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The Detrimental Effect of Affirming Masculinity on Judgments of Gay Men

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A group-based affirmation reminds individuals of important ingroup attributes and highlights positive distinctiveness. Because nonprototypical ingroup members threaten the distinctiveness of the ingroup, group-affirmed individuals may be motivated to derogate fellow nonprototypical ingroup members. Four experiments test this hypothesis by affirming masculinity in heterosexual men and examining its effect on their judgments of gay men, who are often considered nonprototypical of their gender. Consistent with the main hypothesis, heterosexual men whose masculinity was affirmed via feedback or a values writing task expressed more prejudice against gay men relative to heterosexual men who were not affirmed (Experiments 1–4). Second, affirming masculinity and threatening masculinity had the same effect—both increased antigay prejudice (Experiment 2). Third, antigay prejudice increased in response to a masculinity affirmation only when the affirmed attribute was in a domain in which gay men are considered nonprototypical (masculine toughness), but not in a domain irrelevant to gay men’s prototypicality as men (professional ambition; Experiment 3). Finally, affirming masculinity by targeting masculine characteristics important to individual male participants versus the group as a whole both increased antigay prejudice, which was mediated by social categorization (Experiment 4). Together, these findings suggest that a group-based affirmation can sometimes paradoxically increase prejudice.

Keywords: affirmation, threat, prejudice, masculinity, homophobia, social identity theory

The need to belong is a fundamental social motive that is satisfied when people are able to affiliate with significant others, including members of their ingroup (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Gardner, Pickett, & Brewer, 2000). Individuals attach psychological value to their ingroups and the characteristics possessed by these groups leading to a sense of positive distinctiveness (Abrams

& Hogg, 2004; Deaux, 1996; Kuhn & McPartland, 1954; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Indeed, the mental representations of one’s self-concept and that of one’s ingroup are overlapping and interconnected constructs (Smith & Henry, 1996); furthermore, individuals’ self-esteem is strongly associated with their group-esteem and group identity (e.g., Greenwald et al., 2002; Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998; Swann & Bosson, 2010). Given the importance of social groups to individuals’ self-concept, it is no surprise that they are motivated to maintain the integrity of their social identity, as well as the image of their ingroup as positively distinct (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This motivation manifests in the form of ingroup favoritism (Brewer, 1979; Oaker & Brown, 1986; for a review, see Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). However, one important caveat to this general tendency is when individuals have to evaluate ingroup members who are considered nonprototypical ingroup members—that is, ingroup members who are perceived not to possess attributes central to the ingroup.

Perceivers tend to distance themselves from nonprototypical ingroup members who do not fit ingroup norms because these members are viewed as undermining positive group distinctiveness. Nonprototypical ingroup members tend to be disliked compared with prototypical ingroup members (Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998; Marques & Paez, 1994; Marques, Yzerbyt, & Leyens, 1988; Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Reid & Hogg, 2005). Whereas prototypical ingroup members are viewed as loyal, influential, and important to the group, nonprototypical members are evaluated less favorably on all three dimensions (Abrams & Hogg, 2004; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003). In some cases, people believe that it is perfectly legitimate to exclude nonprototypical members from the ingroup (Wenzel,

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2001). Collectively, this research suggests that, relative to prototypical ingroup members, nonprototypical members can become targets of derogation because of their perceived peripheral status in the group.

The previous negative effect is strongly evident in the psychology literature on heterosexual men's judgments of gay men who are often considered nonprototypical men (consider the derogatory comment "they are not real men"). One meta-analysis on the effect of gender of participants on self-reported judgments of male and female homosexual individuals found that heterosexual male participants expressed the strongest levels of negative explicit attitudes toward gay men (Kite & Whitley, 1996). Moreover, implicit social cognition research demonstrated a similar effect with heterosexual men and their expression of implicit prejudice against gay men (Steffens, 2005). Altogether, this research suggests that heterosexual men derogate gay men at least partially because they are perceived to be nonprototypical of the group and its masculine attributes. Put differently, heterosexual men may view gay men as deviating from the very ingroup attributes that are important sources of positive group distinctiveness.

Negativity toward nonprototypical men increases substantially when heterosexual men's social identity is threatened (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). A social identity threat is when an individual's value as a group member is questioned. Such a threat activates the motivation to reestablish one's belonging in the group as well as the ingroup's positive image. One way to satisfy this motivation is by derogating nonprototypical ingroup individuals. For example, Talley and Bettencourt (2008; Experiment 2) manipulated social identity threat by giving male participants false feedback on a measure of masculine beliefs suggesting that their masculinity was "below average" (threat condition) or "average" (no threat condition), and then gave male participants an opportunity to behave aggressively toward a prototypical (a presumed heterosexual male student) or a nonprototypical (a presumed gay male student) ingroup member. Male participants who received a threat to their masculinity behaved aggressively toward the nonprototypical (presumably gay) male student when compared with those who did not receive a threat to their masculinity; however, this effect did not emerge when the target was a prototypical (presumably heterosexual) male student. This study and similar others (see Branscombe et al., 1993; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008) demonstrate that threats to men's social identity increase bias against other men who are viewed as nonprototypical ingroup members.

The previously mentioned findings raise an interesting but as yet unexamined question. If *threatening* men's social identity increases bias against nonprototypical male ingroup members, will *affirming* men's social (or group) identity have a similar or different effect? On one hand, affirming social identity might *decrease* prejudice against nonprototypical ingroup members because one's own place in the ingroup is enhanced and maintained. On the other hand, and our a priori hypothesis is that, affirming social identity might *increase* prejudice against nonprototypical ingroup members if it activates the motivation to preserve positive distinctiveness of one's ingroup. This issue is at the heart of the present research.

The Effect of a Group Affirmation on Judgments of Nonprototypical Ingroup Members

Self-affirmation theory (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, Spencer, & Lynch, 1993) posits that one way in which individuals maintain their overall self-image is to seek out opportunities to make salient and affirm a positive aspect of their personal identity. Self-affirmation research focuses on affirming a personal value that is linked to an individual's personal identity; however, personal identity and its associated attributes do not wholly represent the self-concept. Tajfel and Turner's (1979, 1986) social identity theory suggests that the self-concept consists of one's *personal* identity and one's *social* identity. Personal identity is the individual self, defined by important and distinct individual attributes. By comparison, social identity is the collective self, defined by group memberships and important and distinct group attributes. Because individuals can develop a positive emotional attachment to their social groups (Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Reynolds, Haslam, & Veenstra, 2006), social identities can be a source of value and positive distinctiveness (Swann & Bosson, 2010).

