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Good for the Goose *and* Good for the Gander: Examining Positive Psychological Benefits of Male Allyship for Men and Women

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Allyship is increasingly promoted as a tool to support gender diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, including in higher education institutions. Male allyship toward women can be a useful expression of men's positive/caring masculinity, but little empirical research has examined if and how male allyship benefits men and women psychologically and socially. Using women's other- and self-reports and men's self-reports from 101 male–female colleague dyads in male-dominated departments, we tested a model involving men's allyship, women's inclusion and vitality, and men's growth and work–family enrichment. As hypothesized, men's growth mediated the link between their allyship and work–family enrichment, and women's perceptions of men's allyship predicted women's vitality, both directly and through inclusion. However, men's allyship was weakly associated with women's perceptions of their allyship, and men's benefits were unrelated to women's inclusion or vitality. Findings highlight the importance of male allyship rooted in positive masculinity while underscoring a disconnect between women's and men's experiences. The implications for promoting gender inclusion and diversity in male-dominated departments of higher education are discussed.

Public Significance Statement

Men engaging as allies to women is key to ensuring gender equity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and male-dominated academic departments and is beneficial to both male and female faculty. Male faculty's engagement in allyship plays a role in their personal growth and work–family enrichment. When women faculty perceive male colleagues as allies, they feel energized and included at work.

Keywords: gender disparity, faculty development, diversity and inclusion, men as allies, positive psychology/positive masculinity model

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Women face greater challenges to organizational entry, advancement, and promotion in comparison to men, and this is exacerbated in male-dominated work contexts such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in higher education (National Science Foundation; <https://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/advance/>). Whereas the remedies to these challenges typically focus on how

female faculty can boost their own careers (e.g., women's leadership programs hosted by the Association for Women in Science [AWIS]), male faculty can also play critical roles as allies supporting the careers of their female counterparts (Burke & Major, 2014).

Washington and Evans (1991) describe an ally as “a member of the “dominant” or “majority” group who works to end oppression in

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his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population” (p. 195). We frame male allyship as a form of prosocial behavior rooted in positive and caring masculinity that can move men to support gender equity. Typically, male allyship invokes strategies such as challenging sexism in the workplace, publicly and privately recognizing women’s achievements, and advocacy (Madsen et al., 2020; Warren & Bordoloi, 2021). As such, male allyship has the potential to promote both healthy forms of masculinity (McDermott et al., 2019; Seidler et al., 2018) and women’s psychological, social, and material well-being.

Positive Masculinity and Benefits of Male Allyship for Men

Dominant frameworks that focus exclusively on men’s misogynistic and oppressive behaviors stemming from toxic masculinity may induce shame and fear, and repel men from contributing to gender equity efforts (Cole et al., 2021). Instead, we consider a shift to a positive psychology/positive masculinity paradigm (Cole et al., 2021) that emphasizes men’s healthy attitudes, relationships, and behaviors (e.g., compassion) that constitute optimal psychological functioning. From this perspective, men’s prosocial behaviors toward women (e.g., allyship) may foster men’s positive emotions (Morelli et al., 2015), motivating upward spirals of thoughts, actions, and relationships that reshape masculinities while supporting gender equity (see broaden and build theory, Fredrickson, 2001).

Hegemonic masculinity in the workplace is characterized by competition and aggressive interactions (OliFFE & Han, 2014), which are associated with leadership, social influence, and perceptions of professional capabilities (Lease et al., 2020, p. 139). In contrast, Elliott (2016)’s concept of caring masculinities rejects domination and instead values positive emotions, interdependence, and relationality. The power of a caring masculinities framework lies in reducing hegemonic masculinity and its costs (e.g., stoicism), while bolstering interdependent and care-oriented values that yield psychological and social benefits to men. We believe such a framework is amenable to male allyship and suggests examining how allyship might benefit male allies.

Although there are social costs to men for engaging in male allyship toward women (Kutlaca et al., 2020), such as sanctions for violating gender stereotypes (Moss-Racusin, 2014) and institutional obstructions to their efforts (Warren & Bordoloi, in press), it is useful to explore if and how men *benefit* from their allyship efforts (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Past research on LGBTQ+ allies suggests that having an ally identity can provide individuals with satisfying interpersonal relationships, community belonging, and a sense of meaning and purpose as contributors to social change (Rostosky et al., 2015)—the same sorts of psychological and social benefits theorized in the positive masculinity framework. In the present study, we therefore examine the psychological (personal growth) and relational (work–family enrichment) benefits associated with men’s allyship toward women in the higher education workplace.

