LGBTQ Experiences of Social Identity Threat

Thesis

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By

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Abstract

Experiencing prejudice is a reality faced by members of stigmatized groups in their daily lives; thus, researchers have long been interested in what this experience entails. Prejudice can serve a self-protective role allowing members of stigmatized groups to protect their self-esteem by attributing negative feedback to prejudice. Prejudice can also be detrimental, as the threat of being evaluated according to negative stereotypes about one's group can be threatening for members of stigmatized groups. The current research aimed to examine attributions to prejudice as a potential mechanism which may cause prejudice to be simultaneously protective of one's self-esteem and a threatening experience. Across three studies we examined the relation between attributions to prejudice and both threat and self-esteem. We predicted that attributions to prejudice would lead to increased social identity threat, and that these same attributions to prejudice would be protective of self-esteem. We found consistent evidence for the former prediction in all three studies, and consistent evidence for the latter prediction in Studies 2 and 3. Furthermore, in Study 3 we identified a negative consequence of attributions to prejudice leading to increased social identity threat – social withdrawal. The evidence suggests that while attributions to prejudice can serve a protective role for self-esteem, they have the parallel cost of increasing threat.

Dedication

To my dad, Ted, who instilled in me a love for learning and an endless curiosity and to my mom, Janice, who gave me the social skills to do something with that.

Acknowledgments

They say it takes a village to write a master's (or something like that), and the work presented here is no exception. There are so many people who had a hand in getting me to this spot. I would first like to thank my advisor, Steve Spencer, for his guidance and support at each stage of this project. I would also like to thank the members of my thesis committee, Rich Petty and Duane Wegener, for dedicating their time to reading my thesis and for providing their expert feedback. I am also incredibly grateful to Laura Hildebrand for her invaluable feedback on this project. Her mentorship has gone above and beyond what I could have ever asked of her. Her future grad students will be incredibly privileged to be advised by her.

I next would like to acknowledge all my peers who have helped me immeasurably along the way. Thank you to my cohort-mates, roommates, sometimes collaborators and frequent coconspirators, Karla and Sami. I can't imagine sharing this experience with anyone else. To the rest of my cohort, Regression to the Mean, thank you for always being there for support and for fun. I would like to thank the members of the Spencer lab for their feedback throughout this project. Thank you also to the APL lab for every single hangout in the Nook. Brett, Darcy, Kelly, Keathun – you have brought so much light to our windowless office.

Finally, thank you to my parents for not only entertaining but encouraging every question I've ever asked. It is thanks to both my mom and my dad that I have the confidence and wherewithal to look at the world with wonder. Not only that, but their support at each stage of my academic journey has been unwavering and deeply comforting. I am so fortunate to have been raised by you two, thank you for everything.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

What is it like to interact with someone who is prejudiced towards you? How does that interaction make you feel about yourself? How does it make you feel about that person? In their daily lives, many stigmatized group members have these experiences at both the interpersonal and institutional level. Recently, one such group – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals – has increasingly been the target of discriminatory legislation. Indeed, as of February 2024, the American Civil Liberty Union (ACLU) had identified 437 state-level anti-LGBTQ bills, ranging from free speech bans, to limiting access to healthcare, to bills restricting educational curriculums (*Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures in 2024*, 2024). For example, Florida's infamous "Parental Rights in Education" bill – the so-called "Don't Say Gay" bill, signed into law in 2022 – prevents teachers from teaching students about sexual orientation or gender identity (Johnson, 2020).

These laws are merely one symptom of a broader trend of increasing discrimination against people in the LGBTQ community. Indeed, the FBI reported an increase of 13.8% in reports of hate crimes based on sexual orientation from 2021 to 2022 (Luneau, 2023). One can reasonably infer that many LGBTQ individuals are facing heightened interpersonal discrimination as well. Anti-LGBTQ legislation merely codifies

a societal shift towards permitting attacks on sexual minorities, which emboldens individuals to act on any discriminatory attitudes they may hold towards LGBTQ individuals. We sought to examine what LGBTQ individuals feel in response to interpersonal experiences of prejudice.

The Impact of Prejudice

Interacting with someone who is clearly exhibiting prejudice towards you, or a group to which you belong, is an aversive experience (Allport, 1954; Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Meyer, 2003). One of the fundamental needs shared by all humans is the need to belong, or to have positive, rewarding social connections (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Group stigmatization impedes fulfilling this need, as stigmatized group members experience belonging uncertainty and may be unsure of the strength of their social bonds (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Furthermore, members of stigmatized groups tend to avoid intergroup interactions because they anticipate rejection – a clear threat to belonging (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). Despite the inherent threat of prejudice experiences to belongingness, attributions of prejudice may play a self-protective role for members of stigmatized groups (Crocker & Major, 1989). Specifically, stigmatized group members may protect their self-concept by attributing negative feedback to prejudice. These attributions to prejudice allow stigmatized individuals to avoid making internal attributions when facing negative feedback, thus, protecting their self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989). For example, Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, and Major (1991) found that black participants who believed they were visible to their partner - and therefore believed their partner knew their race – attributed the partner's negative feedback to the partner's

prejudice. This in turn preserved their self-esteem. In contrast, Black participants who believed they were not visible to their partner made no such attributions to prejudice and experienced a drop in their self-esteem following receiving negative feedback from their partner. In this way, being a member of a stigmatized group provides a unique route for shielding one's self-esteem from the harm of receiving negative feedback.

Social identity threat

Although these findings speak to the impact of interacting with someone who is prejudiced on one's self-esteem, they cannot speak to concerns about how one will be treated. Evaluations such as self-esteem, which is an internal evaluation, may not be harmed through prejudicial interactions, but these interactions may be detrimental through external evaluations of both the prejudiced person and the environment in which the interaction takes place. Past work has found that members of stereotyped groups may experience a "threat in the air" when in an environment in which negative stereotypes about their group may be used as a basis of their evaluation (Steele, 1997). This threat in the air occurs only when individuals identify within a domain in which their group is stereotyped – for example, women highly identified with STEM – because identification causes these stereotypes to become self-threatening (Spencer et al., 1999). A threat in the air may cause stigmatized individuals to experience social identity threat, which is the concern that they will be judged merely based on this stereotype (Steele et al., 2002). Social identity threat experiences can cause self-threat without harming one's self-esteem or causing stigmatized individuals to otherwise internalize these stereotypes. Yet, social identity threat can still produce detrimental outcomes. Hall and colleagues (2015) found

that among women in engineering positions, conversations with their male coworkers could trigger feelings of a lack of acceptance (i.e., the threat in the air), which predicted mental exhaustion and burnout. The external evaluations of threat made when interacting with someone prejudiced therefore can be extremely harmful.

Kroeper and colleagues (2024) developed a scale that assesses the extent to which members of disadvantaged social groups have concerns about experiencing social identity threat in specific contexts. In initial studies developing and validating this scale, LGBTQ individuals reported heightened social identity threat concerns across a range of contexts such as on their college campuses; moreover, LGBTQ individuals in this study experienced greatly elevated social identity threat concerns in contexts in which stereotypes towards their community are historically widely held, such as religious institutions. These findings show that that LGBTQ individuals experience a threat in the air in their daily lives. Indeed, when LGBTQ individuals believe that their identity is known by others in a situation, they experience threats to their belonging (Bosson et al., 2012). Furthermore, LGBTQ individuals report being hypervigilant – a state of chronic heightened alertness – for signs of threat in an environment (Rostosky et al., 2022). As a result of anticipating negative outcomes associated with their identities, LGBTQ individuals experience near constant social identity threat.

Present Research

The current research aims to identify a mechanism which may cause the different outcomes for internal and external evaluations following prejudiced experiences. Specifically, we investigated attributions to prejudice, the extent to which one perceives

someone else's treatment of them to be due to the other person's prejudices, as a mechanism (Crocker & Major, 1989). We conducted three studies examining whether making attributions to prejudice causes interacting with prejudiced others to both protect self-esteem and increase social identity threat concerns. Study 1 investigated attributions to prejudice as a potential mediator causing prejudiced interactions to increase social identity threat concerns. Participants imagined partaking in an interaction in which prejudice was present or absent. We measured both attributions to prejudice and social identity threats to examine this process. In study 2, we attempted to demonstrate that attributions to prejudice concurrently moderate the impact of experiencing prejudice on self-esteem (i.e. serve a self-protective role) and lead to increased social identity threat. We once again had participants imagine taking part in scenarios that were prejudiced or not and subsequently measured attributions to prejudice, social identity threat concerns, and self-esteem. Finally, study 3 examined a potential negative outcome associated with increased social identity threat, despite self-esteem being protected. To do so, we measured behavioral intentions to withdraw socially following the imagined interaction. We hypothesized that attributions to prejudice will protect the self-esteem of LGBTQ individuals, in line with past research (Crocker et al., 1991), yet will have the parallel cost of increasing their social identity threat concerns regardless – an effect new to the present research. In study 1, we predict that the relation between experiencing prejudice and increased social identity threat concerns be explained by the effect of experiencing prejudice on attributions to prejudice. In study 2, we predict that we will find evidence for this same psychological process, in addition to finding that attributions to prejudice

negate the effect of experiencing prejudice on self-esteem. In the presence of prejudice, greater attributions to prejudice should be positively related to self-esteem. Finally, in study 3 we predict that experiencing prejudice will increase behavioral intentions to socially withdraw and this effect will be explained by attributions to prejudice and social identity threat concerns. Thus, we hypothesize that attributions to prejudice will buffer the negative effect of interacting with a prejudiced other on self-esteem. Yet, new to the present research, we propose that attributions to prejudice come with a parallel cost: specifically, increased attributions to prejudice will increase social identity threat, even without affecting self-esteem.

Chapter 2. Study 1

The first study aimed to establish whether attributions to prejudice are related to social identity threat concerns. Participants imagined they were interacting with another person. We varied the extent to which the imagined interaction partner expressed prejudice towards LGBTQ individuals. We then examined the extent to which participants attributed the interaction partner's behavior to prejudice and the level of social identity threat concerns they reported experiencing. We predicted that when imagining a prejudiced interaction, participants would make greater attributions to prejudice and experience heightened social identity threat concerns. Furthermore, we hypothesized that the effect of interacting with a prejudiced person on social identity threat would be mediated by attributions to prejudice.

Method

Participants

Men and women (N = 267; 58.8% women) who identified as members of the LGBTQ community and reported same-sex attraction were recruited via prolific (17.1% gay, 9.5% lesbian, 68.6% bi/pansexual, 4.4% queer, .4% other). Participants were additionally screened to ensure that they identified as either a man or a woman (including trans men and women). Non-binary or otherwise gender nonconforming individuals were

excluded from this study as the manipulation made specific reference to gender using binary pronouns.