Based on the assumption that an individual is generally motivated to protect and maintain all important aspects of the self, including one's personal and social identities, researchers have extended self-affirmation theory to propose that one's social (group) identity may also serve as a source of affirmation (Sherman & Hartson, 2011; Sherman, Kinias, Major, Kim, & Prenovost, 2007). A "group affirmation" generally involves an act that highlights ingroup qualities and thus enhances an individual's overall sense of positive identity with his or her group. It is typically manipulated by providing participants with favorable feedback about their ingroup's performance in an important domain (Derks, van Laar, & Ellemers, 2006, 2009; Villicana, Rivera, & Garcia, 2016) or by giving them an opportunity to write about values that are important to their ingroup (Glasford, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009; Sherman et al., 2007; McGregor, Haji, & Kang, 2008; Villicana et al., 2016). These studies reveal that affirming positive ingroup qualities activates identity-based motivations, reduces defensive biases, attenuates prejudice against outgroups, improves group members' well-being, enhances their performance, and serves as a psychological buffer when group members face a threat. In sum, a group affirmation tends to have positive effects on individuals' self-concept, performance, and attitudes toward outgroup members.

The present research extends this literature to testing the effect of a group affirmation on judgments of nonprototypical ingroup members. Specifically, we examine how affirming heterosexual men's gender group influences their evaluations of fellow ingroup members—in particular, those who are perceived to be less prototypical of the ingroup (gay men). While much of the group affirmation literature focuses on affirming one's ingroup as a whole, we separately examine the effect of affirming heterosexual men's personal masculinity versus the effect of affirming the masculinity of men as a group to determine how each type of affirmation influences their attitudes toward gay men. Group-based affirmations enhance the positive and unique aspects of men as a group (positive distinctiveness), so such an experience should motivate affirmed men to judge other men who do not embody

important ingroup attributes as less prototypical and more negatively.

Overview of the Present Research

Past research has manipulated group-based affirmations in several ways. For example, affirmation may take the form of highlighting an important value of the ingroup without making direct reference to an individual as a member of the group (see Glasford et al., 2009; Sherman et al., 2007) or highlighting an important value of the individual as a member of the ingroup (see Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001; Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). We adopted both group-based affirmation types across four experiments—that is, we operationalized a group affirmation by giving men favorable feedback about their masculinity (Experiments 1–3) or by asking them to write about values important to male participants as individual group members or to their group in general (Experiment 4). We expected for both group affirmations to exacerbate derogation of nonprototypical ingroup members—gay men—compared with a situation where no affirmation occurs. Participants' attitudes toward gay men were assessed with multiple measures to demonstrate the reliability of the findings.

Experiment 1 served as an initial test of the main hypothesis that masculinity affirmation can increase antigay prejudice. Experiment 2 compared the effects of affirming versus threatening masculinity on antigay attitudes. We predicted that both would lead to similar outcomes in the context of evaluating gay men. Whereas a threat to men's social identity will motivate them to achieve positive group distinctiveness (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2001; Vandello et al., 2008), affirming men's social identity will motivate them to preserve positive group distinctiveness. A second goal of Experiment 2 was to test the prediction that affirmation would only affect heterosexual men's attitudes toward gay men but not affect their attitudes toward other heterosexual men or toward women (lesbians and heterosexual women).

Experiment 3 sought to test whether affirming some types of masculine attributes elicit more antigay prejudice than others. We predicted that when the masculine attributes being affirmed are central and important to the group, but gay men are perceived not to possess these masculine attributes (e.g., physical and emotional toughness), then an affirmation will increase antigay prejudice. However, if the affirmed masculine attribute is less relevant to the categorization of gay men (e.g., professional ambition), affirmation will have no effect on antigay prejudice.

Finally, Experiment 4 sought to determine whether affirming men as individual members of their group versus affirming men as a group in general have similar effects on their evaluations of gay men. We used a different affirmation procedure by asking participants to write about why particular values are important to men as a group (group affirmation) or important to them as individual men (group member affirmation). We predicted that both conditions would increase derogation of gay men. Finally, we sought to examine the effect of group-based affirmations on the social categorization of gay men relative to men in general and to heterosexual men.

Experiment 1

The main goal of Experiment 1 was to provide an initial test of our main hypothesis. We operationalized a group-based affirmation by providing bogus scores on a masculinity measure to heterosexual male participants (control participants did not receive any feedback). Our procedure is consistent with past affirmation manipulations that have provided bogus feedback on measures of personality and traits (e.g., Cohen, Aronson, & Steele, 2000; Heine & Lehman, 1997; Steele et al., 1993). Then, all participants were given an opportunity to express their implicit attitudes toward gay men and, finally, their feelings about the masculinity feedback (a manipulation check).

Method

Participants. One hundred thirty-two male students from a public university in New England participated in exchange for extra course credit or \$8.¹ Fourteen (11%) were dropped for the following reasons: Some had recently completed a study on a very similar topic and were suspicious ($n = 6$), others correctly guessed the hypothesis ($n = 6$), or did not believe the feedback ($n = 2$).² The final sample size was $N = 118$ ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.69$ years, $SD = 2.26$, age range = 17–28). Seventy-six percent were White, 13% were Asian, 4% were multiracial, 3% were Hispanic, 1% was Black, 1% was Native American, and 2% did not answer the question. None of the participants identified as gay; their mean sexual identification was 10.79 ($SD = .53$) on an 11-point scale where 1 was labeled “*I identify as homosexual exclusively*” and 11 was labeled “*I identify as heterosexual exclusively*.”³

Manipulated and measured variables.

Affirmation manipulation. As part of the cover story to affirm (or not affirm) their masculinity, a general statement led all participants to believe that the scale they were about to complete was being administered nationally to large numbers of male students to investigate individual differences in masculinity. Next, all participants completed the Male Role Norms Scale (MRNS; Thompson & Pleck, 1986), which contains 26 items assessing the degree to which they endorse masculine social norms related to social status, toughness, and antifemininity (e.g., “I think a young man should try to become physically tough, even if he's not big;” “I think it's extremely good for a boy to be taught to cook, sew, clean the

¹ Extra credit was assigned to male student participants recruited in psychology classes. Furthermore, to recruit a representative sample of the university student body, we paid cash to male student participants who responded to recruitment flyers posted throughout the campus.

² Although the participants who guessed the hypothesis were dropped, the effect of affirmation on attitudes toward gay men remained statistically significant even when they were included in the analysis.

³ Following the rationale underlying the hypotheses, Experiments 1, 2, and 4 did not recruit male participants who self-reported as exclusively homosexual on a prescreening measure administered at the start of the semester (sexual identification scores reported in each experiment are from measures administered at the end of the procedure). In Experiment 3, no participants self-reported as exclusively homosexual.

house, and take care of younger children”) on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).⁴

Participants who were randomly assigned to the affirmation condition were told that men who had high scores on the scale tended to be very masculine, and men who had low scores tended to be not as masculine. Also, to enhance the credibility and personal relevance of the feedback, they were told that these men differ “in important ways that affect future professional success and personal relationship quality.” Then, the computer appeared to calculate their “score.” After several seconds, these participants were given a relatively high score (164) and told that the score was “at the high masculine end of the scale,” which suggested that they were “very masculine compared to most college-aged men.” The remaining half of the participants who were randomly assigned to the control condition did not receive any feedback, which is consistent with past control conditions in false feedback studies (e.g., Cohen et al., 2000, Study 2; Heine & Lehman, 1997). We wanted all participants to complete the MRNS in order to make salient gender and gender beliefs for all men, but only manipulate an affirmation for those randomly assigned to the false feedback procedure.