Benefits of Male Allyship for Women

From women’s perspective, chronic gender inequities in higher education institutions create a pressing need to advocate for change. For instance, despite the rising enrollment of women in male-dominated educational programs, research shows that 60% of

STEM faculty are men; at the professorial level, the figure rises to 75% (Ceci et al., 2014). In departments of elite research institutions that do not have a critical mass of women faculty (minimum threshold of 15%), women are likely to be overburdened with “caretaking tasks” (e.g., bringing refreshments to meetings), student advising, teaching, service, and responsibilities that do not count toward measures of success for promotion and tenure (e.g., O’Meara et al., 2017). These issues contribute to female faculty’s stress and burnout—indicators of poor well-being—leading to the “leaky pipeline” (Casad et al., 2021). To combat this, it is important to dedicate attention and resources toward the pursuit of women’s energy and enthusiasm—that is, their vitality, also an indicator of well-being—and consider how male allyship might boost it.

Although the need for advocacy on issues of gender inequity is clear, when women advocate for themselves, they face backlash that silences them. For instance, women are often penalized for appearing agentic or self-promoting in hiring, promotion, or pay negotiation settings (Bosak et al., 2018). To avoid backlash and to be heard, women are further burdened to navigate gender norms (Moss-Racusin & Rudman, 2010) when advocating for themselves. Simply, women are forced to consider not only the content of the issue for which they are advocating but also the manner in which they advocate. In such circumstances, women faculty often feel excluded and marginalized from their academic institutions (Maranto & Griffin, 2011).

In contrast, such pressures and backlash are considerably less for allies (Czopp & Monteith, 2003), who are viewed more favorably and may be optimally positioned to change inequitable systems (Rasinski & Czopp, 2010). For example, calling out sexism is more effective when it is done by men (Cihangir et al., 2014), presumably because men are assumed to be less attuned to sexism such that when they do speak out their confrontations are taken as legitimate (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Most importantly, other men may perceive male allies more favorably than they do women because of systemic patriarchy (Berkowitz, 2004). In addition to men’s efforts creating structural change, the process of allyship itself (typically consisting of prosocial emotions, cognitions, and behaviors) may play a pivotal role in restoring women’s psychosocial sense of inclusion. Whereas female faculty experience exclusion in male-dominated academic departments, the presence of procedural fairness and gender equity (goods that allies fight for) can act as powerful counterbalances that reduce isolation, foster inclusion, and restore feelings of warmth and vitality (Maranto & Griffin, 2011). As such, we examine whether male allyship predicts the vitality and inclusion of women in higher education.

Interconnections Between Men’s and Women’s Benefits From Male Allyship

Men’s efforts to intervene on behalf of women can be perceived as stemming from maladaptive male ideologies such as paternalism (Good et al., 2018) and male saviorism (Cheng et al., 2019), potentially reducing men’s commitment to future allyship behaviors. In contrast, framing allyship from a positive masculinity perspective has the potential to be perceived as rooted in men’s caring identity, energizing male allyship. From a positive masculinity perspective, men’s allyship would sensitize men not simply to the instrumental benefits to women (e.g., salary) but also to the psychological (e.g., vitality) and social (e.g., inclusion) benefits,

reinforcing their commitment to changing androcentric structures. As such, men's familiarity with women's benefits from allyship such as inclusion and vitality might deepen their understanding, motivation, and meaning from engaging in allyship action. Therefore, we examine whether women's inclusion and vitality are associated with men's personal growth.

When women do not perceive men as allies, they are less likely to ask for and receive support, because seeking help from men may be viewed as fitting dependency-related sexist stereotypes, even when the goal is to combat structural injustice (Wakefield et al., 2012). Accordingly, the present study examines how the natural (i.e., untrained) variation of male allyship in higher education is perceived by women, and whether such allyship is related to benefits for both women and men. By doing so, we provide a foundation beam for the idea that male allies are untapped institutional resources that may help relieve women of the double burden of swimming upstream against bias while also dismantling unjust systems.

