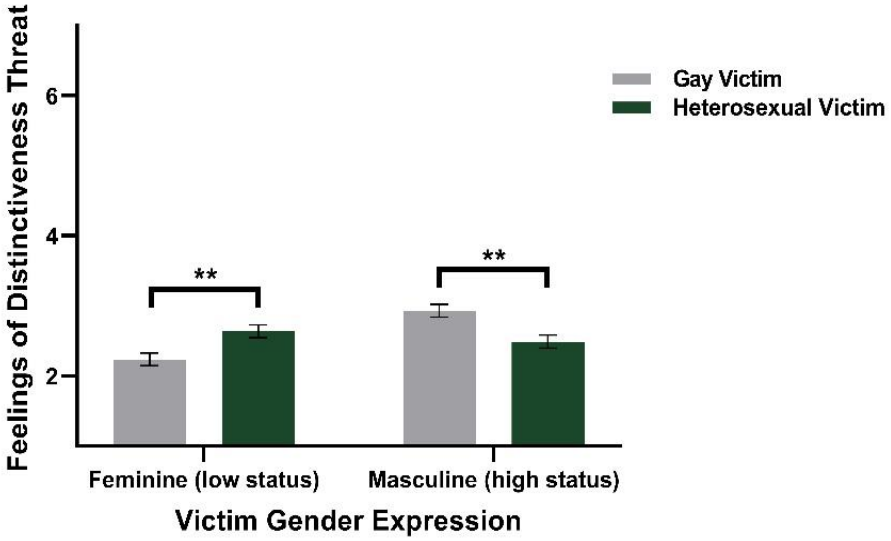


5.6.2 Results and Discussion

Preliminary analyses. First, a victim sexual orientation x victim type ANOVA was computed with distinctiveness threat as the dependent variable, in order to validate the assumptions implied by the identity-threat caveat. While victim sexual orientation did not have a significant main effect on distinctiveness threat, $F(1, 666) = .05$, $p = .826$, $\eta^2 < .01$, it interacted with victim gender expression to influence participants' self-reported experience of distinctiveness threat, $F(1, 666) = 21.26$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$: As expected, heterosexual men reported a greater experience of distinctiveness threat when exposed to the masculine gay victim relative to the masculine heterosexual victim, $F(1, 666) = 11.47$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .017$ (see Figure 5.8). Conversely, heterosexual men expressed stronger feelings of distinctiveness threat when presented with the feminine *heterosexual* victim than when they saw the feminine *gay* victim, $F(1, 666) = 9.81$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .02$ (see Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8.

Comparisons for heterosexual men's feelings of distinctiveness threat towards the gay and heterosexual victims with low- and high-status via their gender expression from Experiment 6.



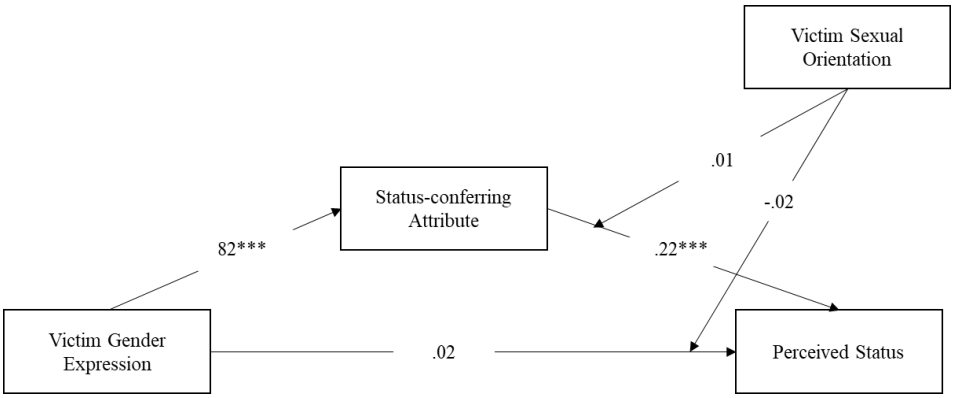
Note. ***p* < .01; Error bars represent standard error.

Testing the status assumption. As before, I first ran a moderated mediation (using model 15 on PROCESS; Hayes, 2012) to test the effect of victim gender expression on the gay versus heterosexual victim's perceived status via the specified mechanism of the status-conferring masculinity attribute. I ran this with the collated masculinity and femininity items (which were reverse-coded prior to combining with the masculinity attribute). As before, I used model 15 (with 5000 bootstrap samples), with victim gender expression (coded, -1 = *feminine victim*, 1 = *masculine victim*) as the independent variable, and victim sexual orientation (coded, -1 = *gay victim*; 1 = *heterosexual victim*) as the moderator.

The findings showed that, while victim gender expression did not have a significant direct effect on perceived victim status, β = .02, *SE* = .04, *t*(664) =.47, *p* = .642, 95% *CI* [-.07, .11], cues to the masculine (versus feminine) victim were positively associated with the status-conferring attribute, β = .82, *SE* = .03, *t*(668) = 27.01, *p* < .001, 95% *CI* [.76, .88]. Moreover, the status-conferring attribute positively mediated the effect of victim gender expression on perceived status, β = .22, *SE* = .04, *t*(664) = 5.61, *p* < .001, 95% *CI* [.15, .30], and this was the same for both the gay and heterosexual victims: In other words, victim sexual orientation did not significantly moderate this mediational effect, β = .01, *SE* = .04, *t*(664) = .26, *p* = .792, 95% *CI* [-.07, .09], with the masculine victim being perceived as higher in status than the feminine victim under both the gay victim condition, β_{CIE} = .17, *SE* = .04, 95% *CI* [.09, .26], and the heterosexual victim condition, β_{CIE} = .19, *SE* = .05, 95% *CI* [.10, .28] (see Figure 5.9). Therefore, heterosexual men rated the status-conferring attribute of masculinity (vs. femininity) as higher in social status, regardless of the victim's sexual orientation.

Figure 5.9.

The effect of gender expression of gay and heterosexual victims on heterosexual men's compassion via the status-conferring attributes of masculinity (see Experiment 6).



Note. Victim gender expression: -1 = stereotypically feminine, 1 = stereotypically masculine. Victim sexual orientation: -1 = gay, 1 = heterosexual.

****p* < .001

I tested Hypotheses 1 and 2 in two steps to reduce model complexity and avoid convergence problems. Firstly, I focused on Hypothesis 1 in the initial model (model 15 on PROCESS; Hayes, 2022), examining the effect of the victims' gender expression treatment (coded -1 = *feminine victims*, 1 = *masculine victims*) on compassion, via the status-conferring attribute, when victim sexual orientation (coded as, -1 = *gay victims*; 1 = *heterosexual victims*) moderated the path from the status-conferring attribute to compassion. That is, I wanted to determine whether

cues to the victims' masculine (vs. feminine) gender expression boosted compassion via the status-conferring attribute of masculinity in the case of gay victims, while initiating the opposite indirect effect in the case of the heterosexual victim.

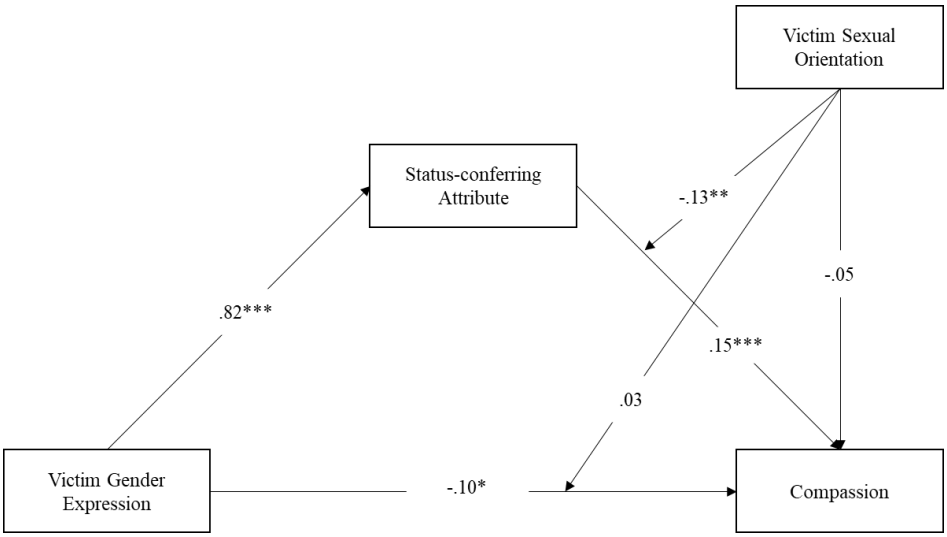
Secondly, I tested Hypothesis 2 using a separate moderated serial mediation model (model 85 on PROCESS; Hayes, 2022; Hayes, 2018) in which the effect of cues to victim gender expression on compassion was specified as the focal predictor, while victim sexual orientation moderated the paths from victim gender expression to the serial mechanisms of perceived similarity and distinctiveness threat. As before, 5000 bootstrap samples were used to run these models.