Implicit Association Test (IAT). An IAT (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) is a measure of implicit attitudes. It is a speeded reaction time (RT) task that assesses the relative strength with which two groups are associated with good versus bad evaluations using response latency to operationalize attitude strength. Our IAT examined participants’ implicit attitudes toward gay men relative to heterosexuals. Gay men were represented by pictures that depicted same-sex couples, whereas heterosexual men were represented by pictures that depicted different-sex couples. The stimuli were selected to ensure that the couples appeared to be lovers, not platonic friends (Appendix A). Good and bad concepts were represented by common English words with strong positive or negative meaning (e.g., paradise, poison). For a complete description of this IAT, see Dasgupta and Rivera (2006). Although the present IAT used pictorial stimuli of same-sex versus different-sex couples, Dasgupta and Rivera (2006) demonstrated its validity as a measure of implicit attitudes toward gay men in general. Specifically, they demonstrated the conditions under which implicit antigay prejudice measured with the present IAT was associated with discrimination against a presumably gay student during an interpersonal interaction.

Manipulation check: Affective reaction to affirmation. Using an open-ended response format, participants were asked to describe their thoughts and feelings about the “personality measure” (i.e., MRNS) as a manipulation check for the affirmation task.

Procedure. A female experimenter informed participants that they would participate in two separate studies. The “first study,” allegedly an investigation of personality, allowed us to assess male participants’ endorsement of masculine traits using the MRNS and to provide them with false feedback about their masculinity (see Affirmation manipulation section for details). The “second study,” presented as a study of social cognition, allowed us to measure participants’ implicit attitudes toward gay men using the IAT. Finally, all participants completed the manipulation check assessing their feelings about the feedback, and were debriefed extensively.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check: Affective reaction to affirmation.

Participants’ open-ended responses about their thoughts and feelings after completing the MRNS were coded on two 7-point scales anchored by *very sad* (1) to *very happy* (7), and *very bad* (1) to *very good* (7). Two independent coders scored each of the responses (three participants’ hand-written responses were impossible to read, so they were excluded from these analyses). The two dimensions (averaged across coders) were strongly correlated, $r(115) = .90, p < .001$, so they were averaged to create an affective index. As expected, participants in the affirmation condition expressed more positive feelings after their masculinity had been affirmed ($M = 4.55, SD = 1.21$) compared with those in the control condition ($M = 4.01, SD = 1.05$), $F(1, 113) = 6.51, p < .05, d = .47$. Thus, the affirmation manipulation led men to feel more positive after receiving masculinity feedback versus no feedback.

Effect of affirmation on implicit attitudes toward gay men.

IAT scores were calculated for each participant using effect sizes (abbreviated as IAT D scores) such that larger IAT D scores indicate stronger implicit bias against gay men and relative preference for heterosexuals (for the IAT scoring algorithm, see Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003). Consistent with Dasgupta and Rivera (2006), a one-sample t test comparing the IAT D s to zero revealed that participants, on average, expressed implicit prejudice against gay men, compared with heterosexuals (IAT $D_{\text{control}} = .72, SD_{\text{affirm}} = .42$; IAT effect = 361 ms, $SD = 246$ ms), $t(117) = 18.64, p < .01, d = 3.44$.

To test our main hypothesis, IAT D scores were subjected to a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). As predicted and shown in Figure 1, participants whose masculinity had been affirmed expressed significantly more implicit antigay prejudice (IAT $D_{\text{affirm}} = .79, SD_{\text{affirm}} = .41$; IAT effect = 391 ms; $SD = 232$ ms) than others in the no-feedback condition (IAT $D_{\text{control}} = .64, SD_{\text{affirm}} = .41$; IAT effect = 329 ms, $SD = 258$ ms), $F(1, 116) = 3.98, p < .05, d = .36$, suggesting that affirming men’s masculinity increased implicit derogation of gay men who were considered nonprototypical ingroup members.

Experiment 2

The primary goal of Experiment 2 was to extend the previous experiment by determining whether affirming masculinity versus threatening masculinity would have the same effect on heterosexual men’s attitudes toward gay men. To that end we manipulated affirmation, threat, and no feedback and compared their effects on heterosexual male participants’ attitudes toward gay men. Whereas participants in the affirmation condition were given a relatively high masculinity score, participants in the threat condition were given a relatively low masculinity score. This procedure is consistent with past experiments that threatened gender identity (Van-

⁴ We selected the MRNS from among the possible measures in the literature because it assesses gender beliefs about men across multiple domains related to traits, role behaviors, and physical characteristics of men. This variability in the MRNS items was especially important to address Experiment 3’s research goals. Related, in Experiments 1–3, participants’ MRNS scores did not interact with masculinity feedback condition to affect prejudice, $.12 < ps < .96$.

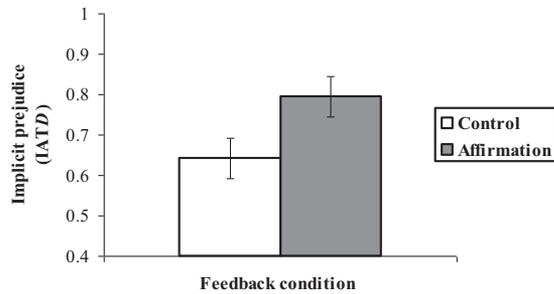


Figure 1. Implicit prejudice toward gay men as a function of masculinity feedback condition (Experiment 1). Higher IAT *D* scores indicate stronger implicit prejudice. IAT = Implicit Association Test.

dello et al., 2008). A second goal was to test whether affirming (vs. threatening) feedback increases negativity only toward gay men (nonprototypical ingroup members) but not toward heterosexual men (prototypical ingroup members) or women (outgroup members). Finally, to ensure the generalizability of these findings across multiple attitude measures, this experiment used measures of explicit attitudes (as opposed to the IAT measure of implicit attitudes).

Method

Participants. One-hundred fifty-two male students from a public university in New England participated in exchange for extra course credit. Four (.02%) were dropped because they did not believe the feedback. The final sample size was $N = 148$ ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.46$ years, $SD = 2.39$, age range = 17–38). Seventy-seven percent were White, 8% were Asian, 3% were multiracial, 3% were Hispanic, 1% was Black, 1% was Native American, and 6% neither indicated an ethnicity listed nor answered the question. All participants were heterosexual; their mean sexual identification was 10.65 ($SD = 1.03$) on an 11-point scale where 11 was labeled “I identify as heterosexual exclusively.”