Hypothesis Development

We draw from research on LGBTQ+ allyship that conceptualizes allyship as (a) knowledge about the experiences of the marginalized group, (b) openness to learning about the marginalized group, and (c) awareness of how systemic oppression operates (Jones et al., 2014). We argue that these same characteristics are amenable to male allyship toward women, yet it seems insufficient for men to simply possess these characteristics. Rather, we argue that what matters is whether women *perceive* men who possess these characteristics as allies. Without this, men's efforts may be "missing the mark," and women are likely to continue to feel isolated and avoid seeking support. As a first step in examining this issue, we test the strength of the association between men's self-reports and women's other reports of men's allyship. We hypothesize (see Figure 1 in supplemental file):

Congruence Hypothesis: Men's self-reported allyship is positively related to women's perceptions of men's allyship.

At the same time, we recognize that male allyship carries at least some cost in terms of effort and time. We thus consider whether there are as-yet-unexplored benefits for allies that might offset these costs. Recent qualitative research on deeply committed allies suggests that they experience personal growth because of their allyship (Warren, 2021).

Past research also suggests that allies who regularly contribute to diversity and inclusion in the workplace find that their learnings through allyship spill over into their personal lives (Warren, 2018). Such allies find that their personal growth (e.g., through insights and shifting values) deepens their understanding of issues faced by marginalized individuals (e.g., mothers, wives, daughters) in their personal lives, resulting in work–family enrichment (Warren, 2018). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Men's Personal Growth Hypothesis: Men's allyship is positively associated with their personal growth and work–family enrichment, such that allyship is linked to work–family enrichment through their personal growth.

The most critical test of allyship is whether it actually benefits women. Initial findings indicate that the mere presence of coworker allies predicts higher job satisfaction, lower anxiety (Griffith & Hebl, 2002), and a stronger commitment to the institution (Law et al., 2011) among marginalized group members. However, there is limited empirical research on whether allyship helps beneficiaries feel more *included* (Collins & Chlup, 2014). We argue that men's allyship—and critically, women's perceptions of men's allyship—predicts women's sense of inclusion.

Further, we contend that the sense of inclusion brought about through allyship will foster women's feelings of vitality (i.e., feeling energized and enthusiastic, Bostic et al., 2000). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Women's Inclusion Hypothesis: Men's allyship (and women's perceptions of men's allyship) is positively associated with women's sense of inclusion and vitality, such that men's allyship is linked to women's feelings of vitality through their sense of inclusion.

Finally, research on helping behaviors suggests that when beneficiaries profit from a benefactor's contributions, benefactors tend to experience personal growth and psychological well-being (Grant, 2012; Rokach, 2017). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Feedback Hypothesis: Women's feelings of inclusion and vitality are positively related to men's personal growth.

Method

Data were collected from faculty in the male-dominated disciplines of STEM, philosophy (Paxton et al., 2012), religion, business (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2018), law (Ward, 2008), and political science (Maliniak et al., 2013) in 64 elite, research-intensive universities across the United States and Canada.

Procedure

A two-sided, distinguishable dyadic design was employed (Gonzalez & Griffin, 1999). First, women participants were recruited using a purposive sampling strategy. Chairs of specified male-dominated departments were asked to distribute the study invitation to their women faculty. Some women faculty were invited directly. Women participants were invited to nominate a male colleague and to complete a survey on the male nominee's collegial behaviors (women's other-reports) as well as their own experiences (women's self-reports). An email was then sent to male nominees informing them that an undisclosed colleague had nominated them to complete a brief survey on collegial relationships in higher education (men's self-reports). All responses (women and men) were kept confidential and women were not informed about whether their nominees participated. Participants were offered a \$5 gift card to complete the 15–20-min online survey.

Participants

A total of 101 matched female–male dyads completed the survey. Among the 101 female faculty ($M_{\text{age}} = 45.66$, $SD = 10.44$, 7% missing), 51% were tenured, 17% were tenure-track, and 18% held

nontenure track appointments (adjunct or clinical faculty), while 15% did not respond. The racial/ethnic composition of the sample of women was as follows: 9% identified as Asian or Asian American, 3% Black or African American, 0% Hispanic/Latino or Hispanic/Latino American, 78% White or European American, 4% mixed race, 3% preferred not to respond, and 3% did not report. Academic disciplines were: 21% science, 6% technology, 39% engineering, 9% math, 2% law, 16% business, 2% religion, 1% philosophy, 1% political science, and 3% were missing.