Testing Hypothesis 1. The findings revealed that cues to a masculine (versus feminine) victim gender expression reduced heterosexual men's compassion for the victim, β = -.10, *SE* = .05, *t*(664) = -2.01, *p* = .045, *95% CI* [-.21, -.01], which was not significantly qualified by victim sexual orientation, β = .03, *SE* = .05, *t*(664) = .58, *p* = .560, *95% CI* [-.07, -.13] (see Figure 5.10). As with the previous experiments, victim gender expression was positively associated with the status-conferring attribute of masculinity, β = .82, *SE* = .03, *t*(668) = 27.01, *p* < .001, *95% CI* [.76, .88]. Consistent with the high-status compassion bias thesis, cues to status appraisals (via the status-conferring attribute of masculinity) were positively associated with increased compassion for the masculine (vs. feminine) victim, β = .15, *SE* = .05, *t*(664) = 3.24, *p* = .001, *95% CI* [.06, .25].

Crucially, the status-conferring attribute significantly interacted with victim sexual orientation, β = -.13, *SE* = .05, $t(664) = -2.74$, $p = .006$, *95% CI* [-.22, -.04] (see Figure 5.10). To understand this moderation in the context of the envisaged mediated process, I examined the conditional indirect effect of gender expression on compassion via the status-conferring masculine attribute for the gay and heterosexual victims. The results revealed that cues to the status-enhancing attribute explained a positive effect of gender expression on heterosexual men's compassion, but only when cued to a *gay* victim, β_{CIE} = .23, *SE* = .06, *95% CI* [.13, .34], and not to a heterosexual victim, β_{CIE} = .02, *SE* = .06, *95% CI* [-.09, .13].

Figure 5.10.

The effect of gender expression of gay versus heterosexual victims on heterosexual men's compassion via the status-conferring attribute of masculinity (see Experiment 6).



Note. Path from victim sexual orientation to status-conferring attribute refers to the interaction effect of victim sexual orientation*status-conferring attribute on compassion.

Path from victim sexual orientation to victim gender expression refers to the interactive effect of sexual orientation*gender expression on compassion.

Path from victim sexual orientation to compassion refers to the direct effect of victim sexual orientation on compassion.

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

In short, heterosexual men expressed more compassion for the feminine (versus masculine) victims, regardless of their sexual orientation. However, when status appraisals were activated (via attention to the status-conferring attribute of masculinity), heterosexual men adhered to the high-status favoring bias, expressing more compassion for the masculine versus the feminine gay (but not heterosexual) victim. I will return to a discussion of the high-status compassion bias in a subsequent (more nuanced) analysis later on.

Testing Hypothesis 2. ***Testing the perceived similarity assumption***. One of the underlying assumptions under the identity-threat caveat of the high-status compassion bias is that perceived similarity to an outgroup (but not ingroup) member activates feelings of distinctiveness threat in heterosexual men. Conversely, *reduced* similarity to an ingroup (but not outgroup) member should also activate identity-threat appraisals. Therefore, in order to test this similarity assumption, I looked at whether: (a) increased similarity occurred for the masculine (vs. feminine) victims, as well as the heterosexual (versus gay) victim; (b) similarity explains the accentuating effect of gender expression on distinctiveness threat, which in turn, decreases heterosexual men's compassion for the victim (i.e., a serial mediation); and (c) a simple positive mediational effect of similarity on compassion is present, as per social identity principles.

As expected, cues to a victim's status-enhancing masculine (versus feminine) gender expression increased heterosexual men's feelings of similarity towards the victim, $\beta = .54$, $SE = .05$, $t(666) = 11.40$, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [.45, .64], as did cues to a victim's heterosexuality (vs.

homosexuality), β = .21, *SE* = .05, *t*(666) = 4.30, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [.11, .30] (see Figure 5.11). Furthermore, the gender expression x victim sexual orientation interaction was not significant (β = .09, *SE* = .05, *t*(666) = 1.78, $p = .076$, *95% CI* [-.01, .18]), as heterosexual men perceived themselves to be more similar to the masculine (versus feminine) victim, regardless of the victim's sexual orientation (*gay conditions*: β = .46, *SE* = .07, *t*(666) = 6.80, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [.33, .59]; *heterosexual conditions*: β = .63, *SE* = .07, *t*(666) = 9.31, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [.50, .76]). Not surprising, the conditional indirect effects of cues to the victim's gender expression on compassion via similarity showed that heterosexual men were more likely to express compassion for the masculine (versus feminine) gay (β_{CIE} = .12, *SE* = .02, *95% CI* [.08, .16]), and heterosexual (β_{CIE} = .16, *SE* = .03, *95% CI* [.11, .21]) victims.

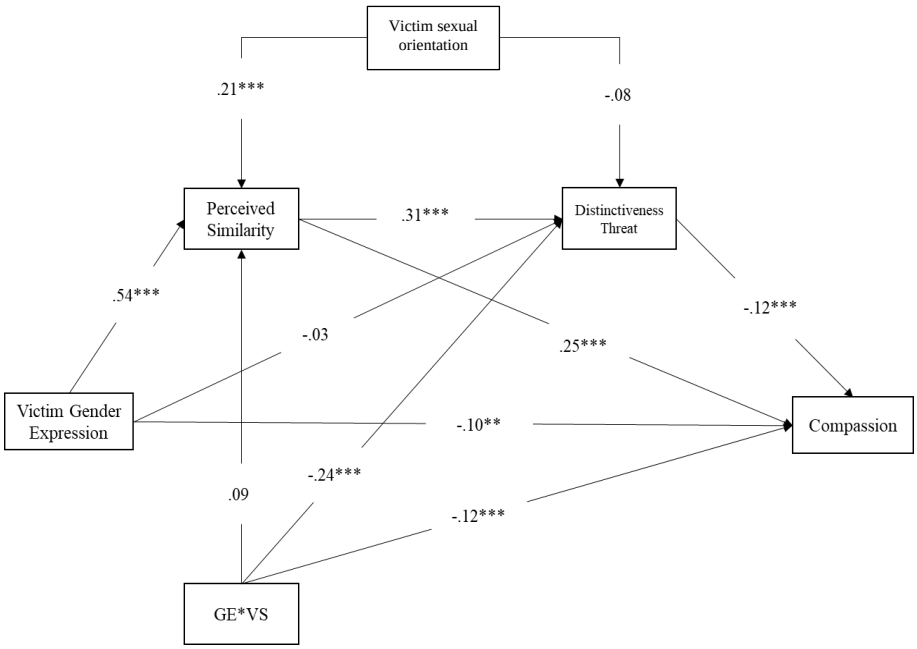
Testing the identity-threat caveat. First, perceived similarity towards the victims was positively associated with heterosexual men's reported feelings of distinctiveness threat (β = .31, *SE* = .04, *t*(665) = 8.93, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [.25, .76]). Moreover, and consistent with Hypothesis 2, the significant victim gender expression x victim sexual orientation interaction (β = -.24, *SE* = .04, *t*(665) = -5.48, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [-.32, -.15]) revealed that cues to a gay victim's masculine (versus feminine) gender expression increased heterosexual men's self-reported feelings of distinctiveness threat, β = .20, *SE* = .06, *t*(665) = 3.21, $p = .001$, *95% CI* [.08, .33]. The opposite pattern was found under the heterosexual victim conditions: cues to a heterosexual victim's *feminine* (versus masculine) gender expression increased heterosexual men's feelings of distinctiveness

threat, β = -.27, *SE* = .07, $t(665) = -4.18$, $p < .001$, *95% CI* [-.40, -.14] (see Figure 5.11).

The conditional indirect effect of cues to the victim's masculine (vs. feminine) gender expression on compassion via distinctiveness threat was negative when the victim was gay (β_{CIE} = -.03, *SE* = .01, *95% CI* [-.05, -.01]), but positive when the victim was heterosexual (β_{CIE} = .03, *SE* = .01, *95% CI* [.01, .06]).

Figure 5.11.

The effect of gender expression of gay versus heterosexual victims on heterosexuals' compassion via perceived similarity and distinctiveness threat (see Experiment 6).



Note. Victim gender expression was coded, 0 = *feminine victim*, 1 = *masculine victim*; victim sexual orientation was coded, 0 = *gay victim*, 1 = *heterosexual victim*.

GE*VS: interactive effect of victim gender expression and victim sexual orientation.

**$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

In short, a sense of similarity towards both gay and heterosexual victims arose when the victim was described with the status-enhancing attributes of masculinity. However, this similarity activated feelings of distinctiveness threat towards the masculine gay victim (the high-status outgroup victim), reversing the expected pattern under the high-status compassion bias thesis. Conversely, feelings of threat for the heterosexual victim were found for the low-status feminine heterosexual victim, allowing a high-status compassion bias to prevail within the ingroup victim conditions.

5.7 Chapter Conclusions

Does the high-status compassion bias *always* occur? The present chapter discusses an identity-threat caveat for the compassion bias thesis based on social identity principles. Specifically, I argued that cueing participants to an outgroup victim whose identity elevates their otherwise typically disadvantaged identity (i.e., masculine gay victims) can activate identity-threat appraisals due to the perceived challenge this may pose on people's ability to claim a distinctly positive (or high status) position in society (Jetten & Spears, 2003; Scheepers et al., 2002; Spears et al., 2002; Branscombe et al., 1999). Because of this, participants may wish to downplay their compassion for a higher-status outgroup victim in order to restore inter-group/status boundaries.