Manipulated and measured variables.

Affirmation versus threat manipulation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three false feedback conditions: affirmation, threat, or no feedback. The affirmation and no affirmation conditions were identical to Experiment 1. Those who were randomly assigned to the threat condition received a relatively low score (64) and were told that they were at the “low masculinity” end of the scale, which meant that they were “not as masculine when compared with most college-aged men.”

Feeling thermometer. Four feeling thermometers (Alwin, 1997) were adopted to assess participants’ feelings toward four social groups: gay men, heterosexual men, lesbians, and heterosexual women. Participants were asked to indicate how they felt about each group on scales anchored at 0 degrees (*cold or unfavorable feelings*), 50 degrees (*neutral feelings*), and 99 degrees (*warm or favorable feelings*).

Procedure. The procedure in this experiment was very similar to that of Experiment 1 with two exceptions. First, participants were assigned to one of three (as opposed to two) feedback conditions: affirmation, threat, or no feedback. Second, we measured participants’ explicit attitudes using feeling thermometers.

Results and Discussion

Effect of affirmation versus threat on explicit attitudes.

One-sample *t*-tests comparing the feeling thermometer scores to 50 (*neutral feelings*) revealed that participants, on average, expressed neutral feelings toward gay men ($M = 47.71$, $SD = 21.95$), $t(147) = -1.26$, nonsignificant (*ns*). By comparison, they expressed warm feelings toward lesbians ($M = 59.22$, $SD = 19.79$), heterosexual men ($M = 77.48$, $SD = 21.95$), and heterosexual women ($M = 89.59$, $SD = 14.57$), $t_s(147) > 5.67$, $p_s < .001$, $d_s > .93$. Moreover, a series of paired samples *t*-tests collectively demonstrated that feelings, on average, were different among the four groups—heterosexual women were the target of the warmest feelings, followed by heterosexual men, then lesbians, and, finally, gay men, $t_s(147) > 6.83$, $p_s < .001$, $d_s > 1.12$.

To test our a priori predictions, the four feeling thermometers were subjected to two planned contrast tests using feedback condition as the independent variable. The first planned contrast tested our main prediction that the affirmation and threat conditions would produce more antigay prejudice than the control condition; thus we compared the two feedback conditions to the control condition. The second planned contrast examined if the two feedback conditions were different from each other in terms of the degree of prejudice they elicited. Consistent with our prediction, both affirmed and threatened heterosexual men expressed significantly less positive attitudes toward gay men ($M_{\text{affirm}} = 45.18$ degrees, $SD_{\text{affirm}} = 21.76$ degrees; $M_{\text{threat}} = 43.48$ degrees, $SD_{\text{threat}} = 21.40$) than heterosexual men who received no feedback ($M_{\text{control}} = 54.38$ degrees, $SD_{\text{control}} = 21.54$), $t(145) = -2.68$, $p < .01$, $d = .47$ (Figure 2). Moreover, attitudes in the affirmed versus threatened conditions were statistically equivalent, $t(145) = .39$, $p = .69$. As expected, participants’ attitudes toward heterosexual men and women (both lesbians and heterosexuals) did not vary between feedback and control conditions, $t(145)_{\text{heterosexual men}} = -.73$, $t(145)_{\text{lesbians}} = -1.53$, $t(145)_{\text{heterosexual women}} = -.34$, all *ns*; nor between affirmation and threat conditions, $t(145)_{\text{heterosexual men}} = -.13$, $t(145)_{\text{lesbians}} = .01$, $t(145)_{\text{heterosexual women}} = -.07$, all *ns*.

Supplementary analyses. Several weeks before the experiment in the laboratory and as part of a prescreening, a subsample of the participants had completed two of the feeling thermometers listed above—one targeting their attitudes toward gay men ($n = 119$) and another targeting their attitudes toward lesbians ($n = 115$). These prescreening data allowed us to test for within-

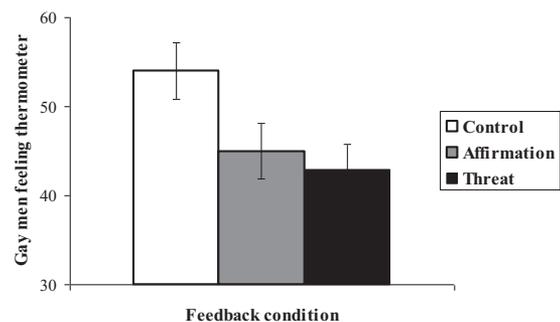


Figure 2. Feelings toward gay men as a function of masculinity feedback condition (Experiment 2). Higher numbers on the feeling thermometer indicate positive feelings toward gay men.

participant change in attitudes as a function of masculinity feedback. Specifically, we conducted a mixed-model ANOVA with pretest/posttest administration of attitude measure as a within-participants variable and feedback condition as a between-participants variable. Consistent with our prediction, heterosexual male participants' attitudes toward gay men changed as a function of feedback condition, $F(2, 116) = 4.21, p < .05$. Heterosexual men expressed significantly less positive attitudes toward gay men after receiving an affirmation ($M_{\text{pretest}} = 62.36$ degrees, $SD_{\text{pretest}} = 20.59$ vs. $M_{\text{posttest}} = 43.26$ degrees, $SD_{\text{posttest}} = 22.63$), $t(40) = 4.49, p < .001, d = .88$, and a threat ($M_{\text{pretest}} = 66.5$ degrees, $SD_{\text{pretest}} = 20.85$ vs. $M_{\text{posttest}} = 43.35$ degrees, $SD_{\text{posttest}} = 20.60$), $t(39) = 6.01, p < .001, d = 1.11$, but no significant change was obtained in the control condition ($M_{\text{pretest}} = 61$ degrees, $SD_{\text{pretest}} = 23.87$ vs. $M_{\text{posttest}} = 54$ degrees, $SD_{\text{posttest}} = 20.53$), $t(38) = 1.86, ns$. In contrast, there was no change in attitudes toward lesbians as a function of feedback condition, $F(2, 109) = .04, ns$.

In sum, Experiment 2 confirmed that affirming heterosexual men's masculinity has the same effect on antigay attitudes as threatening their masculinity. Both affirmation and threat increased antigay prejudice compared with a control (no feedback) condition. Second, Experiment 2 confirmed that affirming (and threatening) men's masculinity increased bias *only* against fellow ingroup members perceived as nonprototypical (gay men), but not against others perceived as prototypical ingroup members (heterosexual men) or outgroup members (heterosexual women and lesbians). Finally, this experiment provides converging evidence using a different measure of attitudes than the first experiment, thereby confirming the replicability of these findings.