Among the 101 male colleagues ($M_{\text{age}} = 52.04$, $SD = 11.87$), 72% were tenured, 11% were tenure-track, and 16% held nontenure track appointments (adjunct or clinical faculty), 1% did not respond. The racial/ethnic composition of the sample of men was: 3% identified as Asian or Asian American, 1% Black or African American, 1% Hispanic/Latino or Hispanic/Latino American, 56% White or European American, 2% other, 1% mixed race, 2% preferred not to respond, and 34% did not report. Academic disciplines were: 26% science, 6% technology, 31% engineering, 11% math, 2% law, 18% business, 3% religion, 2% philosophy, and 2% political science.

Measure

Allyship

The Ally Identity Measure (AIM; Jones et al., 2014) assesses allyship via three dimensions: knowledge and skills, openness and support, and oppression awareness. Since this measure is used to assess LGBTQ+ allyship, it was adapted such that items focused on allyship toward women in the higher education context. Men used a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) to respond to five items on knowledge and skills (e.g., “I keep myself informed through reading books and other media about various issues faced by women, in order to increase my awareness of their experiences”), six items on openness and support (e.g., “If I see discrimination against a woman, I actively work to confront it”), and three items on oppression awareness (e.g., “I think women face barriers in the workplace that are not faced by men.”). Women’s other reports of men’s allyship focused on observable behaviors and thus included fewer items. Women used a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *always*) to respond to three items: “He seeks to stay informed about women’s experiences and gender issues,” “If he sees discrimination against a woman, he actively works to confront it,” and “He has taken a public stand on important issues facing women.” Internal consistencies were strong for both men ($\alpha = .86$) and women ($\alpha = .88$).

Inclusion

Inclusion was measured only for women. Women used a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *always*) to respond to four items from the Perceived Group Inclusion Scale (PGIS; Jansen et al., 2014), which measures relationship-specific inclusion with male colleagues (e.g., “He treats me like an insider”). Internal consistency was strong ($\alpha = .93$).

Vitality

Vitality (measured only for women) was assessed by adapting four items from the Vitality subscale of the High-Quality

Relationships (HQR) scale (Carmeli, 2009), which measured women’s relationship-specific vitality while working with their male colleagues. A 7-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *almost always*) was used to respond to the items (e.g., “I feel enthusiastic about working with him”), and internal consistency was strong ($\alpha = .96$).

Growth

Personal growth (measured only for men) through supporting women in higher education was captured by adapting six items from the Post-Traumatic Growth Scale (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). Men used a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) to respond to the items (e.g., “As a result of working to support women, I am able to do better things with my life”). Participants also had an additional response option: “N/A, I have not really supported women.” Internal consistency was strong ($\alpha = .88$).

Work–Family Enrichment

The Work to Family Development subscale from the Work–Family Enrichment Scale (WFES; Carlson et al., 2006) measured how work affects one’s family. Men used a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) and responded to three items (e.g., “My supportiveness of women helps me acquire skills and this helps me be a better family member”). Internal consistency was strong ($\alpha = .96$).

Data Analytic Procedure

Correlations among the study variables are displayed in Table 1. Men’s data were analyzed to examine differences in allyship (the most critical construct) along demographic variables. No differences were found between STEM and non-STEM fields in men’s allyship, and these were therefore combined for the analyses. There were no significant differences in allyship variables by race/ethnicity, education, age, or disability. Mean scores were computed by averaging the items contributing to each construct.

Although the sample was relatively small by structural equation modeling standards and there was no temporal ordering in the measurement of constructs, we thought it would nevertheless be instructive to examine the hypothesized associations, including mediational pathways, in a single cohesive path model using *Mplus* 8.3. This approach provides model fit indices that help evaluate the viability of the theorized processes. However, it is critical to note that with a sample of only 101 dyads, the model parameters may be rather unstable and the directionality of the causal flow cannot be determined with cross-sectional data. We return to these issues in the limitations section.