In three experiments, I found a direct high-status effect, with attention to a status-elevating attribute (i.e., masculinity) in gay men being associated with more compassionate responses from heterosexual men (Experiments 4-6). The higher status of a gay victim (via their possession

of the status-elevating attribute of masculinity) was also found to be associated with increased expressions of distinctiveness threat (Experiments 5 and 6), which subsequently reversed the high-status compassion bias effect (Experiments 4-6). Experiment 6 further demonstrated this reversal of compassion bias favoring the lower-status victims was limited to the gay outgroup and this may have come about because it was difficult in the context for heterosexual men to make a unique claim over the positively valued masculine identity. This finding corroborates the underlying basis for intergroup distinctiveness, which states that only *outgroup* members who are deemed *too similar* to the ingroup identity should activate distinctiveness threat motivations (Jetten & Spears, 2003; Spears et al., 2002).

Meanwhile, *ingroup* members who *threaten* the legitimacy of the group's position in society (particularly groups that are already high in the social hierarchy) were the ones to activate distinctiveness threat motivations (as seen in Experiment 6; see also Scheepers et al., 2002; Branscombe et al., 1999). This identity-based threat towards the low-status victim allowed, even enhanced, the emergence of a compassion bias in favor of the high-status victim within the *ingroup* (heterosexual) conditions. These findings support the patterns predicted by the identity-threat caveat, as well as past studies demonstrating that an increase in perceived similarity encourages a sense of kinship between helper and helpee, thus, stimulating greater compassion for the helpee (as seen in the serial moderated mediation in Experiment 6; see also Westmaas & Silver, 2006; Levine et al., 2002). However, this is contingent on the

bystander/helper not experiencing feelings of distinctiveness threat towards the victim/helpee (see also Martínez et al., 2015).

A potential alternative explanation as to why heterosexual men reduced their compassion for the high-status gay victim could be because of the observed tendency for people to derogate non-prototypical members of both the ingroup and outgroup (Scheepers et al., 2002; Abrams et al., 2000; Hogg et al., 1995; Branscombe et al., 1993; Marques et al., 1988). However, this alternative explanation does not fully explain why increased focus on the status-enhancing mechanism of masculinity was predictive of increased compassionate responses for the high-status gay victim. If derogation of "deviant" group members had been the driving force behind the findings, one should have seen a downplaying of compassion via the status-enhancing mechanism route, given that masculinity in gay men is seen as a deviation from the gay stereotype (Blashill & Powlishta, 2009; Cohen et al., 2009). Indeed, the identity-threat caveat of the high-status compassion bias explains these findings better, and why heterosexual men reduced their compassion towards the high-status gay victim when similarity perceptions activated feelings of distinctiveness threat (Spears et al., 2002).

Nevertheless, it is possible that it was the masculine (gay and heterosexual) victim(s)' conformity to their expected gender norms, rather than their masculinity *per se*, which drove the (high) status effect in this Chapter, and conversely with the feminine (gay and heterosexual) victim(s)' non-conformity to gender expectations. As such, while the present findings provide a strong head start in this line of research, there is

still a potential ambiguity in this aspect. One way one could disentangle these two processes would be to look at a context of a (masculine versus feminine) lesbian victimization. In this context, then, the masculine (lesbian) victim would be both possessing the status-enhancing attribute of masculinity, but also the potentially status-attenuating attribute of non-conformity. If then, one finds that heterosexual participants were to perceive the masculine lesbian victim as, (1) higher in status which is explained by their masculinity attributes, or (2) *lower* in status due to their gender non-conformity (via their masculinity), and this in turn; (3) explained an increase (like with the masculine gay victim) or a downplaying of compassion (via their non-conformity), this could help secure the current conclusions more solidly. Of course, this is largely speculative, and as such, future research is necessary to more readily clear these two processes attached to a victim's status.

Moreover, and on an exploratory basis, I tested whether these patterns were only present in heterosexual men (as I suspected), or if they were found in heterosexual women as well. Experiment 4 demonstrated that heterosexual women hold more compassion for the low-status feminine (versus high-status masculine) gay victim, presumably due to the shared identity via the feminine attribute. However, one alternative explanation for these findings could be that Western women may be more beholding to egalitarian views than men (see Diekman & Schneider, 2010; Norrander, 2008, for reviews). Indeed, Chapter 4 discussed how anti-egalitarians were, on average, more compassionate towards high (versus low) status victims and, on this basis, one might expect that the high-status favoring bias

should be evident for anti-egalitarians in this context as well, while egalitarians should exhibit the reverse compassion bias in favor of low-status victims (Lucas & Kteily, 2018).

Running an exploratory post-hoc independent samples *t*-test revealed, at least within Experiment 4, that heterosexual women reported more egalitarian views than heterosexual men.[14] This confirmed the foregoing speculations when I re-ran the moderated mediation analysis from Experiment 4, replacing participant gender with (anti-)egalitarianism as the moderator. In short, attention to the status-enhancing attribute of masculinity (but not femininity) boosted compassion for the masculine gay victim for anti-egalitarians, while the reverse indirect effect was found for egalitarians (see Appendix K for a summary of these post-hoc analyses). These patterns, therefore, mirrored the findings reported with gender as the moderator. These exploratory analyses provide some credence to this alternative explanation (and further evidence of the importance of (anti-)egalitarian ideology when investigating the role of victim status in compassion research, as discussed in Chapter 4).

Nevertheless, this exploratory analysis should be taken with caution given an unequal sample of egalitarians and anti-egalitarians. That is, about 75% of participants scored less than the midpoint of 4, meaning that most participants in Experiment 4 were decidedly more egalitarian than not. This

[14] The same 8-item measure of social dominance orientation that was used in Chapter 4 to measure (anti-)egalitarianism (α = .96) had been included in these studies as an exit questionnaire.

poses a problem, especially in light of a similar discussion presented in the previous chapter on the importance of having a representative sample.

One final note worth discussing, moreover, is that Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrated that bystanders may be willing to put up with great costs sometimes to assist high-status (versus low-status) victims. If we assume that feelings of threat during an emergency may be a manifestation of compassion costs, then why did distinctiveness threat appraisals undermine the high-status compassion bias in this chapter's investigation? A potential explanation for this seeming discrepancy may relate to the *type* of image-management considerations tied to the cost calculations at hand. Recall that in Chapter 4 (and, in Chapter 3 as well, at least informally), the image-management concerns that constrained the high-status compassion bias effect related to a desire to affirm a *positive* self-image by adhering to societal norms (Horne, 2004, 2001; Coleman, 1990). Providing (costly) compassion is a surefire way to achieve this (e.g., Owuamalam & Rubin, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2007).

In Chapter 5, however, the motivations behind the downplaying of compassion toward the high-status victim were driven by the need to reaffirm group boundaries after the high-status victim threatened participants' *distinct* position. In this scenario, the best way to (re)achieve group boundaries is to distance themselves from the threatening outgroup by reducing an attribute more associated with femininity and homosexuality (i.e., warmth and compassion). In other words, the need to achieve a distinct social identity undermined any cost considerations related to the "worthiness" cues of the high- (versus low-)status victim within the

current inter-sexual orientation context. This, then, highlights the importance of taking into consideration the *type* of image-management motivations that may be activated during compassionate situations.

The findings reported in this chapter, therefore, demonstrated that people may not always adhere to the high-status compassion bias. Indeed, I highlighted that heterosexual men may not *always* treat gay victims with low-status conferring attributes (in this case, feminine gay men) more negatively relative to those with status-elevating attributes (in this case, masculine gay men) as prominently seen in the literature (Salvati et al., 2016; Cohen et al., 2009; Glick et al., 2007). The data further demonstrated how emphasizing a victim's higher status may not always lead to more compassion if the elevated status of the (outgroup) victim activates identity-threat appraisals in the helper/bystander. The present findings, therefore, underscore the importance of image-management motivations on people's compassionate decisions in victimizations that occur during emergencies.

Chapter 6:

General Discussions and Concluding Thoughts

Recall that the current thesis had two main goals: (a) to establish the existence of a high-status compassion bias occurring in emergencies, and; (b) to delineate the conditions under which bystanders are more (or less) likely to compassionately assist a high-status victim over a low-status victim.

To address the first question, I piloted (in Chapter 3) a test for the existence of a status-based compassion bias in the context of a fabricated emergency, in which the perceived social status of the victims was manipulated. This fabricated context (using artificially created groups) permitted an investigation of the existence of a high-status compassion bias within a victimization context that did not have any pre-existing identity-related histories that could otherwise cause ingroup favoritism to increase and contaminate the inter-status effects that I was interested in. Here, bystanders were ostensibly more willing to offer compassionate assistance to victims who were described as high in status relative to those who were depicted as belonging to a lower-status group. This finding, especially when the minimal group approach (á la Tajfel et al., 1971) that was used is considered, demonstrated that merely describing victims as either high or low in status was sufficient to elicit a compassion bias in favor of high-status victims.