Procedure

All participants began the study by completing demographic information regarding their gender, sexuality, and dating preferences. Participants received one of three possible scripted interactions (i.e. supportive, ambiguous, or prejudiced) in which they were to imagine taking part. Each interaction was with Alex, an individual with whom they shared a mutual friend named Jess. The scripts were identical until a line in which the participant is revealed to be in a same-sex relationship, at which point Alex responds supportively (asks to meet their partner), ambiguously (confirms they heard correctly), or prejudiced (calls their relationship "sinful"). The scripts were matched such that the gender pronoun which the participant uses to refer to their partner in the dialogue always indicated a same-sex relationship.

After completing the imagined interaction, participants first completed an open-ended question regarding Alex's response, followed by a measure of social identity threat concerns and attributions to prejudice presented in a random order.

Measures

Social Identity Threat Concerns Inventory. Social identity threat concerns was measured using a scale created by Kroeper and colleagues (2024) which contains 23 items, each of which corresponds to a specific indicator of social identity threat (e.g. "*When interacting with Alex, I would not be sure that I would have equal access to events and activities because of my sexual orientation*" and "*When interacting with Alex, I*

would wonder whether they might dismiss my sexual orientation as a choice rather than who I am"). This scale is sensitive to different scenarios and has been validated for use with LGBTQ individuals. For this study's purposes, 14 questions were added to the original SITC to assess feelings of being understood and able to self-disclose as these two dimensions may be uniquely related to threat experiences among LGBTQ populations. All items were rated on a scale from 1 (not at all true of me) to 9 (extremely true of me). We averaged across all 37 items for each participant ($\alpha = .982$, $M = 4.63$, $SD = 2.14$).

Attributions to Prejudice. Attributions to prejudice were measured in two ways. The first prompted participants to provide open-ended responses to the question of why they believe Alex responded to their partner's pronouns in the manor that they did. Participants were asked to write 1-2 sentences providing their explanation for Alex's behavior.

The second attribution measure consisted of nine questions asking rate their agreement with a series of statements regarding the imagined interaction (e.g. "Alex's response was due to her own discomfort with my sexuality" and "Alex's response was because they don't approve of my sexuality") on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Tests of reliability revealed two items (e.g. "*Alex's treatment of me was my fault"* and "*I am responsible for how Alex responded"*) which reduced the overall reliability of the scale. We conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine whether these items should be included in the scale for this study. We followed the recommendations for EFA outlined in Fabrigar et al., (1999). The EFA revealed two underlying factors which explained 76.08% of the variance. The seven items which

produced the highest reliability loaded onto one factor, while the two items that reduced reliability loaded onto a different factor; therefore, we excluded these two problematic items from the scale, as they appear to measure a construct independent of the rest of the scale. We averaged across the seven remaining items in the scale ($\alpha = .95$, $M = 4.04$, $SD = 2.02$). See table 1 for interitem correlations.

Table 1. Inter-measure correlations for Study 1

		Attributions to Prejudice	SITC
Attributions to Prejudice	Pearson Correlation	1	.798**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	246	245
SITC	Pearson Correlation	.798**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	245	245

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results and Discussion

Prior to conducting analyses, participants who left the study before they were randomized to a condition (n = 11) were removed from the sample, leaving a total of 255 participants. A post-hoc sensitivity analysis found that we will be able to reliably detect an effect size of η_p^2 = .0008 at 80% power. Then, condition was effects-coded such that the values –1, 0, and +1 corresponded to the prejudiced condition (n = 85), ambiguous condition (n = 84), and supportive condition (n = 86) respectively.

Attributions to Prejudice

We first examined attributions to prejudice across conditions. The levels of attributions to prejudice differed across each of the 3 conditions, $F(2, 243) = 270.97$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .69$. To determine where these specific differences exist, we conducted a series of follow-up independent t-tests comparing each of the groups to each other. In line with our predictions, the people in the prejudiced condition (M = 6.23, SD = 1.09) made greater attributions to prejudice compared to both the people in the supportive condition (M = 2.19, SD = 1.06, $F(1, 246) = 515.88$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .78$) and the ambiguous condition (M = 3.64, SD = 1.22, $F(1, 246) = 216.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .56$). Furthermore, the people in the ambiguous condition made greater attributions to prejudice compared to the people in the supportive condition, $F(1, 246) = 68.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .29$, (see Figure 1).

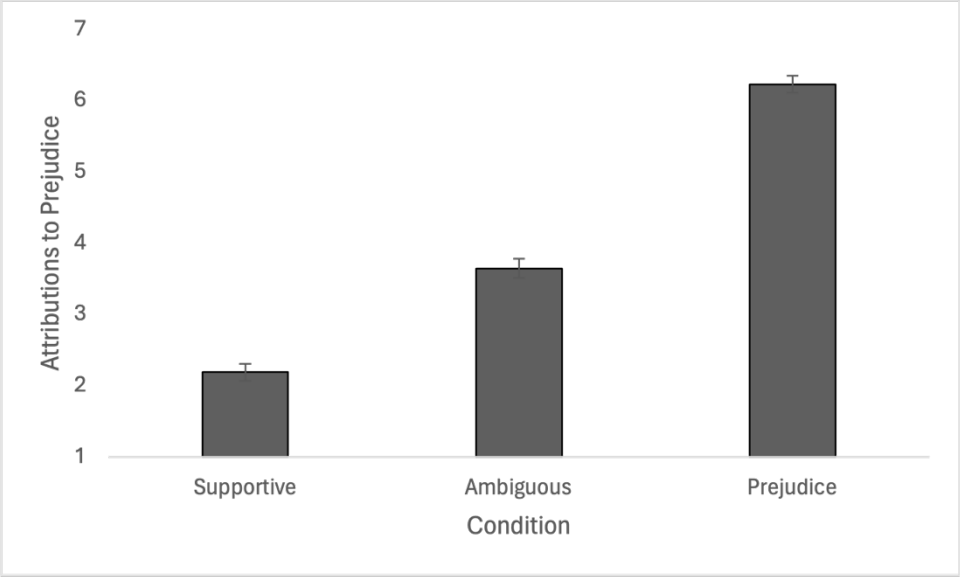

Figure 1. Attributions to prejudice differed across the three dialogue conditions in Study 1.

SITC Inventory.

We then looked at social identity threat concerns reported by participants across the 3 conditions. We found that participants reported different levels of concerns in each of the 3 conditions, $F(2,24) = 103.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .46$. Once again, these differences supported our predictions as the prejudiced condition reported heightened SITC ($M = 6.43$, $SD = 1.73$) relative to both the supportive ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.38$, $F(1, 245) = 206.38$ $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .57$) and ambiguous conditions ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.61$, $F(1, 245) = 60.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$). The ambiguous condition reported heightened SITC relative to the supportive condition, $F(1, 245) = 42.69$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$, (see Figure 2).

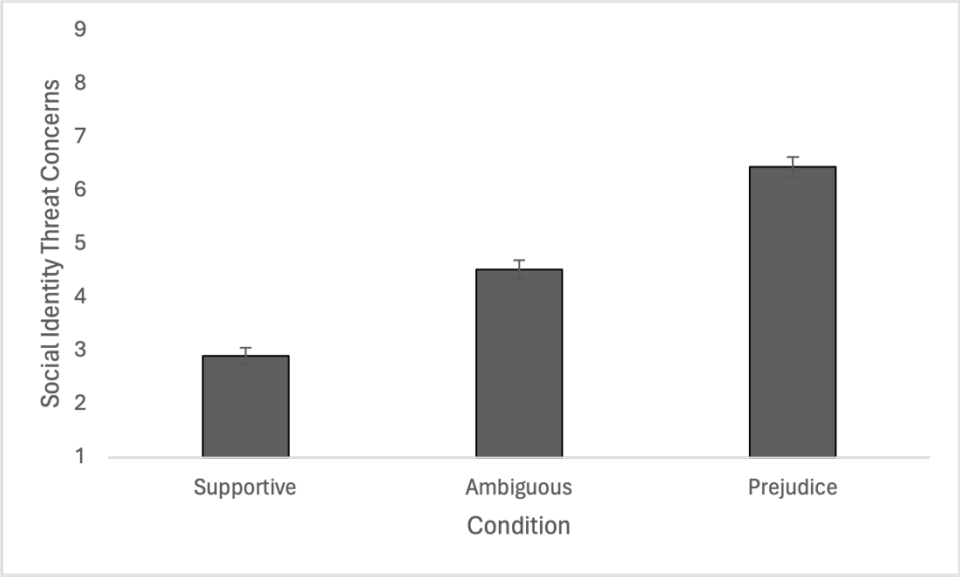

Figure 2. Social identity threat differed across the three conditions in Study 1.

Mediation.

Next, we tested our prediction that condition increases SITC through attributions to prejudice. To do so, we conducted a mediational analysis looking at whether attributions to prejudice mediated the relation between condition and SITC. We mean-centered attributions to prejudice and SITC prior to conducting this analysis. In line with our predictions, we found a significant indirect effect of condition on SITC through attributions to prejudice, (*Est.* = -1.59, 95% CI [-1.93, -1.23]; see Figure 3).

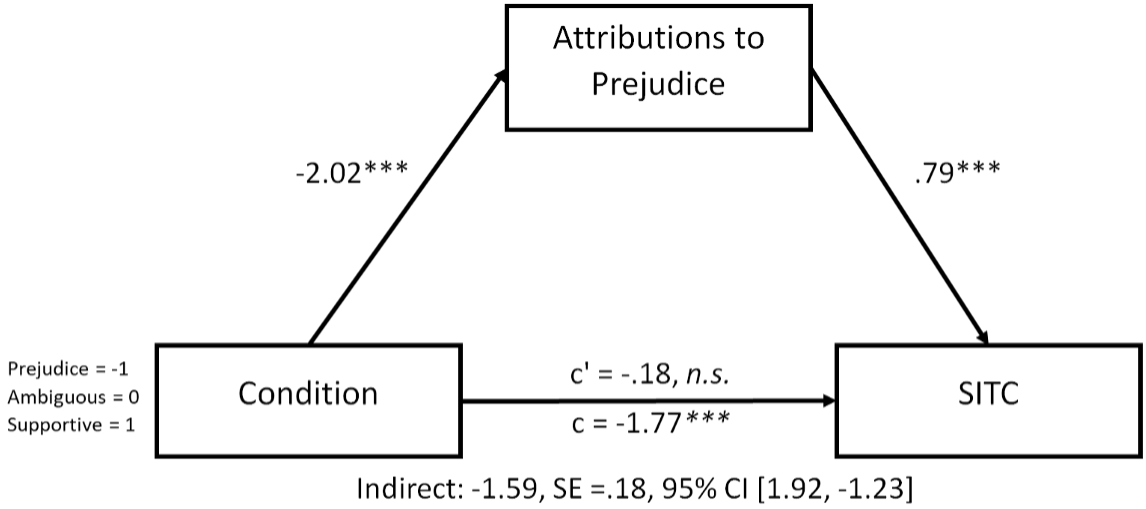

Figure 3. A significant indirect effect indicates that attributions to prejudice mediates the relationship between condition and social identity threat in Study 1. Process model 4 was used for this analysis.