Mean composite scores served as observed variables in the path model, and mediation was tested using the indirect effect command with 10,000 bootstrap draws. Good-fitting models were determined by a comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) $\geq .95$, root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) $< .06$, and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) $< .08$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Results

The path model did not exhibit adequate fit, $\chi^2(7) = 21.33$, $p = .003$; CFI = .894; TLI = .773; RMSEA = .142; SRMR = .068.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

Construct	<i>M(SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Men's allyship	5.59(0.83)	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Women's perceptions of men's allyship	5.39(1.47)	.23*	—	—	—	—	—
3. Men's growth from allyship	5.17(1.14)	.32***	.01	—	—	—	—
4. Men's work–family enrichment	5.88(1.29)	.25**	–.10	.55***	—	—	—
5. Women's inclusion	6.49(0.82)	.00	.42***	.09	.06	—	—
6. Women's vitality	6.41(0.76)	–.07	.52***	–.06	–.06	.65***	—

Note. *N* = 101 dyads.

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

In other words, the theorized model did not fit the observed data well, since certain hypothesized paths were nonsignificant, and one conceptually meaningful link was not hypothesized/specified a priori. As a means of improving the accuracy of the model, nonsignificant paths were dropped (yet are still reported below) and one conceptually meaningful link suggested by the modification indices was added. This led to the final model depicted in Figure 1, which exhibited adequate-to-good fit, $\chi^2(8) = 12.06$, $p = .149$; CFI = .970; TLI = .944; RMSEA = .071; SRMR = .067.

Findings revealed that in support of the Congruence Hypothesis, men's self-reported allyship was associated with somewhat higher levels of women's perceptions of men's allyship ($\beta = .24$, $p = .014$,

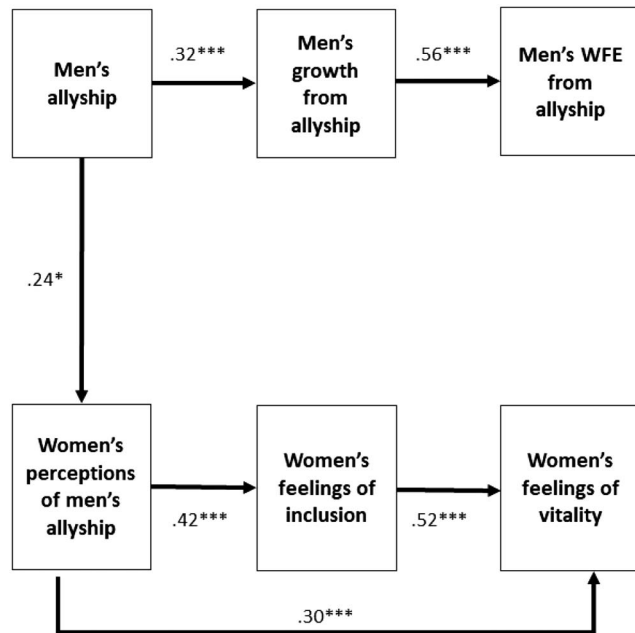
95% CI [.04, .43]), indicating a modest degree of alignment between men's views of their own allyship and women's views of those same men's allyship.

In support of the Men's Personal Growth Hypothesis, men's allyship was associated with higher levels of personal growth from allyship ($\beta = .32$, $p = .005$, 95% CI [.08, .52]), and personal growth from allyship was associated with higher levels of work–family enrichment from allyship ($\beta = .56$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.38, .70]). Indeed, men's allyship was linked to work–family enrichment through their personal growth (*standardized indirect effect* = .18, $p = .009$, 95% CI [.05, .32]). Specifically, 67% of the total effect of men's allyship on men's work–family enrichment was accounted for by men's growth from allyship. In other words, workplace allyship was associated with intrapersonal benefits for men's personal growth, which in turn was linked to interpersonal benefits in their family lives.

Benefits of allyship for women were examined next. In partial support of the Women's Inclusion Hypothesis, women's perceptions of men's allyship was associated with higher levels of women's feelings of inclusion ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.14, .62]), and inclusion was, in turn, associated with higher levels of women's vitality ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.28, .74]). Indeed, women's perceptions of men's allyship was linked to women's vitality through their feelings of inclusion (*standardized indirect effect* = .22, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.06, .42]). Specifically, 40% of the total effect of women's perceptions of men's allyship on women's feelings of vitality was accounted for by women's sense of inclusion. In other words, findings corroborated the premise that when women report that they have strong male allies in the workplace, they feel a stronger sense of inclusion, and this sense of inclusion is associated with feelings of vitality. However, out of step with the hypothesis, men's self-reports of allyship did not predict women's feelings of inclusion ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .241$, 95% CI [–.27, .07]; path was dropped between the initial and final model), indicating a disconnect between how men view their own allyship and their women colleagues' feelings of inclusion.