Past research has demonstrated fairly consistently that attention to a victim's attributes (such as their attire, age, or gender, among others) can influence how much compassion they receive (Carvalho et al., 2019; Klettke & Mellor, 2018; see also Chapter 1). Although, such attributes can help to infer the *status* of a victim (e.g., Rahal et al., 2021; Mattan et al., 2017), the formal role of group-based social status in structuring bystanders' compassionate orientations towards victims of emergencies has largely been overlooked. This critical omission in the literature on identity-based compassion, therefore, makes it unclear whether the conclusions presented in much of these previous investigations have anything to do with status, given that other underlying processes may be at play. Hence, the initial evidence presented in Chapter 3 addressed this interpretational ambiguity by presenting a formal consideration of status that is uncontaminated by other social identity processes, showing that it does have an impact on bystanders' compassionate orientations towards victims.

6.1 The Cost-Calculus Caveat

Importantly, in Chapter 3, I additionally demonstrated that the perceived cost of compassion can condition when an expression of a bias favoring high-status victims is likely to occur. That is, when bystanders are made aware of the potential costs of acting compassionately, they may begin to think twice about whether providing the intended assistance is "worth" the cost of doing so, with status appraisals being the likely yardstick on which assessment of worthiness could be based. As I have argued all along, high-status victims are often accorded greater societal value (and worth) relative to their lower status counterparts, and this may

be the reason that such deservingness cue positively impacted bystander's compassionate orientation when the cost calculus was non-trivial, as in Chapter 3 (see Pavić & Šundalić, 2020; Kuppens et al., 2018; Littler, 2017; Tan, 2008).

This analysis sits well with related literature on cooperation and reciprocal exchanges (Penner et al., 2005; Gouldner, 1960), to the extent that people from elevated status backgrounds may be seen as possessing the capacity (or resources) to reciprocate cooperative behaviors, therefore, making them a likely (even natural) targets when "worthiness-based" considerations are salient to bystanders. In short, I demonstrated that bystanders were more likely to offer compassionate assistance to high- (versus low-) status victims when the presumed cost of assisting the victims was high (see Experiment 1). When the cost was deemed trivial, participants were ostensibly equally likely to express compassionate intentions towards the low and high-status victims (but see Chapter 4, as I will discuss later on, for an important qualification linked to ideology). In short, the findings demonstrated that a high-status compassion bias effect may be more likely to manifest during costly compassionate situations.

The current insight with respect to cost calculations is especially important amidst numerous suggestions (and evidence) that such considerations tend to deflate (not inflate) a positive orientation towards victims (Owuamalam & Matos, 2019; Böhm et al., 2018; Brown, 2016; Dong, 2015; Yanay & Yanay, 2008; Penner et al., 2005). That is, the cost consideration effect on the downplaying of compassion may be less apparent if the victim signals an elevated status background. Although

other factors (e.g., altruistic personality - Böhm et al., 2018; and/or a "hero motive" - Diekman & Clark, 2015) have been shown to also moderate the effects of a cost calculus on compassionate expressions, the current study adds to this discussion by showing that the perceived social status of the victim matters, too. People may take greater risks in their compassionate expressions when the victim is seen as deserving (or high in social status).

6.2 The High-status Compassion Bias Depends on People's Ideologies, Too!

Chapter 4 expanded on the foregoing discussion in two ways. Firstly, it examined the real-life applicability of the trends that were uncovered in the minimal group experiments that supported the existence of a high-status compassion bias and the cost calculus basis for it. This time using real groups, the experiments in Chapter 4 showed that people were more likely to offer a greater degree of compassion to a higher-status (British) victim over victims from nations that people considered to be relatively lower in status (Nigerian and even the Malaysian ingroup when the contrast is Great Britain). In particular, the experiments presented in Chapter 4 (i.e., Experiments 2 and 3) conceptually *replicated* the cost-induced high-status compassion bias, once again demonstrating that such trends are present *only* when the stakes are high for the helper (this time using a different operationalization of cost).

Secondly, and in light of recent suggestions that ideological proclivities play a role in the dynamics of status-based compassion (see Lucas & Kteily, 2018), Chapter 4 further demonstrated that an egalitarian worldview adds to this discussion, especially in cultures where the high-

status privilege may be more normative (e.g., Malaysia). Because the underlying process assumed to cause the high-status compassion bias relates to "worthiness" considerations, and because individuals on both sides of the egalitarianism continuum react differently to this attribute, it seemed natural, too, that differences on this ideological dimension will be consequential (as was evident in the current investigation). That is, a cost-driven compassion bias favoring victims from high-status backgrounds seemed visible only amongst individuals with a strong anti-egalitarian credential: a finding that was unsurprising given their greater sensitivity to merit-based considerations relative to their egalitarian counterparts (Littler, 2017; Pratto et al., 1994).

Interestingly, the data further revealed that cultural norms may be a relevant factor: Unlike the positive orientation towards people in low-status positions typically reported amongst egalitarians in the West (Lucas & Kteily, 2018), the data showed that egalitarians in Malaysia (at least within the populations collected in Experiments 2 and 3) also evidenced the high-status compassion bias. It seemed, then, that the high-status privilege norm may be stronger within this context, nudging egalitarians in Malaysia towards a high-status compassion bias, with the important caveat being that it happened only when the personal cost of doing so was trivial for them. Nevertheless, these conclusions should be taken with some caution since the (anti-)egalitarian analyses were mostly exploratory, and especially given that 3-way interactions such as these are not easily replicated (e.g., Altmejd et al., 2019).

6.3 Threat Appraisals Thwart a Compassion Bias Favoring the Privileged

The final empirical chapter investigated the role of (identity-based) threat appraisals on the high-status compassion bias within an inter-sexual orientation context. This context was chosen because it presented a glaring real-life example of a situation in which a group with a high-status conferring feature (i.e., masculine gay identity) could simultaneously pose identity-based challenges for some bystanders (here, heterosexual men). Hence, the question became, "will the high-status compassion bias manifest in this context, too?" Given that Chapter 4 indirectly demonstrated that certain image-management concerns (i.e., pressures to conform to the status privilege norm) may constrain a high-status compassion bias, Chapter 5 formally investigated whether such concerns could affect the propensity to favor high-status victims, also. Specifically, I posited that when attention is directed towards an attribute of a high-status victim that posed some kind of threat to the bystander (here operationalized as a distinctiveness-induced identity challenge - Jetten & Spears, 2003; Spears et al., 2002), this could reverse the high-status compassion bias, at least within the context of the investigation.

Consistent with the foregoing proposition, Chapter 5 presented empirical evidence not only for a high-status compassion bias (outside the mechanism of threat appraisals; Experiments 4-6), but also for a compassion bias favoring low-status (outgroup) victims (via identity-threat appraisals; Experiments 5-6). When presented with a low-status ingroup victim whose attributes threaten the ingroup identity (i.e., a feminine

heterosexual victim), bystanders demonstrated a high-status compassion bias, showing more compassion for the high-status ingroup victim that did not undermine the ingroup (Experiment 6). In short, identity-based threat appraisals (potentially linked to image-management considerations) can disincentivize bystanders from offering compassionate assistance to a victim. However, depending on the nature of such threat appraisals and under certain conditions, it can sway bystanders from favoring a high-status victim or a low-status victim.

6.4 Contributions to the Extant Literature and Suggestions for Future Research

The current investigation expands on our existing understanding of how status can affect compassionate responses in a number of important ways. Below, I discuss in detail three main contributions.

6.4.1 Extending the Literature on Inter-status Helping

Firstly, unlike existing theories on the role of social status on inter-status helping (Nadler, 2008, 2002), this thesis focused on the effect of status differences between *victims* (not between the victim and the helper). People were more likely to assist a higher-status victim versus a lower-status victim even when status relations between the participants and victim(s) were irrelevant (i.e., status effects were induced – see Experiment 1). This expands on Nadler's (2008, 2002) work by highlighting how status assessments with regard to victims are *also* important (in addition to inter-status relations between victims and helpers) in predicting biases in compassionate expressions.

This is especially important in today's globalized societies, given the unique (over)exposure that the internet and especially social media has given to victimizations and emergencies around the world (Boulianne et al., 2018; Pew Research Center, 2018a; Fraustino et al., 2012). In the context of social media, people can feel more pressure to care and show compassion for emergencies occurring around the world. Indeed, recent research during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has shown that news overloading because of social media (especially bad news) often leads to negative affect, reduction in optimism, and avoidance of such news (Buchanan et al., 2021; Park, 2019). As it might be impossible for people to be able to carry the emotional (and sometimes financial) burden that comes with showing compassion for every victim around the world, status considerations *between* victims become increasingly more relevant in making decisions on *who and when* to help. However, to my knowledge, no research has been conducted specifically looking at the victim's status as one factor that could impact people's compassionate responses in this context.

A second contribution to the literature is that it not only corroborates the importance of image-management considerations on compassionate responses, but it further highlights the importance of the *type* of image-management concerns, as well. That is, the current investigation corroborated Nadler and co.'s stance that inter-status helping is often used as a *strategic* form of social politicking to maintain (or elevate) one's social image (e.g., Halabi & Nadler, 2017; Halabi et al., 2014; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2011; van Leeuwen, 2007; Nadler & Halabi,

2006). Indeed, the research (especially Chapter 5) focused on how image-management concerns (e.g., maintaining a distinctly positive social identity) helped to explain a compassion bias in favor of a low- or high-status victim.