Study 1 established the predicted relation between attributions to prejudice and SITC and created an effective manipulation to test this relation. Participants in the prejudiced condition experienced elevated attributions to prejudice, which then led to increased SITC. In Study 2, we built on Study 1 by examining the impact of attributions to prejudice on self-esteem and social identity threat.

Chapter 3. Study 2

Study 2 aimed to distinguish between the effect of attributions to prejudice on SITC and self-esteem. To do so, we attempted to replicate (a) the effect of attributions on SITC, as found in Study 1 and (b) the protective effect of attributions to prejudice on self-esteem. We predicted that attributions to prejudice would protect self-esteem when interacting with a prejudiced individual, but that these same attributions to prejudice would lead to an increase in SITC, such that increases in attributions to prejudice would be associated with increases in SITC.

Method

Participants

A total of 187 participants were recruited for this study on Prolific. After removing participants who quit the study before being randomized to a condition (n = 38), 149 participants were included in analyses. Participants included only men and women (55% women); individuals who identified as nonbinary were screened out of this study as the manipulation refers to gendered pronouns. All participants identified as members of the LGBTQ population and self-reported same-gender attraction (21.5% gay, 9.4% lesbian, 67.1% bi/pansexual, 1.3% queer, .7% other).

Procedure

The procedure remained largely the same as Study 1 with the exception these changes. First, the ambiguous dialogue condition was changed to be more neutral. In this version of the interaction, Alex has no reaction to the mention of a same-sex partner; rather, Alex continues to conversation unrelated to the gender of the individual's "partner". This change was made to ensure that the ambiguous condition was not unintentionally being interpreted as hostile.

Second, Study 2 included a self-esteem measure to assess whether attributions to prejudice following the imagined prejudiced interaction with Alex were protective of self-esteem. The attributional ambiguity, self-esteem, and social identity threat scales were presented in a randomized order.

Measures

Attributions to Prejudice Scale. Participants responded to the same measure used in study 1 (α =.95, M = 3.55, SD = 2.09).

Social Identity Threat Concerns. Participants responded to the same measure used in study 1 (α = .98, M = 4.06, SD = 2.05).

State Self-Esteem Scale. The State Self-Esteem Scale was used to assess participant's feelings of self-esteem following the imagined interaction. Participants reported their actual feelings of self-esteem in that moment, not what they imagined their self-esteem would be following this interaction. The State Self-Esteem Scale has 20-items and 3 subscales: performance, appearance, and social self-esteem. The appearance subscale was not relevant to this study; therefore, we did not include the questions from

it. Participants rated how true each of the remaining 14 items (e.g. "*I feel confident that I understand things," and "I feel concerned about the impression I am making"*) felt of them from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Extremely). We averaged across all 14 items (α = .94, *M* = 3.70, *SD* = .98). See table 2 for correlations between each of the measures.

Table 2. Inter-Measure correlations for Study 2

		Attributions to Prejudice	SITC	State Self-Esteem
Attributions to Prejudice	Pearson Correlation	1	.718**	.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.175
	N	147	147	147
SITC	Pearson Correlation	.718**	1	-.178*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		.031
	N	147	147	147
State Self-Esteem	Pearson Correlation	.113	-.178*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.175	.031	
	N	147	147	148

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results and discussion

We ran three separate one-way ANOVAs looking at the effect of condition on attributions to prejudice, SITC, and self-esteem. We also ran the same mediation as Study 1 looking at whether the relation between condition and SITC was mediated by attributions to prejudice. Finally, we ran a moderation looking at whether attributions to prejudice moderate the relation between condition and self-esteem. We began by effect coding the condition such that the prejudice condition (n = 48) was coded as –1, the ambiguous condition (n =52) was coded as 0, and the supportive condition (n = 49) was coded as +1.

Attributions to Prejudice.

We began by examining the effect of condition on attributions to prejudice. The effect was significant, $F(2, 144) = 157.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .67$. As predicted, participants in the prejudiced condition ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.33$) made greater attributions to prejudice compared to both the participants in the ambiguous condition ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.20$, $F(1, 147) = 200.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .64$) and the supportive condition ($M = 2.08$, $SD = .98$, $F(1, 147) = 268.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .74$). The attributions to prejudice made by the participants in the ambiguous condition and supportive condition were also different from one another, $F(1,147) = 5.33$, $p = .022$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, (see Figure 4). By changing our ambiguous condition to be more neutral, we successfully reduced the extent to which participants attributed this interaction to prejudice.

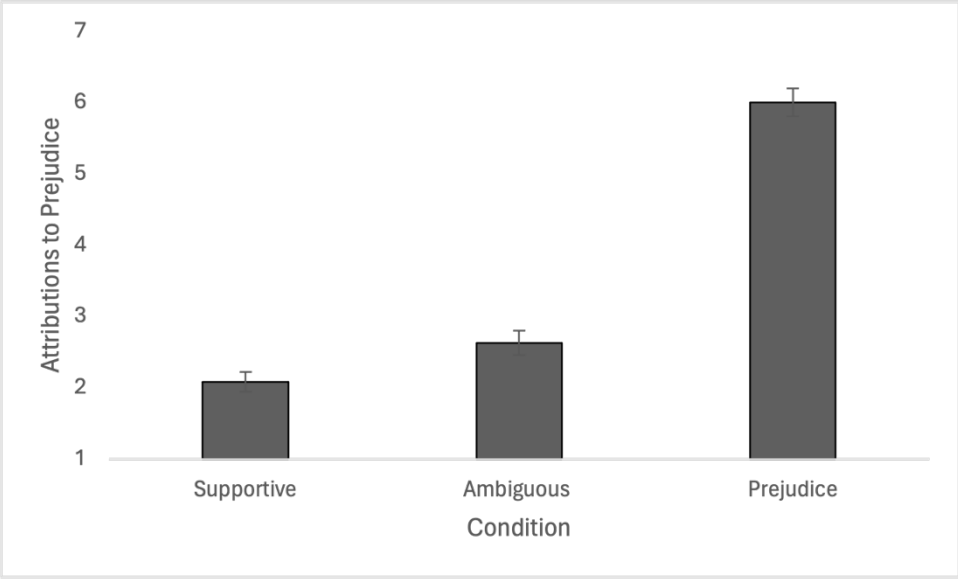

Figure 4. Attributions to prejudice differed across the conditions in Study 2.

Social Identity Threat Concerns.

We then examined the effect of condition on SITC. Once again, the effect was significant, $F(2, 144) = 37.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .34$. In line with our expectations, participants in the prejudiced condition ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 1.79$) reported higher SITC than those in both the participants in the ambiguous condition ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.79$, $F(1, 147) = 49.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .31$) and the supportive condition ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.42$, $F(1, 147) = 62.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .42$). Participants in the ambiguous condition and supportive condition reported similar levels of SITC, $F(1, 147) < 1$, (see Figure 5).

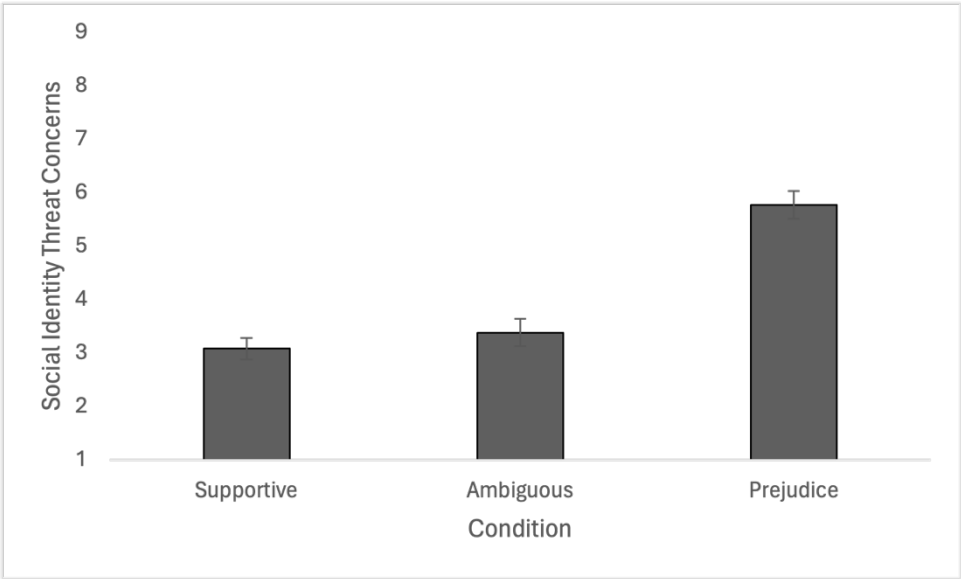

Figure 5. Social identity concerns differed across conditions Study 2.

After this, we wanted to determine whether attributions to prejudice led to the increases in SITC, replicating the results from Study 1. We mean centered attributions to prejudice and SITC then conducted a mediation analysis looking at whether attributions to prejudice mediates the relation between condition and SITC. As predicted, condition affected SITC through attributions to prejudice (*Est.* = -1.43, 95% CI [-1.79, -1.08]; see Figure 6). Interacting with a prejudiced individual increased attributions to prejudice which predicted increased feelings of threat.

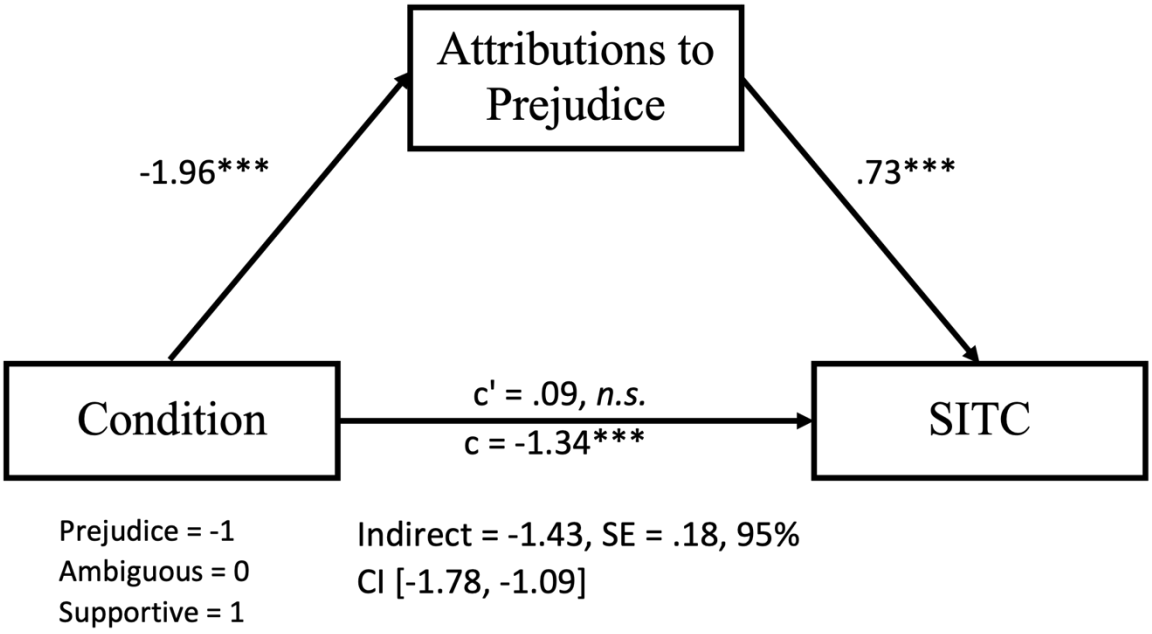

Figure 6. A significant indirect effect indicates that the effect of condition on social identity threat concerns is mediated by attributions to prejudice in Study 2. Process model 4 was used to conduct this analysis.