Experiment 3

Is there a particular masculinity dimension that, when affirmed, exacerbates antigay bias? Or does affirming any type of masculine attribute have the same effect? We addressed this issue in Experiment 3. We predicted that an affirmation would exacerbate antigay bias if the affirmed attribute is related to a dimension on which gay men are perceived as nonprototypical. However, if the affirmed masculine attribute is irrelevant to the prototypicality of gay men, it should have no effect on antigay attitudes. To test this hypothesis we differentiated between two attributes that are both considered prototypically masculine: (a) physical and emotional toughness, and (b) career-oriented ambition (Harris, 1995; Helgeson, 1994; Levant et al., 1992; Mahalik et al., 2003; McCreary, 1994; Parent & Moradi, 2009; Thompson & Pleck, 1986). Physical and emotional toughness is directly relevant to gay men in that they are stereotyped as deficient in that domain—that is, not prototypically tough (McCreary, 1994). In comparison, professional ambition is unrelated to stereotypes about gay men (Keiller, 2010). Thus, we predicted that affirming heterosexual men by highlighting their physical and emotional toughness would increase antigay prejudice whereas affirming masculinity by highlighting their drive to be ambitious and successful would have no effect on antigay prejudice. Finally, because strong group identification is often associated with high prejudice (e.g., Correll & Park, 2005; Leonardelli & Brewer, 2001), we sought to rule out the alternative explanation that the predicted results occurred because affirming masculinity temporarily increases the salience of men's gender identity.

Method

Participants. Eighty-six male students from a public university in southern California participated in exchange for extra course credit. Three (.03%) were dropped because they guessed the hypothesis. The final sample size was $N = 83$ ($M_{\text{age}} = 23.36$ years, $SD = 7.24$, age range = 18–50). Thirty-seven percent were Hispanic, 25% were White, 16% were Asian, 11% were multiracial, 8% were Black, and 2% did not answer the question. All participants were heterosexual; their mean sexual identification was 10.62 ($SD = 1.09$) on an 11-point scale where 11 was labeled “*I identify as heterosexual exclusively.*”

Manipulated and measured variables.

Affirmation manipulation (modified). All participants were provided with Experiment 1's cover story. Then, participants were randomly assigned to complete one of three MRNS scales. Participants in the masculine “toughness affirmation condition” completed 12 items from the MRNS that specifically focused on emotional and physical toughness (e.g., “I think a young man should try to become physically tough, even if he's not big” and “Men are typically not good at professions that require a great deal of emotionality and sensitivity such as nursing”). Participants in the masculine “ambition affirmation condition” completed 12 items from the MRNS that specifically focused on men's professional drive to be ambitious and successful (e.g., “Men should go to great lengths to achieve as much as they can in their professional life” and “Men who are successful in their careers are highly respected by their community”). Finally, participants in the no-affirmation condition completed 12 items – 6 on emotional and physical toughness and 6 on professional ambition and success (items taken from each of the previous two conditions).

Then, we administered a similar bogus feedback to Experiment 1, with the following exceptions. Participants in the toughness affirmation condition were told that men who scored high on this scale differed in important ways that affect “the quality of their personal relationships” whereas those in the ambition affirmation condition were told that men who scored high on this scale differed in important ways that affect “their future professional success.” Participants who did not receive feedback were told that they had been randomly assigned to the control condition and their task was to “simply read the materials contained in this bogus personality measure.” This control condition procedure is consistent with past feedback studies (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997).

Feeling thermometer. As in Experiment 2, a single-item assessed participants' global attitudes toward gay men. Participants were asked to indicate how they felt on a scale anchored at 0 degrees (*cold or unfavorable feelings*), 50 degrees (*neutral feelings*), and 99 degrees (*warm or favorable feelings*).

Attitudes Toward Gay Men—abbreviated (ATG). Three items were selected from the ATG (Herek, 1988) that were purely evaluative or affective in nature: (a) “I think male homosexuals are disgusting”; (b) “Male homosexuality is a perversion”; and (c) “Homosexual behavior between two men is just plain wrong.” Participants indicated their response to these items on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate stronger negative attitudes toward gay men ($\alpha = .91$). We used these items from the ATG because they capture pure positive versus negative evaluations of gay men (i.e., prejudice) rather than beliefs targeting stereotypes about, or the civil rights of, gay men.

We expected that the affirmation would primarily influence global negative attitudes toward gay men rather than specific stereotypic beliefs about them. As such, the ATG items focused on global evaluations devoid of specific stereotypes (similar to the previous experiments).

Perceived similarity to gay men. Two 11-point scales assessed the extent to which participants thought they were similar to, or different from, gay men. Specifically: (a) “How similar are you to gay men?” was anchored at 1 (*not at all similar to gay men*), 6 (*somewhat similar to gay men*), and 11 (*completely similar to gay men*); and (b) “How different are you from gay men?” was anchored at 1 (*not at all different from gay men*), 6 (*somewhat different from gay men*), and 11 (*completely different from gay men*). The two items (first item reverse-coded) were strongly correlated, $r(83) = .45, p < .001$, so responses were averaged such that higher scores indicate greater perceived difference from gay men.

Gender identification. One item assessed the extent to which participants identified with their gender: “I identify strongly as a man” on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*very much*).

Procedure. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three feedback conditions: toughness affirmation, ambition affirmation, or no affirmation (control). Then, all participants completed the dependent measures as part of a separate “second study.”

Results and Discussion

To test our a priori predictions, dependent variables were subjected to two planned contrast tests using feedback condition as the independent variable. The first planned contrast tested our main prediction that the toughness affirmation condition would produce more antigay prejudice than the ambition affirmation and control conditions; thus we compared the toughness affirmation condition to the other two conditions. The second planned contrast examined if the two affirmation conditions were different from each other across all the dependent variables.

Effect of affirmation on antigay prejudice and perceived similarity.

Feeling thermometer. Consistent with our prediction, men whose toughness had been affirmed expressed significantly less positive attitudes toward gay men ($M = 38$ degrees, $SD = 18.08$) compared with men whose ambition had been affirmed ($M = 50$ degrees, $SD = 18.53$) and other men who had not received any feedback ($M = 49$ degrees, $SD = 22.31$), $t(80) = -2.49, p < .05, d = .49$ (Figure 3). Moreover, attitudes in the toughness condition were statistically different from the ambition condition, $t(80) = 2.18, p < .05, d = .65$.

ATG. Participants whose toughness had been affirmed expressed more prejudice toward gay men ($M = 5.78, SD = 1.99$) than others whose ambition had been affirmed ($M = 4.31, SD = 2.56$) and others who did not receive any affirmation ($M = 4.19, SD = 2.38$), $t(80) = 2.83, p < .01, d = .68$; Figure 4). Moreover, attitudes in the ambition condition were statistically different from the ambition condition, $t(80) = 2.28, p < .05, d = .64$.