However, it is important to note that the image-management concerns in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 were predictive of either increasing compassion favoring high-status victims (Chapter 4) or *downplaying* such compassion (Chapter 5). This may seem counterintuitive, particularly the results from Chapter 5, because past research has typically demonstrated that image-management concerns often encourage (not dampen) compassion (Halabi & Nadler, 2017; Owuamalam & Rubin, 2014; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2011; Nadler, 2008; Hopkins et al., 2007; Nadler & Halabi, 2006; Nadler, 2002). One potential explanation for the divergence here could be that most (if not all) of the existing research focuses on image-management considerations relating to the need to achieve a *positive* social identity. For instance, in Hopkins et al. (2007), participants were motivated to refute negative stereotypes of their group (e.g., as mean and uncompassionate), and in van Leeuwen and Täuber (2011), participants' helping was associated with their desire to showcase their low-status group identity as competent.

Similarly, image-management motivations in Chapter 4 related to a (speculated) desire to uphold societal norms over personal values, which encouraged a compassion bias in favor of the high-status victim under low-cost conditions. Given that adherence to cultural norms is often derived from a desire to foster a sense of belonging to a collective (Horne, 2004,

2001; Coleman, 1990), one can say that the image-management motivations in Chapter 4 were also about achieving (or maintaining) a positive self-image. In contrast, the image-management motivations that seemed to be at play in Chapter 5 concerned the restoration of the boundary between one's social identity and that of an outgroup who blurs this demarcation. In this context, downplaying compassion (a known attribute of this outgroup) helps to reinforce the group boundaries and an ability to assert their *uniqueness*.

In short, it seems that, (a) image-management concerns can take on different forms, depending on the context and the nature of what image-related considerations individuals are worried about, and; (b) compassionate responses can either favor a high-status victim (as in Chapter 4, and the ingroup victim conditions in Chapter 5), or a low-status victim (as in Chapter 5) depending on the type of image-management motivations that people are worried about in the situation.

6.4.2 Emphasis on the Importance of Cultural Differences

The findings from Experiments 2 and 3 highlighted the need for a more rigorous cross-cultural exploration within the literature of compassion biases, but specifically of the status-induced compassion biases in this thesis moving forward (see also Henrich et al., 2010). For example, both experiments showed that egalitarians in Malaysia *may* have to navigate between the pressures to conform to societal norms (which may be stronger in collectivistic societies; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and the need to adhere to their personal values. This value-norm conflict may not be as severe for egalitarians in Western cultures (like the US) where the

egalitarian norm is encouraged (Davidov et al., 2008). This may explain why Western egalitarians in the literature do not seem to go against their personal values that encourage compassion in favor of low-status groups (Lucas & Kteily, 2018).

It is entirely plausible, based on the foregoing arguments related to the high-status compassion bias, that Western *anti*-egalitarians may face a similar value-norm conflict that Malaysian egalitarians faced in Experiments 2 and 3. That is, their personal values that favor the high-status victims may sometimes clash with the egalitarian norm that is more embraced within their society. Indeed, worries about appearing non-prejudiced, as well as pressures to conform to the egalitarian norm in American society have been indirectly demonstrated in past research as drivers of positive attitudes towards minority groups (e.g., gay men; Gabarrot & Falomir-Pichastor, 2017; Falomir-Pichastor et al., 2015; African-Americans; Trawalter et al., 2012; Plant & Devine, 1998).

Given that those with anti-egalitarian values in the West are more likely to feel a conflict between their personal values and societal norms (at least when such worries about prejudice are salient), it is likely that anti-egalitarians in the West may be willing to adhere to the egalitarian norm in society when it does not come at a great personal cost to them. As such, one might expect a low-status compassion bias from anti-egalitarians in the US when the cost of compassion is low, similar to how egalitarians in Malaysia favored the high-status victims when the cost to themselves was low (Experiments 2-3). Nevertheless, it was not possible to conduct follow-up (and direct) cross-cultural tests of these ideas in the current climate (i.e., the

COVID-19 pandemic), making it difficult to conclude with any degree of confidence that culture moderates the high-status compassion bias. In short, there is a need for more cross-cultural investigations on ideology-based compassion biases.

6.4.3 Practical Implications for Aid Campaigns

"For many years a charity called Save the Children ran magazine ads with a heartbreaking photograph of a destitute child and the caption, 'You can save Juan Ramos for five cents a day. Or you can turn the page.' Most people turn the page." (Pinker, 2011, p. 86). Aid campaigns often use specific attributes (often with an inferred low status) of victims in order to elicit compassionate responses due to feelings of pity or guilt (see Basil et al., 2008, for a review on this field of research). As suggested by Pinker (2011), however, such appeals can backfire, causing bystanders to *distance* themselves from the victim (or turn the page), with negative emotions being experienced sometimes (Graton & Mailliez, 2019). Because such tactics are virtually ubiquitously used, it becomes important to understand why these tactics sometimes fall short of expectation. One speculation, based on the findings in this thesis, could be that such advertisements may underperform in eliciting the sort of compassionate orientation that it seeks, simply because people may be less willing to incur costs for people with low-status attributes.

Another potential explanation connected to the high-status compassion bias for why aid campaigns with images of impoverished children may not be as successful could be that they increase the experience of more passive forms of compassion (e.g., pity). It is conceivable that

passive compassion may beget *avoidance* rather than a motivation to actively assist the victim, especially when there is a price tag (i.e., cost in terms of donations) associated with a show of compassion.

In short, amidst the efficacy shortfall concerning aid campaigns invoke signals of low status/pity, the current findings demonstrate that tactics that have the potential to activate attentional biases in relation to victim status could ironically discourage aid for the victims, especially those in a more disadvantaged position. Hence, an effective approach could attempt to shift the focus away from information about the victim that bystanders may interpret as potentially threatening. The findings from Chapter 5, for instance, demonstrated how shifting attention *away* from identity-threatening attributes of the victims encouraged more compassionate responses towards them. See also Graton and Mailliez (2019) who concluded that attentional biases are more predictive of successful aid campaigns than guilt-based appeals that often cue people to the victims' impoverished status.

6.5 Concluding Thoughts

Amidst the disproportionate expressions of compassion for victims in real-world emergencies (e.g., the Paris versus Beirut terror attack in my opening preamble), I sought to investigate whether a victim's status could help to explain this phenomenon. In six experiments, I found that the preponderance of the evidence supported the existence of a high-status compassion bias, at least within certain conditions. This phenomenon seemed to be most visible when cost considerations are relevant (Chapters 3 and 4). But other factors beyond the cost calculus moderate this high-status compassion bias too, including: (a) egalitarian ideologies (Chapter 4); and (b) identity threat appraisals (Chapter 5).

Of course, it is important to reiterate that the high-status compassion bias effect was found only under the specific constraints that were identified. Other factors beyond the specific ones considered in this thesis are likely to play a role, too. For example, people have been shown to behave more compassionately towards women and children (both social groups with typically ascribed low status; e.g., Reynolds et al., 2019), "women and children, first" being a rather common rule showcasing this. This can be, potentially, due to the perceived extreme sense of fragility and need these groups elicit, to the point that this need overshadows any considerations of social status. This is to say that the current thesis' stance is not that a compassion bias in favor of high- (over low-) status victims will *always* occur. Rather, this thesis sought to identify (and largely found) under which conditions this compassion bias was likely to be observed. Overall, the current thesis is potentially impactful because it highlights the

unique (and important) role that a victim's social status could play in the provision of aid, with the potential to inform the devising of effective aid campaigns and the training of first responders to emergencies.

Milestones Achieved

As part of this research program, I have presented the findings from Chapter 4 at the Society of Australasian Social Psychologists' Annual Conference on April 2018 in Wellington, New Zealand. Part of these findings have also been published on the *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*. Moreover, part of the findings from Chapter 5 have been published on *Archives of Sexual Behavior* and on an LGBTQ+ special issue by the *European Journal of Social Psychology.*

Outside of official publications and conferences, I have presented the findings from Chapter 5: Experiment 4 on the University of Nottingham Postgraduate Student Conference Support Poster Competition, and I have given a talk on the general findings of the thesis on campus to undergraduate students enrolled in a third-year social psychology module (April 2018). As part of the program, I have also undertaken training in academic writing, publishing, and statistical analyses to further improve such skills.

Published Articles

Owuamalam, C. K., & Matos, A. M. (2021). Heterosexual men in Trump's America downplay compassion more for masculine (than for feminine) gay victims of hate crime: Why? *European Journal of Social Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2787

Owuamalam, C. K., & Matos, A. S. (2020). When are heterosexual men passive or compassionate towards gay victims of hate crime? Integrating the bystander and social loafing explanations. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 49*, 1693-1709. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-01592-y

Owuamalam, C. K., & Matos, A. S. (2019). Do egalitarians always help the disadvantaged more than the advantaged? Testing a value-norm conflict hypothesis in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 22*(2), 151-162. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.12351

Conference Papers and Talks

Matos, A. S., & Owuamalam, C. K. (April, 2018). When and why are people more compassionate towards high and low-status victims? *Paper presented at the annual convention of the Society of Australasian Social Psychologists (SASP), Wellington, New Zealand*. Retrieved from: osf.io/h2xf8/

Matos, A. S., & Owuamalam, C. K. (September, 2017). "They had it coming": Effects of threat and compassion bias on helping behavior. *Poster presented at the Postgraduate Student Conference Support Post Competition at the University of Nottingham, Malaysia*.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Summary of demographic information for all experiments.