State Self-Esteem.

We then tested the effect of condition on state self-esteem. We did not expect to find any differences, as we predicted that attributions to prejudice would protect self-esteem in the prejudiced condition. In line with this, we found no effect of condition, $F(2, 144) = 2.67$, $p = .073$, (see Figure 7).

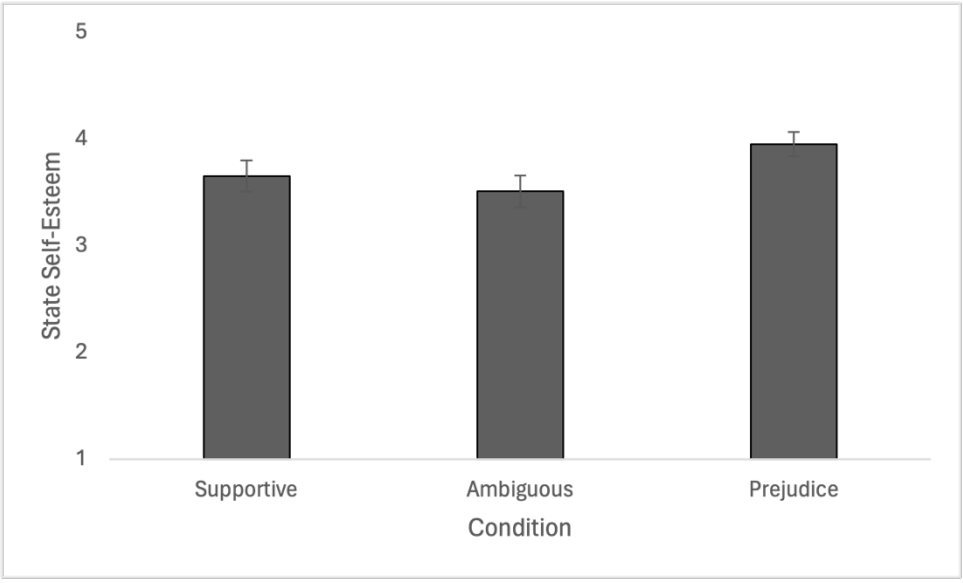

Figure 7. Self-esteem did not differ across the three conditions in Study 2.

Finally, we wanted to look at whether the influence of condition on state self-esteem might be different at different levels of attributions to prejudice. We predicted that attributions to prejudice would play a self-protective role for self-esteem when facing prejudice; therefore, we expected attributions to prejudice to be positively related to self-esteem in the presence of prejudice, but we expected no relation between attributions to prejudice and self-esteem when not in the presence of prejudice. We examined the influence of condition on self-esteem at relatively high (+1 SD) and relatively low (-1 SD) levels of attributions to prejudice. We found a significant interaction indicating that the relation between condition and self-esteem was different at different levels of attributions to prejudice ($\beta = -.22$, $t(143) = -3.21$, $p = .002$). Indeed, we found that at relatively low levels of attributions to prejudice, condition had no influence on self-esteem; however, at high levels of attributions to prejudice, self-esteem was higher in the prejudiced condition relative to the other conditions ($\beta = -.67$, $t(143) = -2.91$, $p = .004$), (see Figure 8). The interaction explains 6.6% of the variance in self-esteem ($\Delta R^2 = .066$).

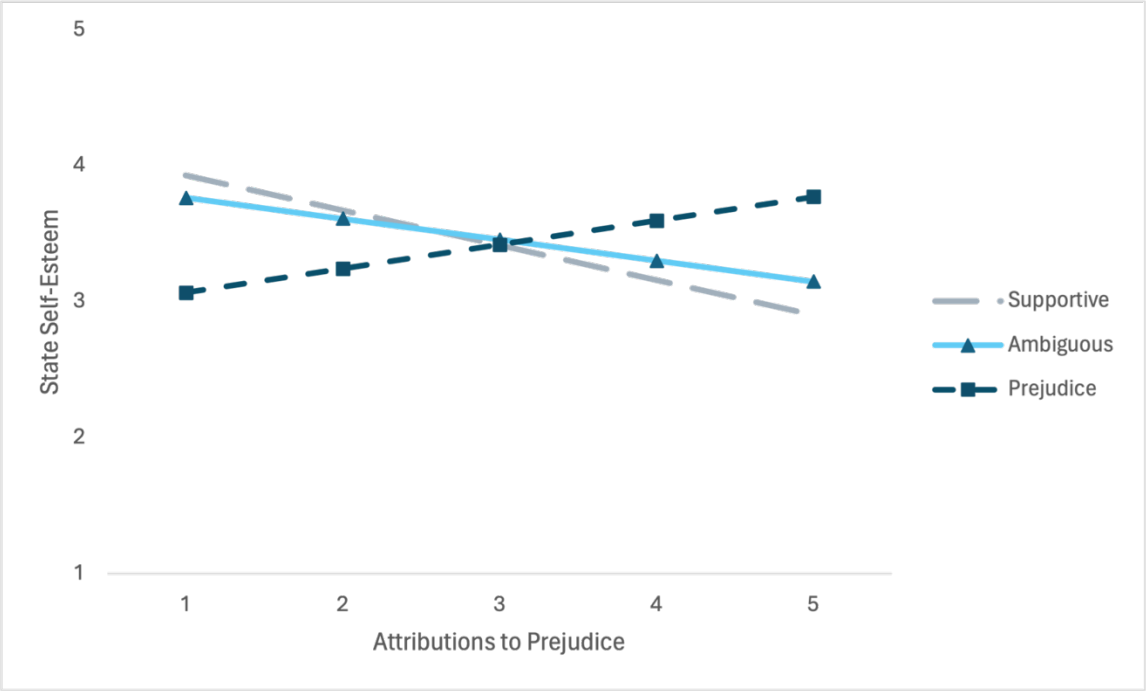

Figure 8. Attributions to prejudice mediate the relationship between condition and self-esteem. When attributions to prejudice are high, self-esteem differs between conditions. Process model 1 was used for this analysis.

In study 2, we demonstrated the different effect of attributions to prejudice on SITC and self-esteem. As in study 1, the prejudice condition increased attributions to prejudice which then increased SITC. In contrast, participants experienced an increase in self-esteem in the prejudiced condition when attributions to prejudice were high. Although attributions to prejudice increased self-esteem, such attributions still created a sense of threat that may well have negative consequences.

Chapter 4. Study 3

Study 3 aimed to demonstrate the existence of potential negative consequences of increased SITC in response to attributions to prejudice that exist despite self-esteem being protected. The specific downstream effect assessed was social withdrawal. We predicted that participants in the prejudiced condition would report greater behavioral intentions to withdraw, but participants in the ambiguous or supportive conditions would not. Furthermore, we predicted that the relation between interaction condition and intentions to withdraw would be mediated by attributions to prejudice and SITC.

Method

Participants

We recruited 220 LGBTQ participants. Participants who left the experiment before being assigned to a condition (n = 9) were removed leaving a total of 211 in the sample (55% women, 22.3% gay, 11.4% lesbian, 60.1% bi/pansexual, 4.2% queer, .9% other). We again excluded non-binary individuals.

Procedure

Participants took part in this study online via Prolific. The procedure remained the same as Study 2, with the addition of a measure of withdrawal. Participants imagined taking part in one of the three possible interactions (e.g. prejudiced, ambiguous, or supportive) after which they completed the attributions to prejudice scale, the SITC

inventory, the state self-esteem scale, and the withdrawal measure. Measures were presented in a randomized order for each participant.

Measures

Attributions to Prejudice Scale. Participants responded to the same measure used in Studies 1 and 2 (α =.96, *M* = 3.63, *SD* = 2.23).

Social Identity Threat Concerns Inventory. Participants responded to the same measure used in Studies 1 and 2 (α = .98, *M* = 4.10, *SD* = 2.17).

State Self-Esteem Scale. Participants responded to the same measure used in Study 2 (α = .95, *M* = 3.74, *SD* = .93).

Social Withdrawal Measures. The measure of withdrawal had participants report their intentions to interact with Jen and/or Alex (the hypothetical friend and interaction partner respectively) in the future. This scale included nine items, five of which participants rated the likelihood of from 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely) (e.g. "*If Jen is having a party and you know Alex will be there, how likely will you be to go?*") and four of which participants rated their agreement with from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (e.g. "*Following this interaction, I would be less willing to spend time with Jen*"). Six items were reverse scored such that higher values indicate greater intention to withdraw. Reliability analysis revealed one item ("*If Jen is having a party and you know Alex will be there, how likely is it that this will influence your decision to go?"*) which decreased reliability. An EFA was conducted to examine the underlying structure of the scale (Fabrigar, 1999). Two underlying factors, correlated (*r* = .54), explained 64.01% of the variance. Six items loaded onto one factor while five items loaded another factor

(three items loaded onto both). The item which reduced reliability did not load onto either factor; therefore, we excluded it from analyses. We summed across the remaining 8 items to get our measure of withdrawal ($\alpha = .90$, $M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.38$). See table 3 for correlations between each of the measures.

Table 3. Inter-measure correlations for Study 3

		Attributions to Prejudice	SITC	State Self-Esteem	Intention to Withdraw
Attributions to Prejudice	Pearson Correlation	1	.872**	-.154*	.709**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.030	<.001
	N	201	199	200	201
SITC	Pearson Correlation	.872**	1	-.307**	.683**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	199	201	199	200
State Self-Esteem	Pearson Correlation	-.154*	-.307**	1	-.215**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	<.001		.002
	N	200	199	201	201
Intention to Withdraw	Pearson Correlation	.709**	.683**	-.215**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.002	
	N	201	200	201	204

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Results and discussion

We ran four separate one-way ANOVAs looking at the effect of condition on attributions to prejudice, SITC, state self-esteem, and intention to socially withdraw. We then ran a mediation looking at whether attributions to prejudice mediated the effect of condition on SITC as well as a moderation looking at whether attributions to prejudice moderate the effect of condition on self-esteem. Finally, we conducted a serial mediation looking at whether attributions to prejudice and SITC serially mediate the relation between condition and behavioral intentions to withdraw. We again began by effects-coding condition such that the prejudiced, ambiguous, and supportive conditions had values of +1, 0, and -1 respectively.

