

Ritualistic Initiations and Outgroup Denigration: The Roles of Effort Justification, Identity Fusion, and Positive Distinctiveness

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Background

- Extreme initiations increase commitment via effort justification (Aronson & Mills, 1959)
- Shared dysphoric experiences foster identity fusion
- Strong group identification promotes positive distinctiveness
- Positive distinctiveness can increase outgroup denigration

Research Question:

Does initiation extremity increase outgroup denigration through identity fusion and positive distinctiveness?

Hypothesis

Extreme Initiation
↓
Identity Fusion
↓
Outgroup Denigration

Method

Participants

- Undergraduate students ($N = 30$)
- Random assignment to:
 - Extreme
 - Mild
 - Control

Design

- Between-subject experimental design
- IV: Initiation Extremity (3 levels)
- DV: Outgroup Denigration
- Mediators:
 - Identity Fusion

Planned Analysis

- Mediation analysis (linear regression/PROCESS model)

Procedure

1. Initiation manipulation
2. Manipulation checks
3. Lifeboat group scenario
4. Outgroup rankings
5. Resource allocation task

Measures

- Identity Fusion Scale (Swann et al., 2009)
- Warmth, Competence, Morality ratings (Fiske et al., 2002)
- Resource Allocation (100-point distribution)

Discussion & Implications

- Extreme initiations may increase outgroup hostility through psychological bonding mechanisms
- Effort justification transforms suffering into perceived group value
- Fusion strengthens ingroup bias