Ethnicity

	Experiments					
Groups	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***6***
White	25	-	-	251	275	453
Black	6	-	-	14	32	49
Asian	316	232	240	20	35	60
Hispanic / Latinx	6	-	-	6	30	59
Middle Eastern	37	32	22	-	-	3
Native / Pacific Islander	1	-	-	1	2	5
Mixed	15	4	9	11	11	21
Other	-	5	11	-	-	-
Not stated	30	-	6	-	15	20
Total:	*436*	*273*	*288*	*303*	*400*	*670*

Religion

	Experiments					
Groups	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***6***
Agnostic / Atheist / Non-religious	51	19	14	108	216	363
Christian / Catholic	82	63	60	163	149	256
Jewish	1	-	-	9	10	12
Muslim	174	78	46	6	5	8
Hindu / Sikh	14	17	13	2	1	1
Buddhist / Taoist	88	85	92	3	8	6
Other	10	3	3	4	7	19
Not stated	16	8	60	8	4	5
Total:	*436*	*273*	*288*	*303*	*400*	*670*

Income Class Brackets

	Experiments					
Brackets	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***6***
Low-income class	-	-	-	123	162	269
Middle class	-	-	-	149	204	347
High-income class	-	-	-	31	34	54
Not stated	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total:	-	-	-	*303*	*400*	*670*

Education Level

	Experiments					
Level	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***	***5***	***6***
High school diploma / SPM / O-Level diploma or less	24	1	7	65	53	80
STPM / A-Level diploma	16	1	-	-	-	-
Vocational / Technical school	-	-	-	39	13	18
Associate diploma / Higher diploma / Foundation program	62	12	12	-	1	-
Some college / Undergraduate program	290	244	236	129	260	479
Professional / Postgraduate program	25	12	29	70	73	93
Not stated	19	3	4	-	-	-
Total:	*436*	*273*	*288*	*303*	*400*	*670*

Note. Participants provided their estimated income range in their respective currencies, which were then subsequently categorized into the three main income brackets following the reported income class brackets in the US (Amadeo, 2020), where low-income class was an annual income of $49,999 or less; middle-income class was $50,000-$149,999, and; high-income class was $150,000 or more.

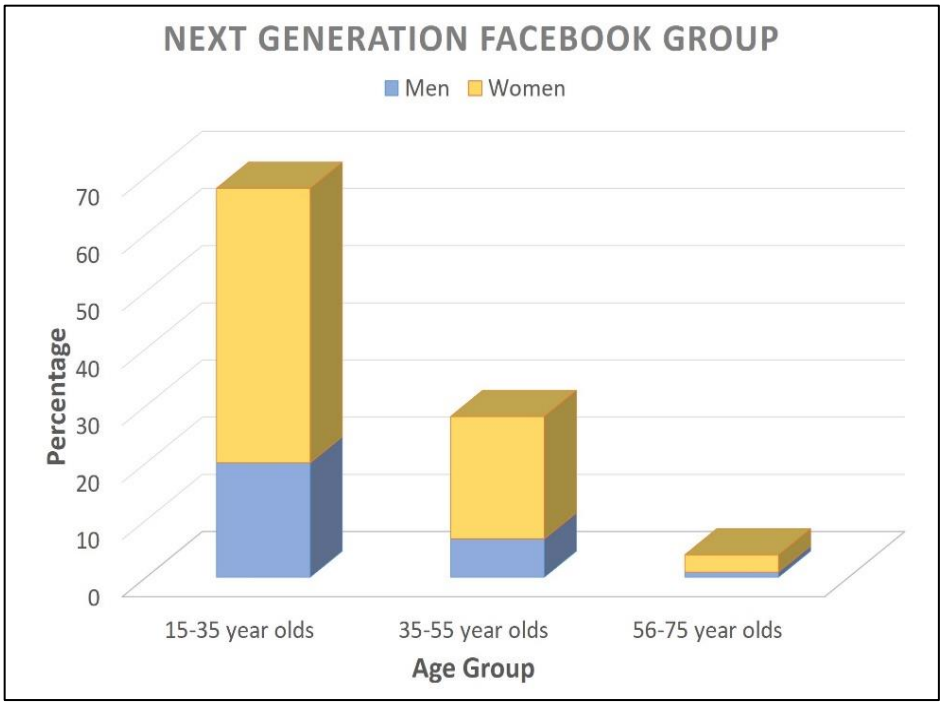
Appendix B.

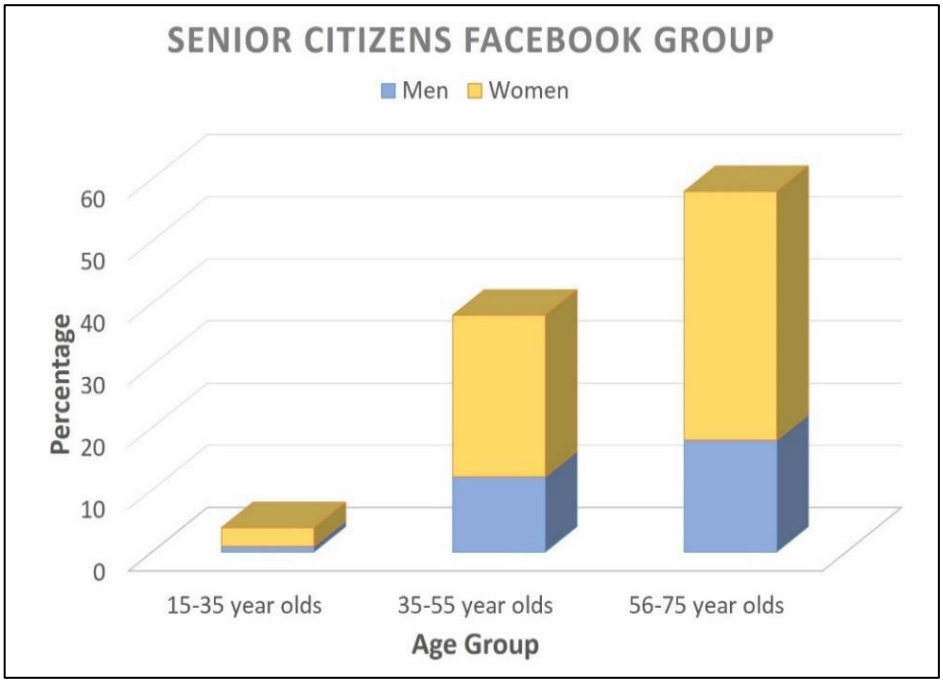
Demographic information of the two Facebook groups presented to participants in Experiment 1 (see Chapter 3).

Instructions to participants:

> *"The SEA Terror Survivors Charity often posts on social media after a crisis occurs in order to reach more people about their fund raising for victims in immediate need. However, because it is a small-time charity, they have a limited budget for advertising on social media. As such, the charity often encourages social media users to share their website's link and posts on the users' personal social media accounts. In order to help the charity, we will provide their link, as well as the news article link you read at the end of the survey, and we will give you the opportunity to share them on your own social media accounts. But, we also want to encourage sharing the charity's link to the most effective target audience possible. On the next page you will be shown the demographic statistics of two Facebook groups that you could post the charity's news article to.*
>
> *Please read the information we have provided for each of the two target audiences carefully. We are interested in the Facebook group you would prefer to post the SEA's news article to."*

Appendix B. (contd.)





Appendix C.

Cover story for the student victimization induction used in Experiment 2 and Experiment 3 (see Chapter 4).

Cover story for student victimization:

> "Student X is a **British [Nigerian/Malaysian]** national who is registered on a degree program in one of the U21 universities overseas. This year, X decided to spend a year at UNMC as part of the U21 universities' mobility program. Prior to arriving in Malaysia, X pre-enrolled for all the modules to be completed while here at UNMC. Normally, faculty administrators notify module conveners (or lectures) of exchange students who have enrolled on their modules, and these lecturers then reserve a place for such students. **An administrative error meant that exchange students' module enrolment information was not passed on to the module conveners, and student quotas on some of the popular subsidiary modules that X had pre-registered for have now been filled**. Upon arriving at UNMC two weeks after the start of the semester due to flight scheduling difficulties, X was utterly dismayed in learning from a subsidiary module convener that registration on the module has now closed. In fact, the module convener already refused to enroll students who had come after the module quota had been filled. It would be unfair to students who had been turned away for late enrolment if additional students were being taken. Because X arrived late due to unavoidable flight scheduling difficulties, it is now difficult to find a suitable replacement that matches X's interests and aspirations.

Importantly, an incomplete number of credits could have an impact on the X's graduation status.”

Appendix D.

The costly/uncostly measures presented to participants in Experiment 2 and Experiment 3 (see Chapter 4).