Perceived similarity to gay men. An inspection of the scores on the similarity measure revealed that the data were skewed (Shapiro-Wilk $W = .93, p < .01$), so a logarithmic transformation was applied to normalize the distribution. As shown in Figure 5,

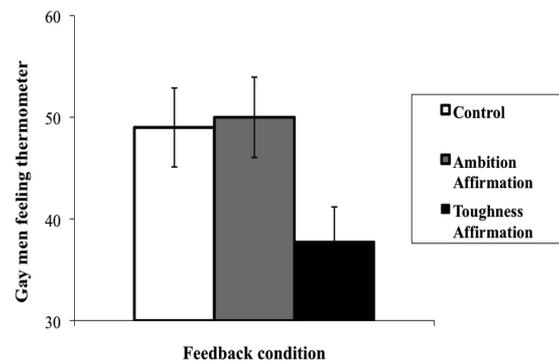


Figure 3. Effect of affirming masculine toughness versus ambition on explicit attitudes toward gay men on the feeling thermometer (Experiment 3). Higher numbers on the feeling thermometer indicate positive feelings toward gay men.

men whose masculine toughness had been affirmed were significantly more likely to distance themselves from gay men by emphasizing how different they were ($M = 8.91, SD = 2.02$) compared with men whose ambition had been affirmed ($M = 7.84, SD = 2.73$) and others who received no affirmation feedback ($M = 7.16, SD = 1.84$), $t(80) = 2.62, p < .05, d = .65$. The results were similar even when the nontransformed data were used as the dependent variable, $t(80) = 2.77, p < .01$. Finally, perceived similarity in the ambition condition and the control condition were statistically equivalent, $t(80) = .53, ns$.

Gender identification. Finally, we examined whether the affirmation-induced prejudice effect occurred because affirming masculinity temporarily increased the salience of men’s gender identity. Participants’ gender identity did not vary between the toughness condition compared with the ambition and control conditions ($M_{\text{toughness}} = 8.5, SD = .96; M_{\text{ambition}} = 7.9, SD = 1.42; M_{\text{control}} = 8.2, SD = 1.50$), $t(80) = 1.65, ns$. Also, identification in the ambition condition and control condition were statistically equivalent, $t(80) = -.87, ns$. Even after controlling for individual differences in gender identity, the effects of affirmation feedback on antigay prejudice and perceived similarity to gay men persisted, $ps < .05$. Although researchers have demonstrated that increased group identification (either measured or manipulated) can increase prejudice (e.g., Correll & Park, 2005; Leonardelli & Brewer, 2001), our results demonstrate that enhanced group identification does not account for the present findings. Furthermore, if strengthening group identity had explained our results, then affirming either masculine dimension (professional ambition or toughness) should have equally increased antigay prejudice. However, this was not the case; affirming masculine toughness only (not professional ambition or the control condition) increased antigay prejudice.

Experiment 4

Experiments 1–3 affirmed male participants by providing bogus feedback about their masculinity as an individual member of their gender group. We referred to this as a group-based affirmation because receiving masculinity feedback about qualities that are central to one’s gender identity should enhance the group’s posi-

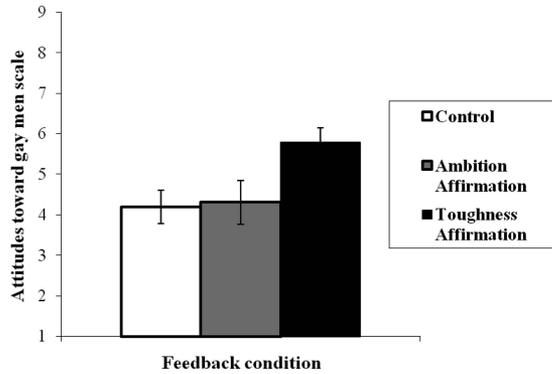


Figure 4. Effect of affirming masculine toughness versus ambition on explicit attitudes on the abbreviated Attitudes Toward Gay Men Scale (Experiment 3). Higher numbers on the y-axis indicate more negative attitudes toward gay men.

tive distinctiveness. However, one might wonder if affirmation of this sort might be different from affirming one's ingroup and its attributes as a whole. We address this issue in Experiment 4 by examining these two different types of group-based affirmations. In one condition we adopted an affirmation manipulation that targeted the ingroup as a whole ("group affirmation"), which is consistent with previous research (Glasford et al., 2009; Sherman et al., 2007). Participants were asked to rank order a list of values and write about why the two values they ranked the highest are important to men as a group and make men unique and distinctive. In a second "group member affirmation" condition, we modified the instructions by asking participants to rank order the same list of values and to write about why the two highest ranked values are important to them as individual men and make them feel unique and distinctive as a man. We posit that affirming individual men or men as a group should motivate affirmed men to maintain their group's positive distinctiveness and consequently derogate non-prototypical men.

The second goal of Experiment 4 was to examine the effect of group-based affirmations on social categorization processes. Does affirming men's masculinity increase the degree to which they cognitively differentiate subgroups of men—those who are prototypical (heterosexual men) versus those who are less prototypical (gay men)? Moreover, does affirming men's masculinity have any effect on their self-categorization? We expected that in the control condition, heterosexual participants will see a modest degree of overlap between gay men and heterosexual men given that both subgroups are subsumed within the broader overarching category of men in general. However, once masculinity is affirmed (via a group or group member affirmation), participants will feel motivated to protect and preserve the positive distinctiveness of their group by increasing the cognitive distance between their subgroup (heterosexual men) as the presumed "real" prototypical men versus others who are less prototypical (gay men). Moreover, we predicted that this type of social categorization would serve as an underlying social-cognitive process mediating the link between affirmation and antigay prejudice.

With respect to self-categorization, we expect that participants are likely to view themselves as prototypical men; as such their self-categorization is unlikely to change as a function of the

affirmation manipulation. Similarly, participants are likely to view heterosexual men as highly prototypical of the larger male category and these categorizations also are unlikely to change as a function of the affirmation manipulation.

Method

Participants. Forty-four male students from a public university in New Jersey participated in exchange for extra course credit. Two participants were dropped because one incorrectly completed the affirmation procedure and one was an outlier on more than one measure. The final sample size was $N = 42$ ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.64$ years, $SD = 2.41$, age range = 18–27). Thirty-six percent were Asian, 26% were White, 10% were Black, 7% were Hispanic/Latino, 5% were multiracial, and 16% indicated an unlisted ethnicity not or did not answer the question. All participants were heterosexual; their mean sexual identification was 10.95 on an 11-point scale where 11 was labeled "I identify as heterosexual exclusively."

Manipulated and measured variables.