Attributions to Prejudice.

We began by examining the effect of condition on attributions to prejudice. We found a significant effect, $F(2, 198) = 428.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .81$. Participants in the prejudiced condition made greater attributions to prejudice ($M = 6.43$, $SD = .75$) compared to both participants in the ambiguous ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.14$, $F(1, 201) = 593.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .82$) and the supportive ($M = 2.06$, $SD = .98$, $F(1, 201) = 685.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .86$) conditions. There was only weak evidence for the difference between the ambiguous and supportive conditions in this study, $F(1, 201) = 2.96$, $p = .09$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$ (see Figure 9).

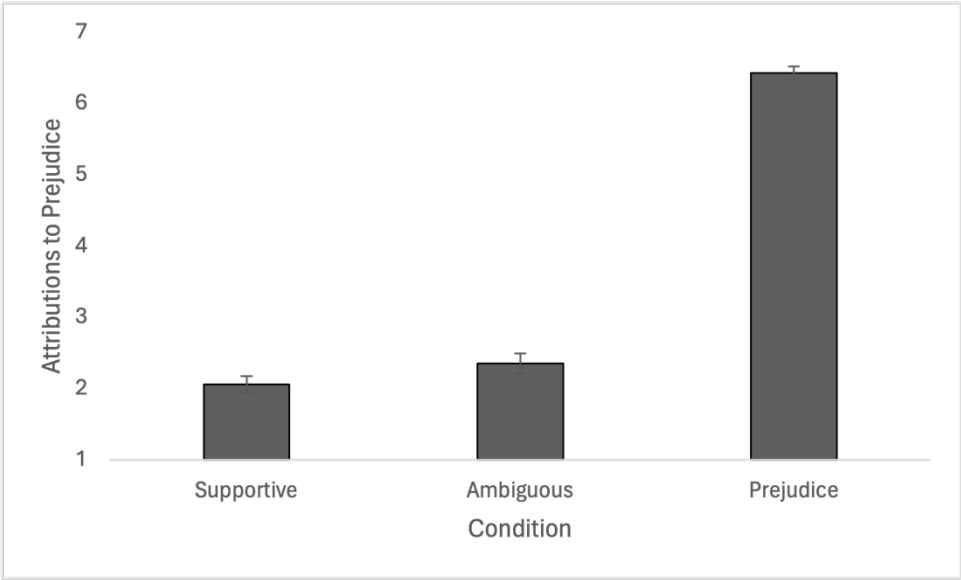

Figure 9. Attributions to prejudice differed across the three conditions in Study 3.

Social Identity Threat Concerns.

Next, we examined the effect of condition on SITC. We found a significant effect, $F(2, 198) = 143.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .59$. Participants in the prejudiced conditions experienced greater SITC ($M = 6.45$, $SD = 1.42$) compared to both those in the ambiguous ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.48$, $F(1, 201) = 203.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .58$) and the supportive ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.25$, $F(1, 201) = 227.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .65$) conditions. No difference in SITC existed between the participants in the ambiguous and those in the supportive conditions, $F(1, 201) = 1.82$ (see Figure 10).

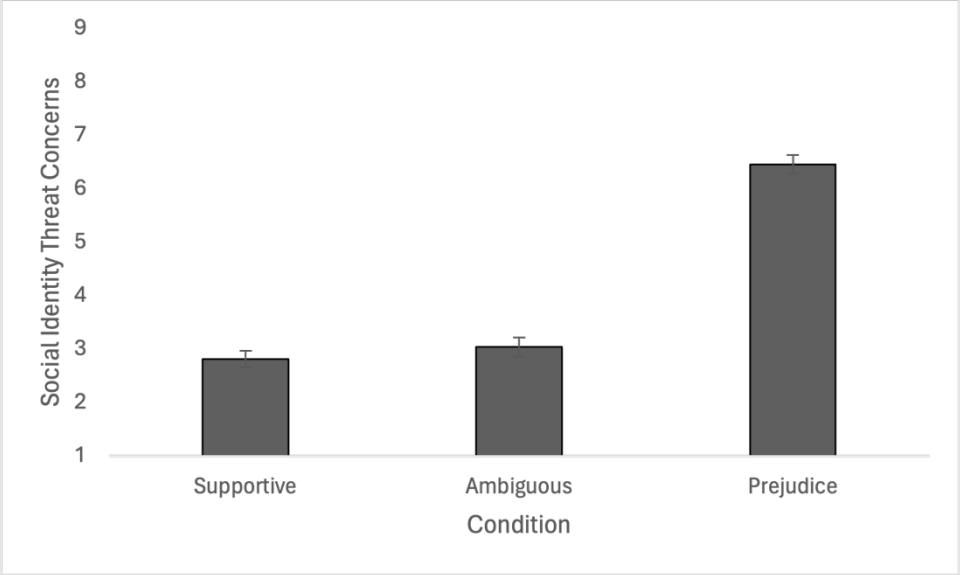

Figure 10. Social identity threat concerns differed across the three conditions in Study 3.

We then examined whether attributions to prejudice mediated the effect of condition on SITC. We first mean centered the SITC and attribution to prejudice measures. As in the previous two studies, we found that the effect of condition acted through SITC such that increased attributions to prejudice in the prejudiced condition led to heightened SITC, (*Est.* = -1.92, 95% CI [-2.20, -1.66], see Figure 11).

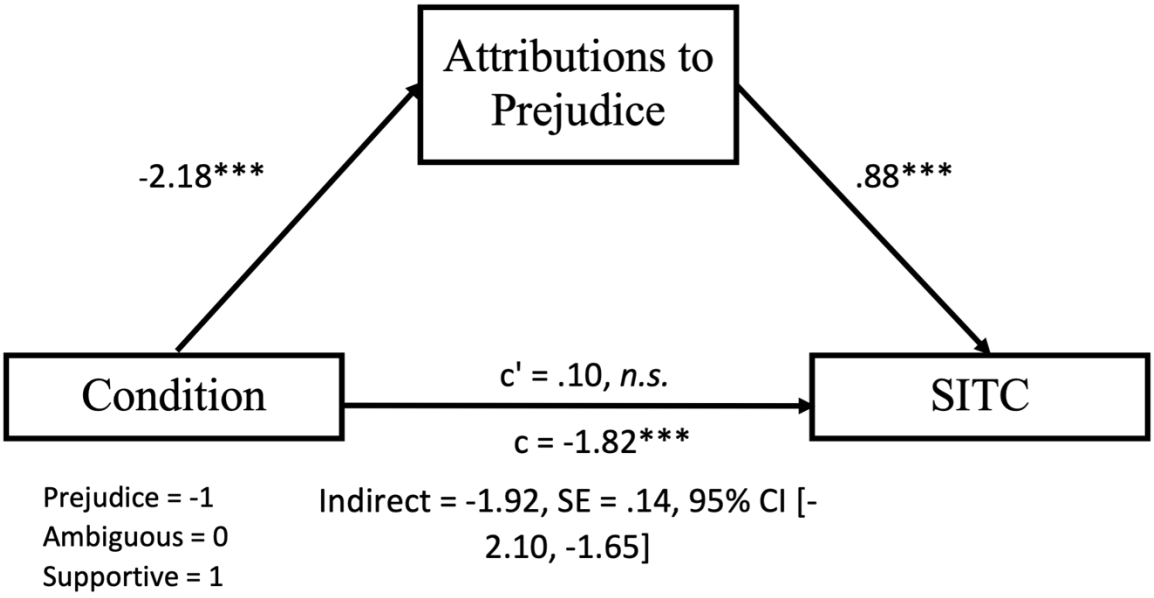

Figure 11. A significant indirect effect demonstrates that the relationship between condition and social identity threat concerns is mediated by attributions to prejudice in Study 3. Process model 4 was used for this analysis.

State Self-Esteem.

We examined the effect of condition on state self-esteem. Once again, we found no evidence of an effect based on condition, $F(2, 198) = .117$, $p = .89$, (see Figure 12).

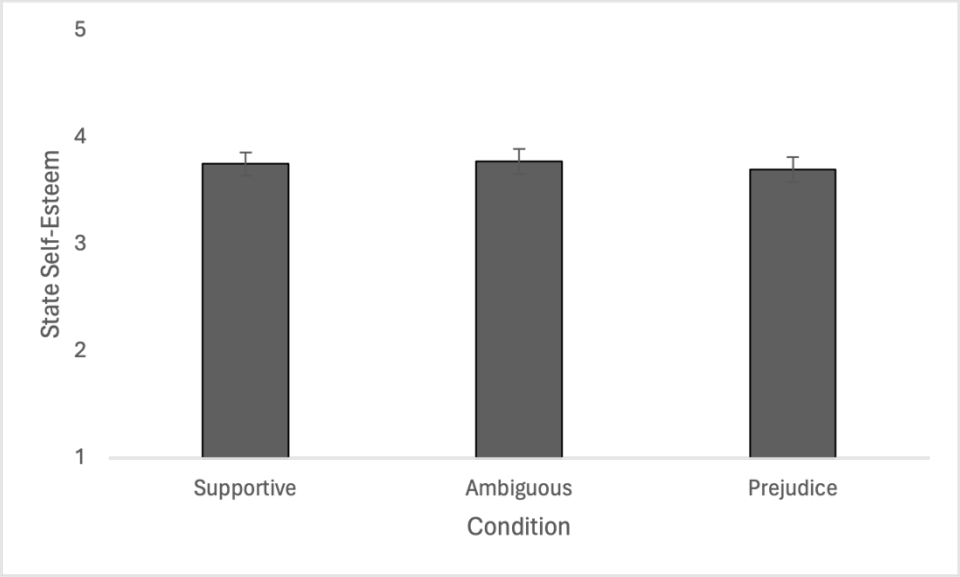

Figure 12. Self-esteem did not differ across the three conditions in Study 3.

We then examined whether the relation between condition and state self-esteem differed at relatively high (+1 SD) and relatively low (-1 SD) levels of attributions to prejudice with the goal of replicating the moderated relation found in Study 2. We again predicted that in the presence of prejudice, relatively high attributions to prejudice would increase self-esteem; however, when prejudice is absent, we expected there to be no relation between attributions to prejudice and self-esteem. There was a difference in the relation between condition and self-esteem at relatively high (+1 SD) versus low attributions to prejudice (-1 SD), (β = -.169, $t(196) = -2.92$, $p = .002$). As in study 2, we found that at relatively low levels of attributions to prejudice, condition did not relate to self-esteem. At relatively high levels of attributions to prejudice, however, condition was related to self-esteem such that self-esteem was higher in the prejudiced condition (β = -.80, $t(143) = -3.98$, $p < .001$). (see Figure 13). The interaction explains 3.9% of the variance ($\Delta R^2 = .039$).