This disconnect was further evident in links between women's experiences and men's benefits. No support was found for the Feedback Hypothesis, as neither women's feelings of inclusion nor vitality were linked to men's growth from allyship ($\beta = .18$, $p = .212$, 95% CI [–.09, .50]; $\beta = -.16$, $p = .204$, 95% CI [–.44, .06]; both paths were dropped between the initial and final model). These findings indicate that men's feelings of growth from allyship might not be a function of how positively their women colleagues feel in their collegial relationships with them.

Figure 1
Final Path Model Depicting Relationships Between Men's Allyship and Women's Perceptions Thereof; Men's Growth and Work–Family Enrichment (WFE); and Women's Feelings of Inclusion and Vitality



Note. Model fit was adequate: $\chi^2(8) = 12.06$, $p = .149$; CFI = .970; TLI = .944; RMSEA = .071; SRMR = .067. Standardized path coefficients are displayed. All *ps* are two tailed.

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

Exploratory Findings

In addition to the hypothesized relationships, several additional effects emerged in the model modification process and should therefore be viewed as exploratory. There was a direct link from women's perceptions of men's allyship to women's feelings of vitality ($\beta = .30, p = .003, 95\% \text{ CI } [.10, .50]$). That is, women who rated their male colleague as higher in allyship reported higher levels of vitality, independent of their feelings of inclusion with respect to that male colleague.

Finally, although men's self-reports of allyship did not directly predict women's feelings of inclusion (as reported above), there was an indirect effect: Men's allyship was linked to women's inclusion through women's perceptions of men's allyship (*standardized indirect effect* = .10, $p = .034, 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, .21]$). These findings suggest that men's allyship may increase women's feelings of inclusion if the women themselves perceive men's allyship as allyship. Similar findings emerged for women's vitality: Men's allyship was linked to women's vitality through women's perceptions of men's allyship (*standardized indirect effect* = .07, $p = .047, 95\% \text{ CI } [.01, .17]$), suggesting that men's allyship may increase women's feelings of vitality if the men's allyship registers with women as allyship.

Discussion

Allyship toward women in the pursuit of gender equity can be a useful expression of men's positive/caring masculinity. We advance research on this important topic by examining whether male allyship benefits men and women psychologically and socially. To our knowledge, this is the first study to employ a dyadic design to examine the role of male allyship in the lives of men and women coworkers. We examined men's allyship toward women in the context of male-dominated departments in elite research universities in the United States and Canada, and found that male allyship—and women's perceptions of this allyship—were linked to intra- and interpersonal benefits for men and women.

Benefits of Allyship for Men

Past studies suggested that allyship is associated with costs such as time, effort, and societal backlash (Kutlaca et al., 2020), due to violation of social norms (Moss-Racusin, 2014) and can therefore feel risky and alienating to male allies. Our findings run contrary to this discouraging portrait of male allyship by showing that allyship is not only an intrinsically worthwhile endeavor, but also brings direct psychological and social benefits to men. The findings demonstrated that men's allyship positively predicted men's own growth, and in turn, their work–family enrichment. In fact, men's growth from allyship accounted for two-thirds of the total effect of men's allyship on work–family enrichment, suggesting that their sense of personal growth (and not other factors such as women's feelings of inclusion or vitality) may be the primary means by which allyship enriches men's family life. In other words, the benefits that men experience seem to hinge on their own efforts and investment in allyship, and seem to be relatively insulated from the ultimate effectiveness of allyship for women. This is useful information because if men's sole source of rewards was dependent on successfully shifting structures or benefitting women, their choices

regarding allyship behavior might hinge on these external contingencies. These findings are critical considering that research shows that male allyship often is not externally rewarded by the patriarchal institutional systems in which they operate and men may not always be successful in effecting change for women (Warren & Bordoloi, in press).