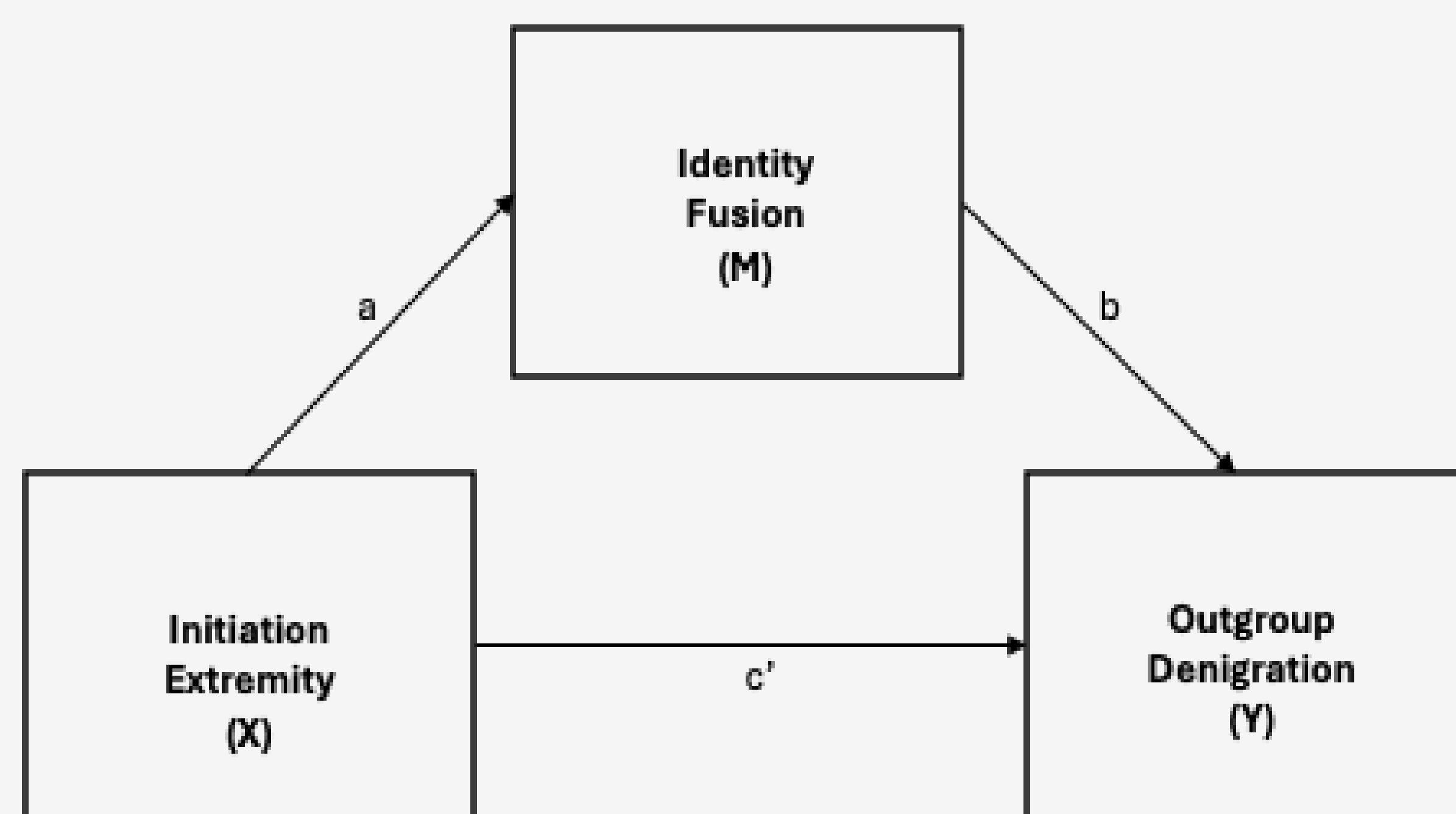


Figure 1
Proposed mediation model of identity fusion

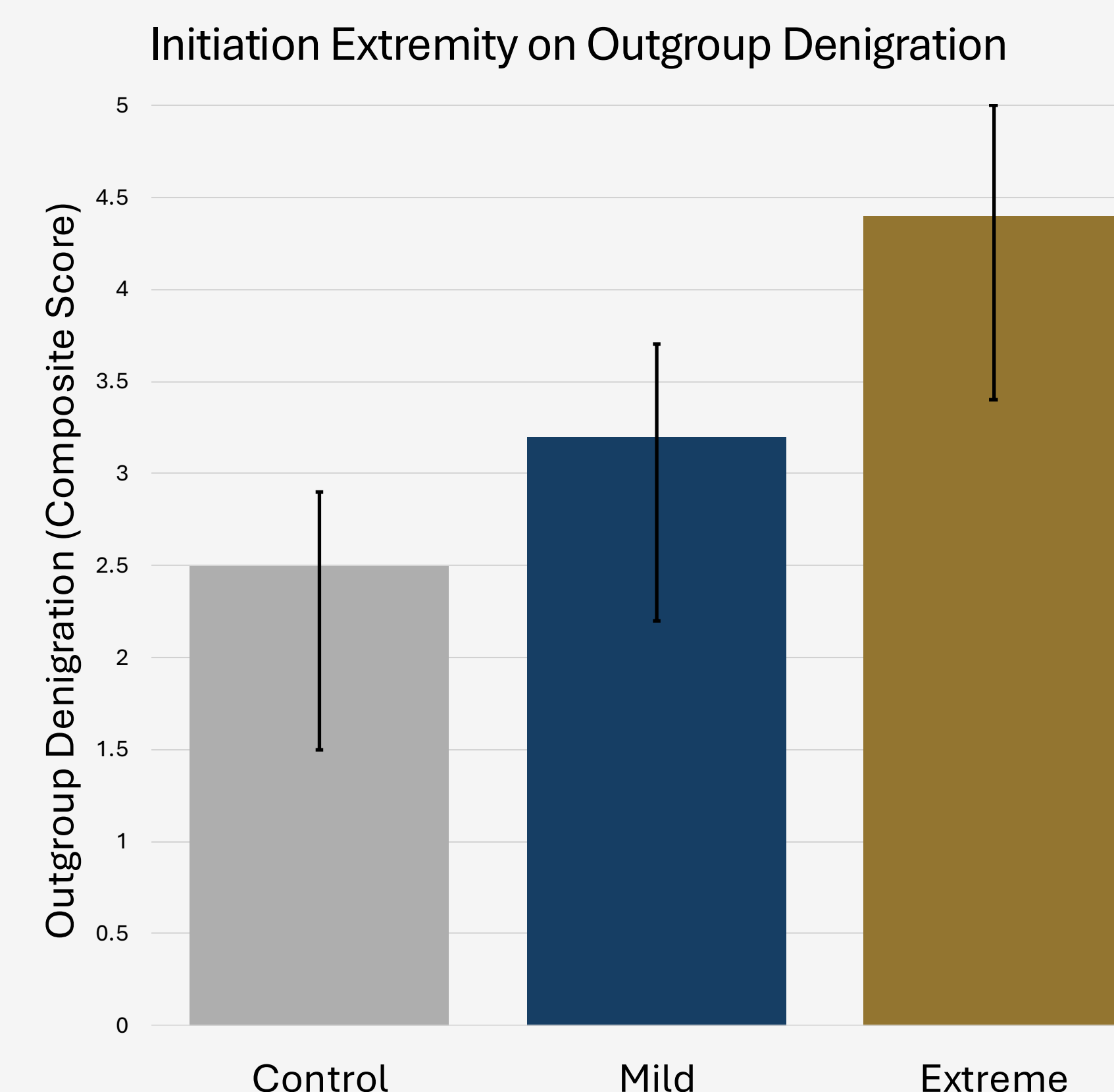


Figure 2
Hypothetical Effect of Initiation Extremity on Outgroup Denigration

Key Takeaway

Extreme initiations may strengthen group cohesion while simultaneously increasing intergroup hostility

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