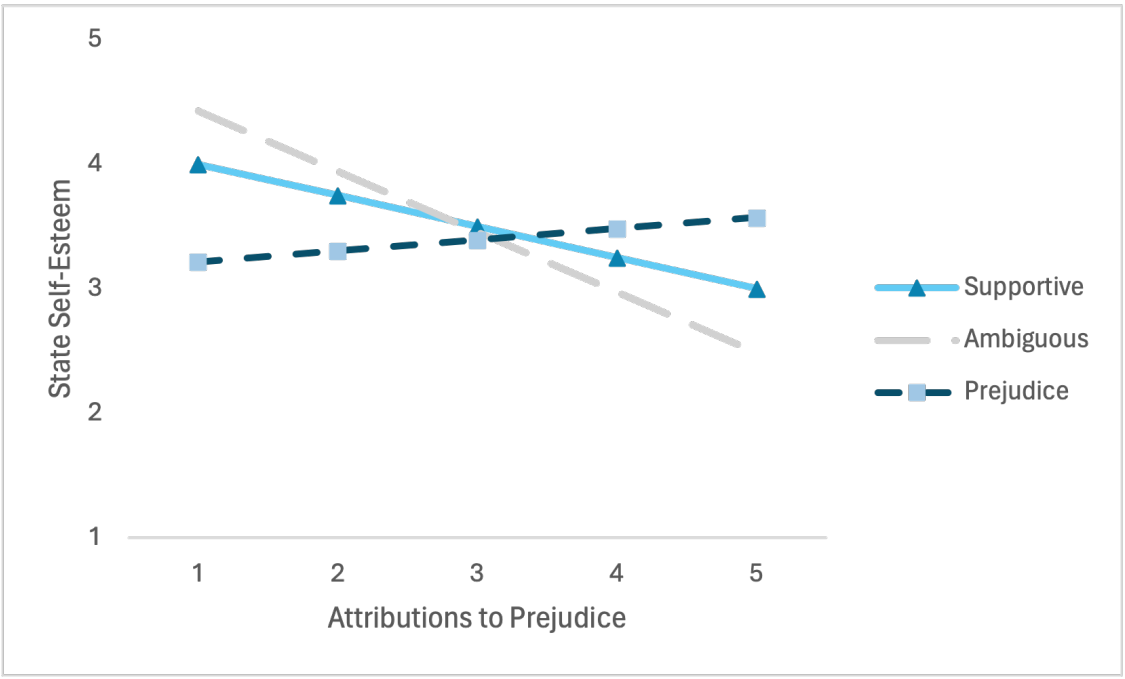

Figure 13. Attributions to prejudice mediate the relationship between condition and self-esteem. When attributions to prejudice are high, self-esteem differs between conditions. Process model 1 was used for this analysis.

Social Withdrawal.

Next, we looked at the effect of condition on behavioral intentions to withdraw. We predicted that individuals in the prejudiced condition would report a greater intention to withdraw compared to the participants in the ambiguous and supportive conditions. Indeed, we found a significant effect of condition, $F(2, 201) = 68.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .41$. As predicted, this difference was driven by higher intentions to withdraw among participants in the prejudice condition ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.30$) compared to participants in the ambiguous ($M = 2.20$, $SD = .94$, $F(1, 204) = 103.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .41$) and supportive conditions ($M = 2.22$, $SD = .93$, $F(1, 204) = 102.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .41$). We found no evidence of differences in likelihood of withdrawing between participants in the ambiguous and supportive conditions, $F(1, 204) < 1$, (see Figure 14).

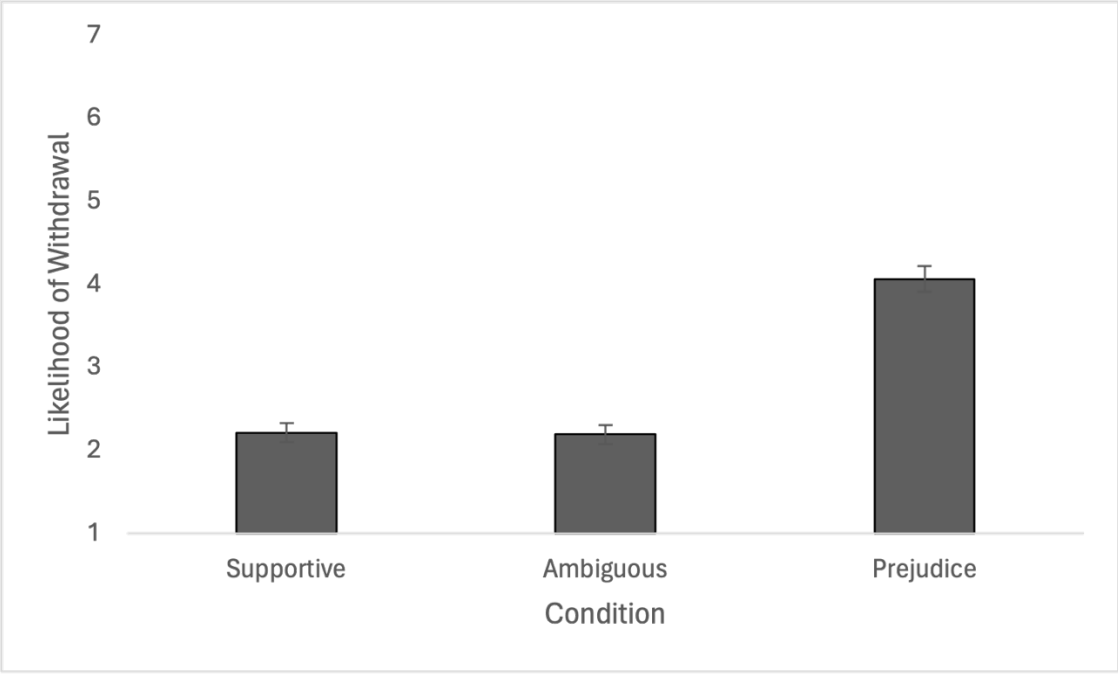

Figure 14. The reported likelihood of withdrawal differed across the three conditions in Study 3.

Finally, we looked at the hypothesized relation between condition, attributions to prejudice, SITC, and likelihood of withdrawing. We predicted that condition would predict attributions to prejudice and that attribution to prejudice would predict SITC and that this relation would account for the effect of condition on intentions to withdraw. As predicted, a serial mediation analysis revealed that condition led to increased intentions to socially withdraw through attributions to prejudice and SITC, (*Est.* = -.33, 95% CI [-.66, -03]; see Figure 15).

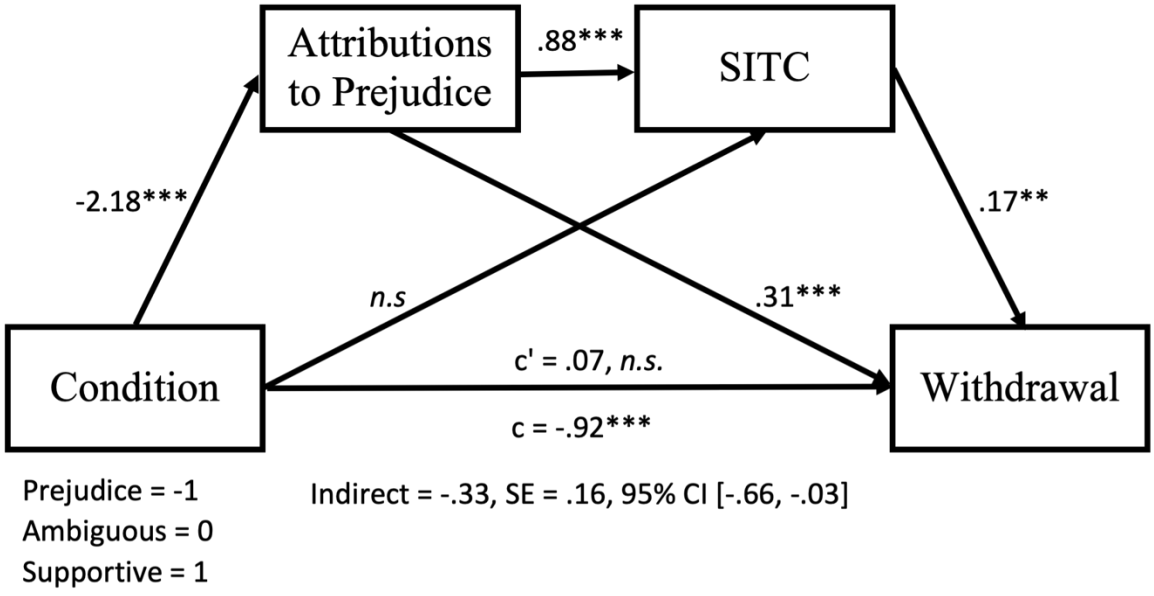

Figure 15. Serial mediation analysis revealed an indirect effect such that condition impacts likelihood of withdrawal through attributions to prejudice and social identity threat concerns in Study 3. Process model 6 was used for this analysis.

This study replicated and extended the findings of Study 2. First, we demonstrated that increased attributions to prejudice lead to both greater experiences of threat but protect and even increased self-esteem in the presence of prejudice. Then, we examined intentions to withdraw as a potential harmful outcome of experiencing SITC, even in the absence of harm to one's view of themselves. We found that attributions to prejudice and SITC accounted for this relation.

Chapter 5. General Discussion

The present research aimed to demonstrate that, although interacting with a prejudiced individual may not make members of stigmatized groups feel bad about themselves, it leads to feelings of threat that they may be discriminated against which leads to intentions to socially withdraw from the situations. Thus, stigmatized group members could experience negative outcomes regardless of self-esteem remaining intact. Across three studies we consistently found that self-esteem was protected from negative feedback when LGBTQ individuals attributed the negative feedback to prejudice; however, these same attributions to prejudice also increased experiences of social identity threat.

Past work has demonstrated that, consistent with our findings, attributions to prejudice can serve a protective function for the self-esteem of stigmatized group members (Crocker et al., 1991). This research, however, demonstrates that attributions to prejudice have the parallel cost of increasing social identity threat. Moreover, experiencing prejudiced interactions leads LGBTQ individuals to report greater intentions to socially withdraw. Finally, this research suggests that, despite protecting self-esteem, attributions to prejudice increase feelings of threat and produce negative consequences (i.e. social withdrawal) for LGBTQ individuals.

Study 1 established that experiencing prejudice led to increased social identity threat and that attributions to prejudice accounted for the relation between experiencing prejudice and social identity threat concerns such that greater attributions to prejudice led to heightened social identity threat concerns. Study 2 sought to demonstrate the differing impact of attributions to prejudice on how one feels about themselves and how one feels about the situation following a prejudiced interaction. We predicted attributions to prejudice would have a self-protective effect on self-esteem, consistent with Crocker et al., (1991). As predicted, in the presence of prejudice, making attributions to prejudice was positively related to self-esteem; however, when prejudice was not present (i.e. the ambiguous and supportive conditions) making attributions to prejudice was unrelated to self-esteem among participants. Attributions to prejudice also revealed the same relation between prejudiced experiences and social identity threat concerns as study 1 and that this relation was accounted for by attributions to prejudice. Thus, we demonstrated the opposing roles of attributions to prejudice – creating a positive internal experience by protecting self-esteem while also causing negative external evaluations of increased threat.