Costly and uncostly measures:

> **"**Now please imagine that you are the Teaching Coordinator for student X's programme, and have just learned about the student's problem. As teaching coordinator, you can plea to the module convener to make an exception for X by accepting this student unto the course. The ultimate decision to accept the student's enrolment on the module rests with module convener. Although you have some influence as a teaching coordinator, you have had personal issues with the module convener in the past that makes you reluctant to approach him on behalf of student X. But student X would need help to persuade the module convener to change a previous 'reject' decision because other late students have been rejected on the module too."
>
> ***Uncostly***: "As the teaching coordinator would you proceed to plea with the module convener on student X's behalf?"
>
> ***Costly***: "Assuming you are the module convener, would you accept student X unto the module knowing that the other students that have already been rejected might learn about your decision and complain?"

Appendix E.

The CNN news extract presented to participants in Experiment 4 as the victimization story (see Chapter 5).

Orlando shooting: 49 killed.

By Ralph Ellis, Ashley Fantz, Faith Karimi and Eliott C. McLaughlin, CNN.

June 13, 2016.

On June 12, 2016, an American-born man (Omar Mateen) gunned down 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando. This incident has been described by authorities as one of the deadliest mass shootings in the USA and the nation's worst terror attack since 9/11. The gunman, 29, of Fort Pierce, Florida, was interviewed by the FBI in 2013 and 2014 but was not found to be a threat. The FBI said Mateen carried an assault rifle and a pistol into the packed Pulse nightclub about 2 a.m. Sunday and started shooting.

According to President Obama, this violence “marks a horrific chapter for our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender friends.”

Appendix F.

Complete list of items for the compassion measure used for Experiments 4-6 (see Chapter 5).

1. If the LGBT community [Mr. M/gay men] needs my help, I want to offer it.
2. I feel at peace with myself knowing that I have the capacity to help LGBT individuals [Mr. M/gay men] fight hatred and discrimination against them, if called upon to serve in this way.
3. I pity the LGBT community [Mr. M/gay men], but do not think it is my place to help them. (R)
4. I feel sorry for the LGBT community [Mr. M/gay men], but cannot pretend that I understand all the fuss. (R)
5. I don't get emotionally wrapped up with the LGBT community's [Mr. M's/gay men's] problems even though I do care. (R)
6. When the media broadcasts some bad news concerning LGBT individuals [Mr. M/gay men], I often feel overwhelmed, and switch the channel. (R)
7. I feel sorry for bad things happening to the LGBT community [Mr. M/gay men] but It's probably not worth the effort to try to get involved. (R)
8. Aiding the LGBT community [Mr. M/gay men] is such a losing battle that only a collective effort can solve. (R)
9. I feel sorry for the LGBT community [Mr. M/gay men], but I do not know that any amount I offer to charities on their behalf can help to solve their problems. (R)

10. I really empathize with Mr. M, and I would try to help.*
11. I am heartbroken for Mr. M, and I would help if the opportunity arises.*
12. I am deeply hurt to learn about Mr. M's plight, and I'd do whatever it takes to help.*
13. Giving aid (e.g., through donations or volunteer work) to victims like Mr. M is the right thing to do.*
14. I don't feel sorry for Mr. M, and I do not feel inclined to help him. (R)

Note. (R) = reverse-coded; * = added in Experiment 6 to equalize the number of items that were right-coded and reverse-coded.

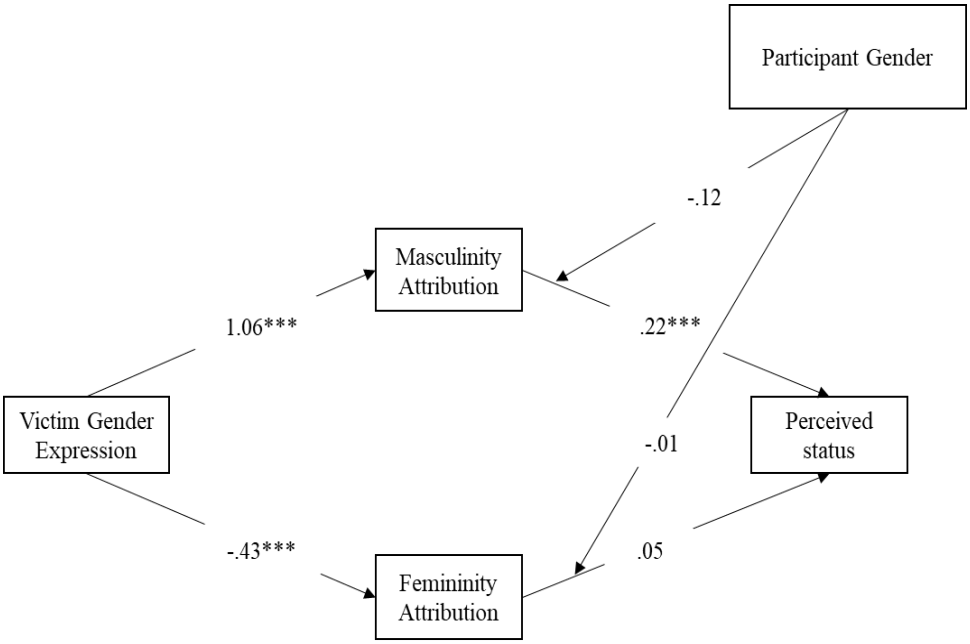
Appendix G.

Model summary for the mediation regression via the status-conferring attributes onto perceived status with participant gender included as moderator (Model 4 on PROCESS; see Experiment 4, Chapter 5).

The indirect conditional effect of victim gender expression	β_{IE}	***SE***	**95% *CI***
...via the status-enhancing attribute of masculinity			
Male Participants	.29	.06	[.19, .41]
Female Participants	.17	.07	[.03, .31]
...via the status-conferring attribute of femininity			
Male Participants	-.020	.015	[-.059, .001]
Female Participants	-.018	.017	[-.058, .010]

Appendix G (contd.).

The effect of gender expression of a gay victim on heterosexual men and women's perceived victim status ratings via cues to victims' status-conferring attributes of masculinity/femininity (Model 15 on PROCESS).



Note. Victim gender expression: -1 = stereotypically feminine, 1 = stereotypically masculine; Gender: 1 = men; 2 = women.

***$p < .001$

Appendix H.

Description of the masculinity threat manipulation that was discarded (and controlled) from the reported analyses from Experiment 5 (see Chapter 5).

Participants were randomly given some information before the victim gender conformity manipulation that was discussed in detail within the methodological section of Experiment 5. In short, participants were made aware that the survey they were completing had already been given to a group of gay male participants who had ostensibly scored quite low (*low masculinity threat condition*) or quite high (*high masculinity threat condition*) on a measure of masculinity that they would be given, also. In reality, they were not given a masculinity threat measure, nor were the gay male participants real. Participants were then further told that their answers would be compared to the gay male participants in order to ascertain whether heterosexual and gay men's responses could be differentiated based on their masculinity scores. Below are the transcripts of what participants saw.

Low masculinity threat condition:

> "For the sake of full disclosure and to fulfill our ethics obligation, we would like to inform you that a different version of the questionnaire has already been completed by *gay men who scored quite low on a measure of masculinity* that you will be asked to complete later on. At the end of this study we *will look at each participant's responses, to determine whether straight and gay men can be differentiated in terms of their masculinity*."

High masculinity threat condition:

> "For the sake of full disclosure and to fulfill our ethics obligation, we would like to inform you that a different version of the questionnaire has already been completed by *gay men who scored reasonably high on a measure of masculinity* that you will be asked to complete later on. At the end of this study, *we will look at each participant's responses, to determine whether straight and gay men can be differentiated in terms of their masculinity*."

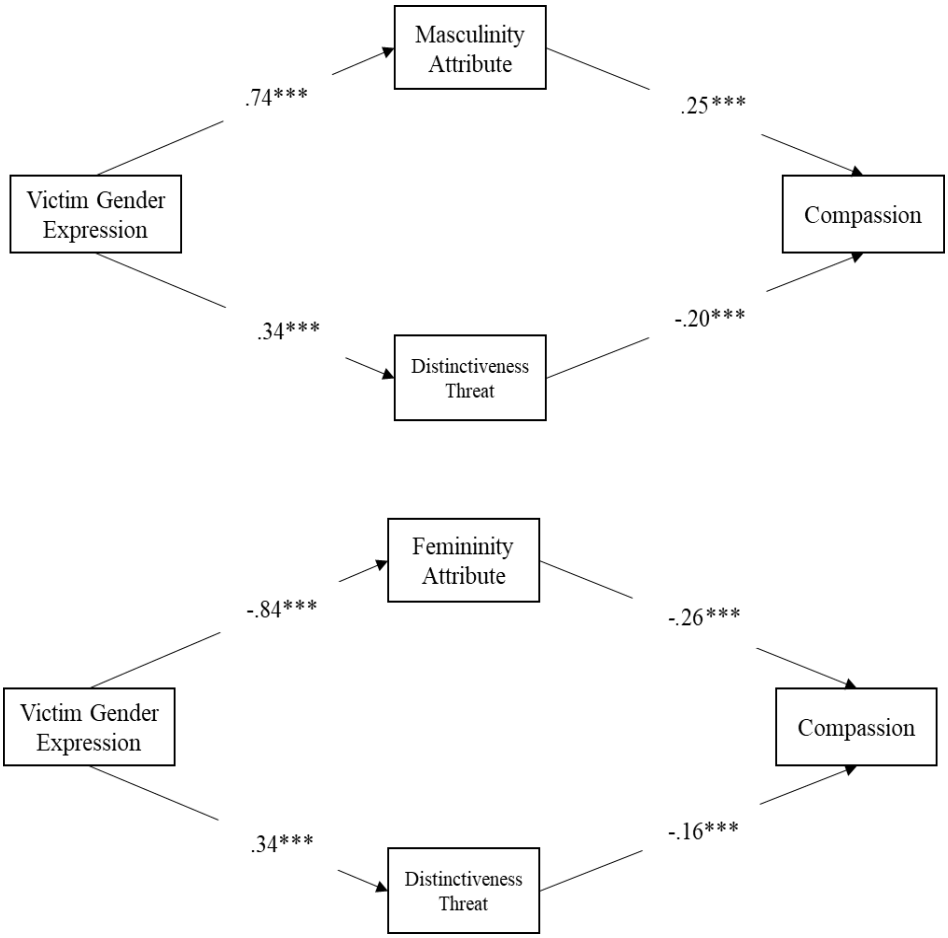
Appendix I.