Affirmation manipulation. The "group affirmation" manipulation was virtually identical to previous research (Glasford et al., 2009; Sherman et al., 2007; also see McQueen & Klein, 2006). Specifically, participants were given a list of 11 values (e.g., confident, secure, has integrity, loyal, etc.) and asked to rank order them from the one that was "most important to men as a group" to the one that was "least important to men as a group." Then they were asked to write a short essay about why the two highest ranked values were "very important to men as a group and [made] men unique and stand out proudly as a group." This affirmation condition is very similar to past manipulations of group affirmation (e.g., Glasford et al., 2009). In the second "group member affirmation" condition, participants saw the same 11 values but this time they were asked to rank order them from the one that was "most important to you as a man" to the one that was "least important to you as a man." Then they were asked to write a short essay about why the two highest ranked values were "very important to you as a man, and makes you proud to be a man." This procedure was similar to our manipulation in Experiments 1–3 in that it affirmed participants' masculinity as a man. Finally, participants randomly assigned to the control condition did not complete the affirmation task.

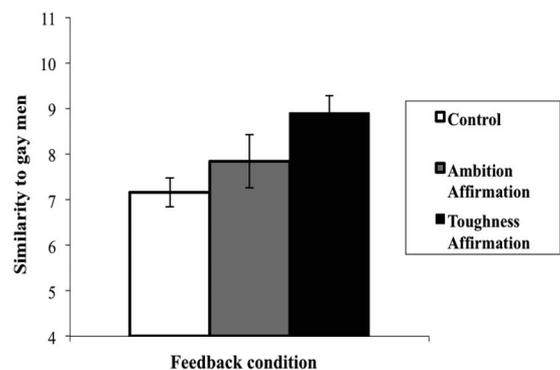


Figure 5. Effect of affirming masculine toughness versus ambition on similarity to gay men (Experiment 3). Higher numbers indicate more perceived difference from gay men.

ATG. This measure was identical to the ATG in Experiment 3 ($\alpha = .85$).

Group- and self-categorization. To assess the categorization processes activated by the affirmation manipulation, we created four sets of Venn-like diagrams to measure the degree to which participants perceived overlap between various pairs of social categories: (a) men in general versus gay men, (b) men in general versus heterosexual men, (c) men in general versus me, and (d) heterosexual men versus gay men. For each comparison, participants saw two circles representing the two target social categories; the distance between the two circles ranged on a 7-point scale. Scores less than 4 represent increasing overlap between the target circles; a score of 4 shows the two circles touching without overlapping; and scores greater than 4 represent increasing distance between two circles (Appendix B). The order in which these items were administered was counterbalanced between participants.

Procedure. A female experimenter informed participants that they would participate in two separate studies. In the “first study,” participants were randomly assigned to either the group affirmation condition, group member affirmation condition, or no affirmation condition (see below for details). In the “second study,” participants completed the categorization task and ATG measure (counterbalanced between-participants). Finally, all participants completed a demographic questionnaire, and then were debriefed extensively.

Results and Discussion

To test our a priori predictions, dependent variables were subjected to two planned contrast tests using affirmation condition as the independent variable. The first planned contrast tested our main prediction that the two affirmation conditions would produce more antigay prejudice than the control condition; thus we compared the two affirmation conditions to the control condition. The second planned contrast examined if the two affirmation conditions were different from each other in terms of the degree of prejudice they elicited.

Effect of group-based affirmations on attitudes toward gay men and social categorizations.

Attitudes toward gay men. Consistent with our prediction, both group and group-member affirmations produced *more* antigay prejudice ($M_{\text{group}} = 5.64$, $SD_{\text{group}} = 2.15$; $M_{\text{group member}} = 5.08$, $SD_{\text{group member}} = 2.32$) than the control condition ($M_{\text{control}} = 3.50$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 2.32$), $t(39) = 2.40$, $p < .05$, $d = .81$. Moreover, attitudes in the group affirmation condition were statistically equivalent to the group member affirmation condition, $t(39) = .67$, *ns*. These results suggest that affirming men as a group versus affirming individual men’s masculinity both increased derogation of gay men.

Social categorizations. In the control condition, heterosexual male participants rated themselves as overlapping with men in general ($M_{\text{me/men}} = 1.83$, $SD_{\text{me/men}} = .93$). Similarly they rated other heterosexual men as overlapping with men in general ($M_{\text{heterosexual men/men}} = 2.00$, $SD_{\text{heterosexual men/men}} = 1.53$). Participants also rated gay men as overlapping with men in general, although to a lesser extent ($M_{\text{gay men/men}} = 3.33$, $SD_{\text{gay men/men}} = 2.22$) than heterosexual men overlapped with men in general, $t(11) = 2.65$, $p < .05$, $d = .69$, and the self overlapped with men in general, $t(11) = 3.02$, $p < .05$, $d = .88$. These data suggest that, in the absence of an affirmation, the experiment’s heterosexual

male participants see gay men as nonprototypical men, relative to perceptions of themselves and other heterosexual men.

Next we examined whether group-based affirmations shifted participants’ social categorization relative to the control condition. As predicted, participants in the control condition categorized gay men as moderately overlapping with heterosexual men ($M_{\text{control}} = 3.33$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 2.22$) whereas participants in the affirmation conditions categorized gay men as very separate from heterosexual men ($M_{\text{group}} = 5.29$, $SD_{\text{group}} = 1.59$; $M_{\text{group member}} = 4.19$, $SD_{\text{group member}} = 1.60$), $t(39) = 2.28$, $p < .05$, $d = .72$. Categorizations in the two affirmation conditions were statistically equivalent, $t(39) = 1.67$, *ns*.

Affirmed participants’ perceptions of gay men relative to men in general ($M_{\text{group}} = 4.79$, $SD_{\text{group}} = 1.47$; $M_{\text{group member}} = 3.56$, $SD_{\text{group member}} = 1.86$) did not statistically differ from the control condition ($M_{\text{control}} = 3.58$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 2.10$), $t(39) = .95$, $p = .13$. Taken together, these results suggest that in the absence of an affirmation heterosexual men categorize gay men as similar to their group. However, once the motivation to preserve the ingroup’s positive distinctiveness was activated following a group affirmation, heterosexual male participants distanced themselves from gay men and categorized them as unrelated to their group.

The degree to which participants perceived an overlap between the self and men in general remained constant across the three conditions ($M_{\text{control}} = 1.83$, $SD_{\text{control}} = .93$; $M_{\text{group}} = 2.36$, $SD_{\text{group}} = 1.78$; $M_{\text{group member}} = 1.69$, $SD_{\text{group member}} = .79$), $t(39) < 1.48$, *ns*. Similarly, the degree to which participants perceived an overlap between men in general and heterosexual men also remained constant across the three conditions ($M_{\text{control}} = 2.00$, $SD_{\text{control}} = 1.53$; $M_{\text{group}} = 2.50$, $SD_{\text{group}} = 1.34$; $M_{\text{group member}} = 2.06$, $SD_{\text{group member}} = 1.12$), $t(39) < .90$, *ns*. These null results suggest that our participants generally perceived themselves and other heterosexual men as prototypical of men in general; affirmation of masculinity did not shift these levels of categorization, which is consistent with the finding from Experiment 3 showing that affirmation procedures did not affect men’s gender identity.