Study 3 examined behavioral intentions to engage in social withdrawal as a potential consequence of experiencing elevated social identity threat concerns in response to interacting with a prejudiced individual. Findings supported the predicted relation, with attributions to prejudice and social identity concerns accounting for the relation between the prejudiced interaction and intention to withdraw. When interacting with a prejudiced individual, attributions to prejudice increased which accounted for the

heightened social identity concerns which in turn accounted for greater withdrawal intentions.

Through this work, we addressed an issue which that had been left largely unexamined in past research by demonstrating that experiencing prejudice leads to harmful outcomes due to creating a threatening situation. The notion that external attributions to prejudice protect individuals from the harm of internalizing prejudice has been well established (Crocker and Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1991). In the present research, however, we show that these external attributions are not without harm. We further demonstrated that these experiences of threat lead to negative outcomes for the stigmatized individual. Overall, we established the differential consequences affected by attributions to prejudice (i.e. protecting self-esteem and increasing experiences of threat) and demonstrated one possible behavioral consequence (i.e. social withdrawal).

Limitations and Future Directions

One caveat to consider with this work is that we cannot parse out the independent influences of negative feedback and prejudice. Crocker et al., (1991), separately varied the valence of the feedback received by participants and the experience of prejudice. This allowed them to both examine the interaction between valence of feedback and prejudice and isolate the impact of prejudice on members of stigmatized groups in the absence of negative feedback. We believe we have partially addressed this limitation by including a measure of attributions to prejudice, which Crocker et al., (1991) did not specifically measure. This measure allowed us to determine the extent to which prejudice influenced participants' judgments about the interaction and demonstrate that the negative feedback

increased these attributions. Going forward, however, future research should aim to include conditions in which feedback valence and prejudice are independently varied.

Another limitation of this work is the use of an imagined scenario to obtain our effects of intentions to socially withdraw. Because participants are imagining an interaction with individuals to whom they have no real connections, the stakes of the interaction are considerably lower than they would be in real life. It may be easier for participants to report that they would socially withdraw from these people, both the person who exhibited prejudice and the person who introduced them, because they exist in a vacuum free from history and context. Real-life social withdrawal has consequences that would extend beyond any one person, given that friendships exist within networks of people. Future work should aim to address this limitation by creating manipulations which reference social networks, or by having participants nominate individuals to imagine in these scenarios. Moreover, subsequent research could investigate the role that connections within social networks play in decisions regarding whether to withdraw from individuals who are prejudiced. For example, one could look at the relative influence of how densely connected an individual is within a network and how emotionally close one feels to that individual on withdrawal decisions. How densely connected an individual is within a social network may influence withdrawal decisions above and beyond feelings of being closely bonded to someone. When considering the broader social network in which interactions take place, members of stigmatized groups may have to make these sorts of cost-benefit analyses when deciding what to tolerate in terms of experiencing prejudice.

Additionally, future research could examine how individual differences may influence the effects obtained here. For example, how might religiosity affect how individuals make external versus internal evaluations in response to prejudice? This is particularly relevant when considering that the manipulation used here had religious connotations to it (i.e. “that’s pretty sinful”).

Finally, future work should examine other consequences of experiencing elevated social identity threat concerns, such as mood changes. Experiences of prejudice could cause depressed mood and negative affect through negative thoughts regarding the corrosive environment to which one is exposed, regardless of how one feels about oneself. Therefore, research going forward should measure mood as an outcome and examine how social identity threat concerns predict it, potentially even above and beyond how self-esteem predicts mood.

Conclusion

Overall, this work contributed to our understanding of the impact of interacting with a prejudiced individuals on members of stigmatized groups. We found that although making external attributions to prejudice can protect one’s self-concept, it still increases feelings of threat and creates detrimental outcomes. Thus, when members of the LGBTQ community experience prejudice, they become wary of their situation and experience feelings of threat. As members of the LGBTQ community face numerous attacks on their right to exist, it is increasingly important to understand how individuals experience these situations and what outcomes they experience as a result.

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Appendix A. Study 1 Measures

Dialogue:
Imagine that you are meeting Alex for coffee. You have never met them before, but you have a mutual friend, Jen, who put you in contact with them because Alex is new in town and looking to meet people. Your mutual friend thought you might have some things in common. Below is a bit of your conversation.

You: I'm glad we get to finally do this, Jen has said such nice things about you

Alex: she's so sweet, she's been really helping me to meet people around here

You: how have you liked it here so far?

Alex: I love it, I was a bit worried that I wouldn't like the weather but it's been gorgeous

You: Oh, just wait until winter

Alex: (laughing) that's exactly what Jen said

You: So you two are both from Arizona originally, right? Did you guys meet when you were kids?

Alex: We actually met in college, we were on an intramural soccer team together

You: Wow, so you guys have known each other a while

Alex: Yeah it's been a few years. How'd you and Jen meet again?

You: My partner actually works with her so I met her through them originally

Alex: Oh ok, is your partner friends with her too or are you the primary connection now?

You: Yeah [partner pronoun] still friends with her. Actually, [partner pronoun] gets along great with Jen's husband so the four of us hang out all together a lot. I forget, do you have a partner?

SUPPORTIVE VERSION

Alex: Yeah, I do! I'd love to meet your partner sometime, maybe the six of us can get together soon.

AMBIGUOUS VERSION

Alex: Sorry, did you say [partner pronoun]?

You: yeah, why?

Alex: I am sorry, just wasn't sure I had heard you right.

You: Oh?

Alex: I'm glad Jen is friends with you and your partner. It is great she makes friends so easily.

PREJUDICED VERSION

Alex: Sorry, did you say [partner pronoun]?

You: yeah, why?

Alex: huh, well I just think that's pretty sinful is all. I'm surprised Jen is ok with that.

**Partner pronoun will match the gender of the participant

Attributions to Prejudice Question:
Please rate how much you agree with the following statements (1 – not at all, 7 – extremely)

1. Alex's response was due to her own discomfort with my sexuality
2. Alex's response was because they do not approve of my sexuality

3. Alex responded appropriately to finding out about my sexual identity
4. Alex responded this way because they were prejudiced towards people who share my sexual identity
5. Alex treated me fairly because they are supportive of my sexual orientation
6. Alex responded inappropriately because they have a problem with LGBTQ individuals
7. Alex's treatment of me was my fault
8. I am responsible for how Alex responded
9. Alex is to blame for how they treated me

Response Options: 1 (not at all) - 7 (extremely)

Social Identity Threat Scale:

The following statements concern your **sexual orientation** and various thoughts you might (or might not) have in future interactions with Alex because of that identity. Using the scale provided, please indicate how "true" each of the following statements are to you (from 1 "not at all true of me" to 9 "extremely true of me"). Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. We simply want to know how **you** would feel **when interacting with Alex.**

Scale:

1. I'm not sure that Alex would think I belong (or "fit in") in interactions because of my sexuality
2. When interaction with Alex, I would wonder whether they have less respect for me because of my sexual orientation.
3. Because of my sexuality, when interacting with Alex, I would not be sure that they value my opinions or contributions.
4. I'm not sure I could represent my sexual identity authentically when interacting with Alex.
5. When interacting with Alex, I would wonder whether I would be left out or marginalized because of my sexual orientation.
6. I would wonder whether I am being stereotyped because of my sexual orientation when interacting with Alex.
7. I would be concerned about being physically injured because of my sexuality when interacting with Alex.
8. I would be concerned when interacting with Alex that they might taunt or harass me because of my sexual orientation.
9. Because of my sexuality, I would wonder when interacting with Alex whether they would give me a fair shot.
10. Because of my sexuality, I would wonder whether I can trust Alex to have my back and support me.
11. I would wonder whether Alex would only keep me around to be the "token" member of my sexual orientation group.

12. I would wonder when interacting with Alex whether they would see me as a "true" ingroup member because of my sexuality.
13. When interacting with Alex, I would be concerned that they would single me out (or shine a spotlight on me) because of my sexual orientation.
14. When interacting with Alex, I would wonder if they would overlook (or forget about me) because of my sexuality.
15. When interacting with Alex, I would wonder whether they think I get "special advantages" or "unfair privileges" because of my sexual orientation.
16. I would wonder when interacting with Alex whether they would pressure me to downplay my sexuality and portray myself as being straight.
17. When interacting with Alex, I would not be sure that I would have equal access to events and activities because of my sexual orientation.
18. When interacting with Alex, I would be concerned that they would reveal my sexual orientation to others without my permission.
19. I am not sure if I should try to "pass" as a member of another sexuality group (in order to blend in with everyone else when interacting with Alex).
20. When interacting with Alex, I would wonder whether they might dismiss my sexual orientation as a choice rather than who I am.
21. When interacting with Alex, I would be concerned that they would make others preoccupied with "correctly" identifying my sexuality.
22. I would not be sure that Alex would understand me because of my sexuality.
23. I would worry that Alex would not see the "real" me because of my sexual orientation.
24. I feel that because of my sexuality, Alex will not really know me well.
25. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that because of my sexuality they would not be aware of what I am thinking and feeling.
26. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that they are not on "the same wavelength" as me because of my sexuality.
27. When interacting with Alex, I feel that they would know the real me, including the role my sexuality plays.
28. When interacting with Alex, I feel that in general they would understand me, including how my sexuality relates to how I see myself.
29. When interacting with Alex I would feel that they know me well, including how my sexuality is an important part of me.
30. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that they are aware of how my sexuality affects what I am thinking and feeling.
31. I would feel that I am on "the same wavelength" as Alex when interacting with them, including how my sexuality affects how I understand who I am.
32. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that because of my sexual orientation I could not be completely sincere when revealing my own feelings and experiences.

33. I would feel that I could be completely sincere when revealing my own feelings and experiences when interacting with Alex, including those about my sexual orientation.
34. I would hesitate to disclose intimate, personal things about myself to Alex because of my sexuality.
35. When interacting with Alex, it would be easy for me to disclose intimate, personal things about myself, including those related to my sexuality.
36. I would feel that I can only infrequently discuss my personal beliefs and opinions when interacting with Alex because of my sexual orientation.
37. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that I could discuss my personal beliefs and opinions, including my sexual orientation.

Appendix B. Study 2 Measures

Dialogue:
Imagine that you are meeting Alex for coffee. You have never met them before, but you have a mutual friend, Jen, who put you in contact with them because Alex is new in town and looking to meet people. Your mutual friend thought you might have some things in common. Below is a bit of your conversation.

You: I'm glad we get to finally do this, Jen has said such nice things about you

Alex: she's so sweet, she's been really helping me to meet people around here

You: how have you liked it here so far?