These findings also contribute to the growing body of positive masculinity research by demonstrating that the expression of caring masculinity through allyship in the workplace can yield personally meaningful benefits for men. From an institutional perspective, future research might examine if encouraging and training male allies provides a viable alternative to the hegemonic masculinity that characterizes male-dominated academic disciplines, since well-intentioned male faculty are likely to experience psychological and relational benefits from such behaviors.

Benefits of Allyship for Women

Ideally, the motivating force behind men's allyship is not primarily driven by the personal benefits that ensue, but rather by goals to bring about equity for their women colleagues. Typically, gender equity is construed in terms of instrumental outcomes to women, such as pay difference or inequitable rewards (e.g., Joshi et al., 2015), and when those inequities are reduced—often as a consequence of considerable effort on the part of women, misperceptions can abound that equity has been achieved and the gains will be sustained (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). When women's psychological and social well-being are recentered as primary areas of focus, it becomes easier to see the costs to women when they have to fight for equity alone, the opportunities for men to serve as allies for women's well-being, and the empathic joy (Morelli et al., 2015) that may accrue to men when their allyship focuses on improving women's well-being. This is likely to be the case when male allyship is rooted in caring masculinities because such men may be more inspired to ensure women's psychological and social well-being than to secure her the corner office (which her male colleague might have).

The present study found that women's perceptions of men's allyship positively predicted women's vitality, both directly and through the mechanism of women's sense of inclusion. That is, women who reported higher levels of allyship from their male colleagues felt more energized at work, and this association was partially accounted for by feeling included. These findings not only point to the interconnections between women's social and psychological well-being, but also highlight the importance of male allyship for women's social and psychological well-being in male-dominated contexts where gender inequities prevail. Simply, women's feelings of isolation and depletion within male-dominated academia can be combated by male allyship. Reducing these negative feelings can be a crucial factor in reducing faculty burnout and turnover among women, and may be an important first step in fixing the “leaky pipeline” that has characterized STEM and other male-dominated disciplines. Further, the presence of male allies may boost women's ability to engage in self-advocacy. Thus, male allyship behaviors rooted in caring masculinities have implications for a ripple effect to increase the momentum toward positive institutional change.

It is also important to consider that feelings of inclusion only partially mediated the link between women's perceptions of men's

allyship and their sense of vitality; there was also a direct link from women's reports of men's allyship to vitality (i.e., independent of the association between inclusion and vitality). Perhaps the mere presence of a known ally is energizing, even if it is a lone voice in an otherwise hostile environment. Alternatively, caring masculinities may enable male allies to provide social capital (e.g., social support, friendship networks in other departments) that buffers the negative impact of sexism on women's vitality in male-dominated departments. Future research should explore such additional mechanisms by which allyship is linked to vitality.

Linking Allyship Perceptions and Outcomes

Despite the many benefits of allyship both to men and women, findings revealed somewhat of a disconnect between men's behaviors and women's experiences. Specifically, men's self-reported allyship was a weak predictor of women's perceptions of their allyship (i.e., there was modest congruence between the two), and men's self-reports of allyship did not directly predict women's feelings of inclusion or vitality. Only when women perceived men as allies did it predict their feelings of inclusion and vitality. These findings underscore the importance of women faculty's *perceptions* of male allies for women's feelings of inclusion and vitality, rather than how men perceive themselves. This finding underscores the importance of focusing on the interactional component of caring masculinities—the psychological and social benefits to men and women—if the goal is to bring about change in gender relations (Warren et al., 2019).

This disconnect also suggests that men's self-reported allyship might not be congruent with women's expectations of allyship, either because (some) men express allyship in ways that are not visible to women, or in ways that do not meet women's needs for inclusion. This presents a double-edged sword for women: On the one hand, it is risky for women to volunteer feedback that might help their male colleagues “hit the target,” particularly if they are unsure about the true intentions of their male colleague (e.g., allyship stemming from caring masculinities vs. male saviorism). On the other hand, not providing corrective feedback perpetuates a status quo whereby men's allyship is not only wasteful but also damaging to the allyship relationship. Further, male faculty may feel that their allyship efforts are being dismissed, which could undermine future allyship.