The effect of gender expression of gay victims on compassion with the status-conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity as separate mediators, and including distinctiveness threat (from Experiment 5, see Chapter 5).

The conditional effect of victim gender expression	β_{IE}	***SE***	**95% *CI***
...via the status-enhancing attribute of masculinity	.25	.06	[.14, .36]
...via the status-conferring attribute of femininity	-.26	.05	[-.36, -.15]
...via distinctiveness threat	-.20	.05	[-.29, -.10]

Appendix I (contd.).

The effect of gender expression of a gay victim on heterosexual men and women's perceived victim status ratings via cues to victims' status-conferring attributes of masculinity/femininity (Model 4 on PROCESS).



Note. Victim gender expression: -1 = stereotypically feminine, 1 = stereotypically masculine.

***$p < .001$

Appendix J.

Summary of preliminary analyses for the status, femininity, and masculinity measures from Experiment 6 (see Chapter 5).

		Feminine straight victim *p* [*95% CI*]	Masculine gay victim *p* [*95% CI*]	Masculine straight victim *p* [*95% CI*]
Femininity Check	Feminine gay victim	.036 [.01, .51]	≤ .001 [1.45, 1.95]	≤ .001 [1.88, 2.38]
	Feminine straight victim	-	≤ .001 [1.19, 1.69]	≤ .001 [1.63, 2.13]
	Masculine gay victim	-	-	≤ .001 [.18, .69]
Masculinity Check	Feminine gay victim	.001 [-.49, -.12]	≤ .001 [-1.72, -1.35]	≤ .001 [-1.93, -1.56]
	Feminine straight victim	-	≤ .001 [-1.41, -1.04]	≤ .001 [-1.63, -1.26]
	Masculine gay victim	-	-	.023 [-.40, -.03]
Victim Status Check	Feminine gay victim	.470 [-.22, .10]	≤ .001 [-.58, -.26]	≤ .001 [-.61, -.29]
	Feminine straight victim	-	≤ .001 [-.52, -.20]	≤ .001 [-.55, -.23]
	Masculine gay victim	-	-	.737 [-.13, .19]

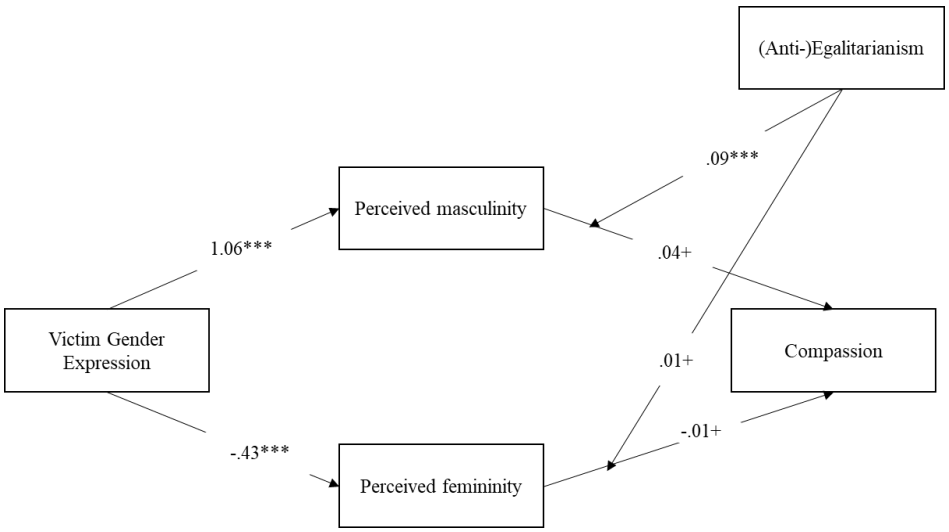
Appendix K.

Model summary for the post-hoc analysis looking at the effect of gender expression of gay victims on (anti-)egalitarians' compassion via the status-conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity (Model 15 on PROCESS; from Experiment 4, see Chapter 5).

The indirect conditional effect of victim gender expression	β_{IE}	***SE***	**95% *CI***
...via the status-enhancing attribute of masculinity			
Egalitarians	-.12	.06	[-.23, -.01]
Anti-egalitarians	.20	.05	[.10, .30]
...via the status-conferring attribute of femininity			
Egalitarians	.01	.02	[-.02, .04]
Anti-egalitarians	-.01	.02	[-.04, .03]

Appendix K (contd.).

The effect of gender expression of gay victims on heterosexual (anti-)egalitarians' compassion via the status conferring attributes of masculinity and femininity (Model 15 on PROCESS).

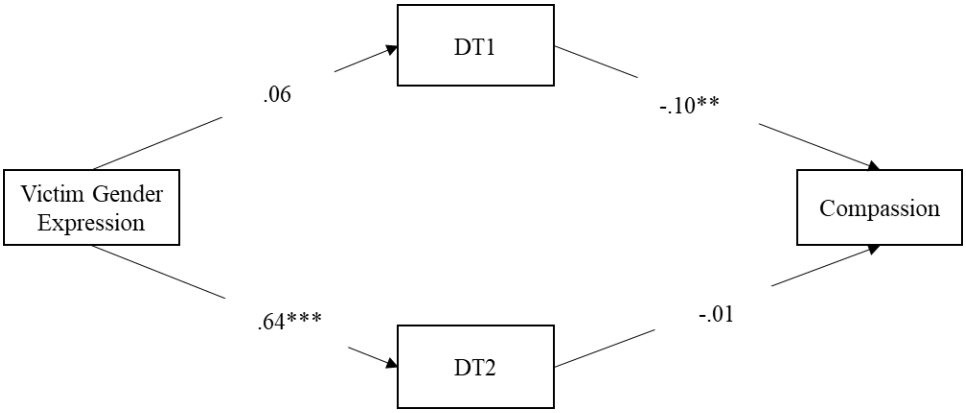


Note. Victim gender expression: -1 = stereotypically feminine, 1 = stereotypically masculine; (anti-)egalitarianism has been standardized so that, -1 = egalitarians, 1 = anti-egalitarians.

+ = not significant; ***$p < .001$

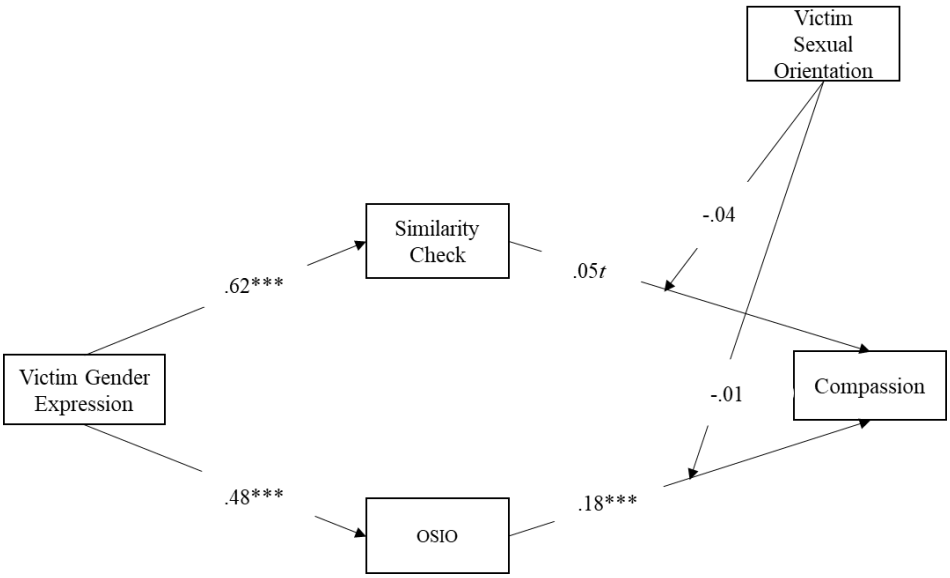
Appendix L.

Post-doc model summary for the main mediational analyses of distinctiveness threat and perceived similarity with the items ran separately (Model 4 on PROCESS; see Chapter 5).



Note. DT1 = Distinctiveness Threat Item 1; DT2 = Distinctiveness Threat Item 2.

Appendix L. (contd.)



Note. Model 15 on PROCESS was run.

Similarity Check = the single item of perceived similarity to the victim;

OSIO = the Overlap of self, ingroup, and outgroup measure.