Alex: I love it, I was a bit worried that I wouldn't like the weather but it's been gorgeous

You: Oh, just wait until winter

Alex: (laughing) that's exactly what Jen said

You: So you two are both from Arizona originally, right? Did you guys meet when you were kids?

Alex: We actually met in college, we were on an intramural soccer team together

You: Wow, so you guys have known each other a while

Alex: Yeah it's been a few years. How'd you and Jen meet again?

You: My partner actually works with her so I met her through them originally

Alex: Oh ok, is your partner friends with her too or are you the primary connection now?

You: Yeah [partner pronoun] still friends with her. Actually, [partner pronoun] gets along great with Jen's husband so the four of us hang out all together a lot. I forget, do you have a partner?

SUPPORTIVE VERSION

Alex: Yeah, I do! I'd love to meet your partner sometime, maybe the six of us can get together soon.

AMBIGUOUS VERSION

Alex: Sorry, did you say [partner pronoun]?

You: yeah, why?

Alex: I am sorry, just wasn't sure I had heard you right.

You: Oh?

Alex: I'm glad Jen is friends with you and your partner. It is great she makes friends so easily.

PREJUDICED VERSION

Alex: Sorry, did you say [partner pronoun]?

You: yeah, why?

Alex: huh, well I just think that's pretty sinful is all. I'm surprised Jen is ok with that.

State Self-Esteem Scale:
This is a questionnaire designed to measure what you are thinking at this moment. There is of course, no right answer for any statement. The best answer is what you feel is true of yourself at the moment. Be sure to answer all of the items, even if you are not certain of the best answer. Again, answer these questions as they are true for you **RIGHT NOW**.

1. I feel confident about my abilities.
2. I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure. (R)

3. I feel frustrated or rattled about my performance (R).
4. I feel that I am having trouble understanding things that I read. (R)
5. I feel self-conscious. (R)
6. I feel as smart as others.
7. I feel displeased with myself. (R)
8. I am worried about what other people think of me. (R)
9. I feel confident that I understand things.
10. I feel inferior to others at this moment. (R)
11. I feel concerned about the impression I am making. (R)
12. I feel that I have less scholastic ability right now than others. (R)
13. I feel like I'm not doing well. (R)
14. I am worried about looking foolish. (R)

Response options: 1 (not at all) – 5 (extremely)

Attributions to Prejudice Question:
Please rate how much you agree with the following statements (1 – not at all, 7 – extremely)

1. Alex's response was due to her own discomfort with my sexuality
2. Alex's response was because they do not approve of my sexuality
3. Alex responded appropriately to finding out about my sexual identity
4. Alex responded this way because they were prejudiced towards people who share my sexual identity
5. Alex treated me fairly because they are supportive of my sexual orientation
6. Alex responded inappropriately because they have a problem with LGBTQ individuals
7. Alex's treatment of me was my fault
8. I am responsible for how Alex responded
9. Alex is to blame for how they treated me

Response Options: 1 (not at all) - 7 (extremely)

Social Identity Threat Scale:
The following statements concern your **sexual orientation** and various thoughts you might (or might not) have in future interactions with Alex because of that identity. Using the scale provided, please indicate how "true" each of the following statements are to you (from 1 "not at all true of me" to 9 "extremely true of me"). Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. We simply want to know how **you** would feel **when interacting with Alex.**

Scale:

1. I'm not sure that Alex would think I belong (or "fit in") in interactions because of my sexuality
2. When interaction with Alex, I would wonder whether they have less respect for me because of my sexual orientation.

3. Because of my sexuality, when interacting with Alex, I would not be sure that they value my opinions or contributions.
4. I'm not sure I could represent my sexual identity authentically when interacting with Alex.
5. When interacting with Alex, I would wonder whether I would be left out or marginalized because of my sexual orientation.
6. I would wonder whether I am being stereotyped because of my sexual orientation when interacting with Alex.
7. I would be concerned about being physically injured because of my sexuality when interacting with Alex.
8. I would be concerned when interacting with Alex that they might taunt or harass me because of my sexual orientation.
9. Because of my sexuality, I would wonder when interacting with Alex whether they would give me a fair shot.
10. Because of my sexuality, I would wonder whether I can trust Alex to have my back and support me.
11. I would wonder whether Alex would only keep me around to be the "token" member of my sexual orientation group.
12. I would wonder when interacting with Alex whether they would see me as a "true" ingroup member because of my sexuality.
13. When interacting with Alex, I would be concerned that they would single me out (or shine a spotlight on me) because of my sexual orientation.
14. When interacting with Alex, I would wonder if they would overlook (or forget about me) because of my sexuality.
15. When interacting with Alex, I would wonder whether they think I get "special advantages" or "unfair privileges" because of my sexual orientation.
16. I would wonder when interacting with Alex whether they would pressure me to downplay my sexuality and portray myself as being straight.
17. When interacting with Alex, I would not be sure that I would have equal access to events and activities because of my sexual orientation.
18. When interacting with Alex, I would be concerned that they would reveal my sexual orientation to others without my permission.
19. I am not sure if I should try to "pass" as a member of another sexuality group (in order to blend in with everyone else when interacting with Alex).
20. When interacting with Alex, I would wonder whether they might dismiss my sexual orientation as a choice rather than who I am.
21. When interacting with Alex, I would be concerned that they would make others preoccupied with "correctly" identifying my sexuality.
22. I would not be sure that Alex would understand me because of my sexuality.
23. I would worry that Alex would not see the "real" me because of my sexual orientation.

24. I feel that because of my sexuality, Alex will not really know me well.
25. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that because of my sexuality they would not be aware of what I am thinking and feeling.
26. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that they are not on “the same wavelength” as me because of my sexuality.
27. When interacting with Alex, I feel that they would know the real me, including the role my sexuality plays.
28. When interacting with Alex, I feel that in general they would understand me, including how my sexuality relates to how I see myself.
29. When interacting with Alex I would feel that they know me well, including how my sexuality is an important part of me.
30. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that they are aware of how my sexuality affects what I am thinking and feeling.
31. I would feel that I am on “the same wavelength” as Alex when interacting with them, including how my sexuality affects how I understand who I am.
32. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that because of my sexual orientation I could not be completely sincere when revealing my own feelings and experiences.
33. I would feel that I could be completely sincere when revealing my own feelings and experiences when interacting with Alex, including those about my sexual orientation.
34. I would hesitate to disclose intimate, personal things about myself to Alex because of my sexuality.
35. When interacting with Alex, it would be easy for me to disclose intimate, personal things about myself, including those related to my sexuality.
36. I would feel that I can only infrequently discuss my personal beliefs and opinions when interacting with Alex because of my sexual orientation.
37. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that I could discuss my personal beliefs and opinions, including my sexual orientation.

Appendix C. Study 3 Measures

Dialogue:
Imagine that you are meeting Alex for coffee. You have never met them before, but you have a mutual friend, Jen, who put you in contact with them because Alex is new in town and looking to meet people. Your mutual friend thought you might have some things in common. Below is a bit of your conversation.
You: I'm glad we get to finally do this, Jen has said such nice things about you

Alex: she's so sweet, she's been really helping me to meet people around here

You: how have you liked it here so far?

Alex: I love it, I was a bit worried that I wouldn't like the weather but it's been gorgeous

You: Oh, just wait until winter

Alex: (laughing) that's exactly what Jen said

You: So you two are both from Arizona originally, right? Did you guys meet when you were kids?

Alex: We actually met in college, we were on an intramural soccer team together

You: Wow, so you guys have known each other a while

Alex: Yeah it's been a few years. How'd you and Jen meet again?

You: My partner actually works with her so I met her through them originally

Alex: Oh ok, is your partner friends with her too or are you the primary connection now?

You: Yeah [partner pronoun] still friends with her. Actually, [partner pronoun] gets along great with Jen's husband so the four of us hang out all together a lot. I forget, do you have a partner?

SUPPORTIVE VERSION

Alex: Yeah, I do! I'd love to meet your partner sometime, maybe the six of us can get together soon.

NEUTRAL VERSION

Alex: Sorry, did you say [partner pronoun]?

You: yeah, why?

Alex: I am sorry, just wasn't sure I had heard you right.

You: Oh?

Alex: I'm glad Jen is friends with you and your partner. It is great she makes friends so easily.

PREJUDICED VERSION

Alex: Sorry, did you say [partner pronoun]?

You: yeah, why?

Alex: huh, well I just think that's pretty sinful is all. I'm surprised Jen is ok with that.

**Participants are assigned to condition with matching gender pronoun to their own

State Self-Esteem Scale:
This is a questionnaire designed to measure what you are thinking at this moment. There is of course, no right answer for any statement. The best answer is what you feel is true of yourself at the moment. Be sure to answer all of the items, even if you are not certain of the best answer. Again, answer these questions as they are true for you **RIGHT NOW**.

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10. I feel inferior to others at this moment. (R)
11. I feel concerned about the impression I am making. (R)
12. I feel that I have less scholastic ability right now than others. (R)
13. I feel like I'm not doing well. (R)
14. I am worried about looking foolish. (R)

Response options: 1 (not at all) – 5 (extremely)

Attributions to Prejudice Question:
Please rate how much you agree with the following statements (1 – not at all, 7 – extremely)

1. Alex's response was due to her own discomfort with my sexuality
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7. Alex's treatment of me was my fault
8. I am responsible for how Alex responded
9. Alex is to blame for how they treated me

Response Options: 1 (not at all) - 7 (extremely)

Social Identity Threat Scale:
The following statements concern your **sexual orientation** and various thoughts you might (or might not) have in future interactions with Alex because of that identity. Using the scale provided, please indicate how "true" each of the following statements are to you (from 1 "not at all true of me" to 9 "extremely true of me"). Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. We simply want to know how **you** would feel **when interacting with Alex.**

Scale:

1. I'm not sure that Alex would think I belong (or "fit in") in interactions because of my sexuality

2. When interaction with Alex, I would wonder whether they have less respect for me because of my sexual orientation.
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36. I would feel that I can only infrequently discuss my personal beliefs and opinions when interacting with Alex because of my sexual orientation.
37. When interacting with Alex, I would feel that I could discuss my personal beliefs and opinions, including my sexual orientation.

**Withdrawal likelihood measures:

1. How likely do you think it is that you will spend time with Alex again?"
2. If Jen and Alex invite you to spend time together, how likely do you think you will be to join them?"
3. If Jen is having a party and you know Alex will be there, how likely is it that this will influence your decision to go?"
4. If Jen is having a party and you know Alex will be there, how likely will you be to go?"
5. How likely is it that you will avoid spending time with Jen in the future?"

Response options: 1 (very unlikely) - 7 (very likely)

**Withdrawal agreement measures:

6. Jen is someone I would continue to want to spend time with."
7. My interaction with Alex would not influence my opinions of Jen."
8. My interaction with Alex would not influence my relationship with Jen."
9. Following this interaction, I would be less willing to spend time with Jen."

Response options: 1 (strongly disagree) - 7 (strongly agree)