Next, as mentioned earlier, findings revealed that men's growth was unrelated to women's experiences of inclusion and vitality. Past research shows that when benefactors witness the impact of their contributions, they tend to experience personal growth (Grant, 2012; Rokach, 2017). The absence of this linkage in our study could bode well for male allies because their motivation is not contingent on outcomes achieved for women. On the other hand, male allyship has the ostensible goal of bringing about equity for women, suggesting the need for robust feedback systems by which men become aware of how women are faring as a result of men's allyship. An important empirical question, therefore, is whether—in the presence of strong feedback mechanisms—men's outcomes remain insulated from women's experiences; or, the more likely case, that with strong communication streams, men's outcomes may be more strongly tied to women's experiences, potentially amplifying men's sense of growth when they become aware that their allyship has helped women. Either way, the strength of these feedback processes needs

to be examined, and potentially strengthened, if men are to “hit the target” of effective allyship toward women.

Limitations

These findings should be viewed in light of certain limitations. As mentioned, the sample size is generally considered small by structural equation modeling standards, opening the possibility of unstable parameter estimates. However, Little (2013) notes that samples slightly larger than 100 are generally adequate for single-group models such as ours. Relatedly, our model trimming procedure was largely data-driven, and our modest sample size did not enable us to set aside a hold-out sample to validate the final model. Accordingly, we have labeled findings for which we had no *a priori* hypotheses as “exploratory.” In addition, our data were cross-sectional and do not permit any definitive conclusions regarding the flow of causal processes. Although the mediation pathways we reported represent viable processes consistent with the data, it is possible that alternative specifications (e.g., vitality → inclusion → allyship) are equally plausible or even superior. Future research should examine these associations experimentally and/or longitudinally to clarify causal mechanisms.

We note that our measure of women's other reports of men's allyship consisted of a subset of three items from the longer measure of men's self-reports of allyship. This was necessary in order to include only the items that lent themselves to observer reports of visible behaviors. Nevertheless, the construct was operationalized differently for men and women. Future research should develop other-report measures of allyship that tap as many aspects of the construct as possible, while referencing behaviors visible to others. The study also used cross-sectional data gathered via surveys, which poses risks associated with common method bias. In addition, although the dyadic nature of our methodological approach was a major strength of the study, not all women nominated a male colleague to participate in the study, and it is possible that some women faculty felt unsafe or uncomfortable doing so, potentially skewing our sample toward dyads with tenure and/or with fairly positive collegial relationships. Future research should examine similar questions and afford anonymity (as we did) to such women faculty.

Relatedly, generalizability of our findings is hampered by skew in our sample toward White academics with tenure, and the study was conducted across elite research universities that are characterized by high-pressure (e.g., publish-or-perish) organizational cultures. Accordingly, our results may have limited generalizability to teaching universities, liberal arts schools, community colleges, and to non-White untenured academics more generally. Finally, given the unique cultural and structural features of North American academia, the results may have limited generalizability to institutions in other regions.

Conclusion and Implications

The present study contributes to the advancement of gender equity in male-dominated domains—an area that has been considered a high priority in academia based on enormous investments. This article offers a productive variation (in our view) on gender equity by framing allyship as rooted in positive/caring masculinities. This view may have the potential to move men to support gender equity as an authentic expression of their own positive masculinities.

As such, we envision a pathway to allyship by inviting men to explore positive masculine ways of relating to their women colleagues, thereby displacing toxic forms of masculinity. Although some men may worry that gender equity implies a loss of their power, our findings show that men's allyship is associated with benefits such as personal growth and work–family enrichment.

Given that men continue to be the numeric majority in these environments, male allyship may also serve as a powerful resource in shifting androcentric structures within academia (Warren et al., 2019). Our findings highlight that men's allyship needs to be perceived by women as allyship. Fostering feelings of vitality and inclusion for women faculty require stronger feedback mechanisms that lead men's allyship in productive directions. Even if novice allies fumble (Cha et al., 2020), our study encourages researchers to consider the long-term perspective of creating feedback loops for fostering allyship behaviors rooted in caring masculinities.

As Fox (2010) noted “just as social-organizational environments are structured, so they can continue to be restructured . . . [to] support equity” (p. 1,009). Male allies can “strategically use their position as men who exhibit new or caring masculinities” (Lund et al., 2019, p. 1,391) to bring about change. If academic institutions are committed to ensuring gender equity, inclusion, and vitality, the psychological and social benefits of allyship to women (and men) need to be recentered in the allyship conversation, and positive masculinity needs to be given greater voice.

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