Categorization mediates the relation between affirmation and antigay prejudice. To test if the categorization of gay men relative to heterosexual men mediates the effect of affirmation on antigay prejudice, we conducted a series of hierarchical multiple regressions following Baron and Kenny (1986). As shown in Figure 6, men in the affirmation conditions compared with men in the control condition reported more antigay prejudice, $b = 1.84$, $SE = .77$, $p < .05$, and greater cognitive separation between gay men and heterosexual men, $b = 1.36$, $SE = .62$, $p < .05$. Furthermore, greater cognitive separation predicted stronger antigay prejudice, $b = .55$, $SE = .17$, $p < .01$. After statistically controlling for categorization (mediator) in Step 1 of the regression equation, the effect of affirmation conditions on antigay prejudice was no longer significant, $b = 1.21$, $SE = .76$, $p = .12$. A Sobel test of the change in coefficients, $z = 1.90$, $p = .057$, effect size of indirect effect = .32 (Kenny, 2016), suggests that categorization of gay men relative to heterosexual men is a social-cognitive process that explained why group-based affirmations increased antigay prejudice.

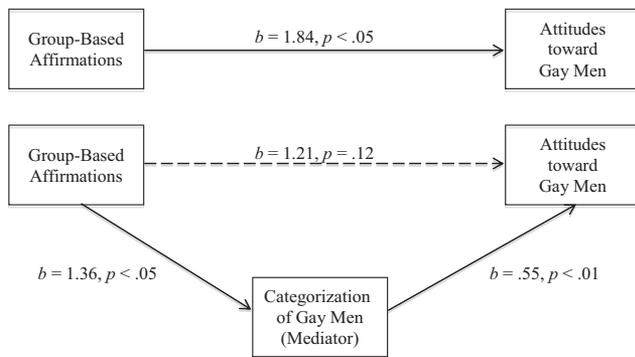


Figure 6. Categorization of gay men relative to heterosexual men mediates the relation between group-based affirmations and attitudes toward gay men (Experiment 4). Sobel test: $z = 1.90, p = .057$.

General Discussion

The present research examined the conditions under which group-based affirmations among heterosexual men have negative consequences on their evaluations of gay men. Our main prediction was that heterosexual men who receive a group-based affirmation will be motivated to preserve their group's positive distinctiveness. This motivation is satisfied by derogating gay men who, by virtue of being nonprototypical group members, threaten the group's positive distinctiveness. In line with this prediction, four experiments consistently demonstrated that heterosexual men whose masculinity was affirmed by favorable feedback about their masculinity beliefs or writing about why particular values were important to them as individual men or to men as a group subsequently exhibited more prejudice against gay men compared with those who did not receive any affirmation. This finding was obtained when attitudes toward gay men were measured implicitly (Experiment 1) and explicitly (Experiments 2–4). Second, affirming heterosexual men's masculinity had the same effect on antigay attitudes as threatening their masculinity—both affirmation and threat increased antigay prejudice compared with a no-feedback condition (Experiment 2). Third, affirmation-induced prejudice occurred only when the affirmed attribute was in a domain on which gay men are nonprototypical (i.e., masculine toughness), but not when it was in a domain irrelevant to the prototypicality of men as a group (i.e., professional ambition; Experiment 3). Finally, affirming group-based values that were central to male participants as individuals or to men as a group in general exacerbated antigay prejudice; this effect was mediated by the increased cognitive separation between the social categories gay men and heterosexual men (Experiment 4). These derogation effects of group-based affirmations occurred across different affirmation manipulations.

Although people typically value their ingroup and see themselves as similar to fellow ingroup members, an idea central to social identity and self-categorization theories (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 2001; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), their reactions are quite different toward ingroup members who are not at the center of the group—nonprototypical members. These individuals may become targets of prejudice relative to prototypical ingroup members (also see Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Waldzus, Mum-

mendey, & Wenzel, 2005; Wenzel, 2001). Nonprototypical members are seen as “bad” group members because they threaten the positive distinctiveness of the ingroup. Based on past group affirmation research in which an affirmation of one's group as a whole tends to buffer group members from threats (Derks et al., 2006, 2007, 2009; Glasford et al., 2009; Sherman et al., 2007), one might have predicted that any group affirmation could make individuals benevolent and generous in their evaluations of *all* ingroup members regardless of their prototypicality. However, we proposed and found support for a very different prediction. That is, affirming group qualities possessed by a perceiver or by their ingroup as a whole motivates ingroup members to uphold the affirmed ingroup attribute and reject anything and anyone whose presence damages their affirmed ingroup distinctiveness. To the extent that nonprototypical ingroup members are seen as lacking the affirmed ingroup attribute, their presence is a reminder that the cherished attribute is not central to everyone in the group, which undermines positive group distinctiveness. Consistent with this prediction, we found that affirming masculine attributes of individual men or of men as a group increased derogation of gay men.

Our findings are consistent with research suggesting that men (more so than women) are highly motivated to protect and uphold their masculine roles, traits, and behaviors, and expect fellow ingroup members to conform to these ideals (e.g., Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Hort, Fagot, & Leinbach, 1990; Kite & Deaux, 1987; Martin, 1990; Page & Yee, 1985). Moreover, heterosexual men who have high gender self-esteem and thus are presumably chronically motivated to maintain positive ingroup distinctiveness are more likely to derogate gay men than others whose chronic self-image is less contingent on their gender (Falomir-Pichastor & Mugny, 2009; cf. Herek, 1986, 1987; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). However most of this past research is correlational and thus unable to establish a causal direction of this relation. The present work used controlled experimental designs to investigate the conditions that elicit heterosexual men's motivation to uphold and preserve their group's cherished attribute—masculinity—and how it subsequently causes changes in their expression of antigay prejudice.

An important contribution of our experiments is the demonstration of how a group affirmation (typically a good thing) can have a paradoxical bad effect. As such, these findings complement and extend past research on self-affirmation in person and group perception. Self-affirmation is when a quality associated with one's personal identity (as opposed to one's social identity) is enhanced (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997; Spencer, Fein, Wolfe, Fong, & Dunn, 1998). Whereas past studies have shown that affirming an attribute associated with one's personal identity *decreases* prejudice against outgroup members, our research demonstrates that affirming an attribute associated with one's social identity as a group member or affirming one's group as a whole *increases* prejudice against nonprototypical ingroup members.

Limitations and Future Research

The present research tested the main hypothesis in the specific context of affirming masculinity and its specific effect on the expression of antigay prejudice, which raises the question whether the present effects would extend to other types of group-based

affirmations and judgments of ingroup members. We suspect that the main hypothesis would be supported to the extent that the present conditions are met—affirming group-based values important to ingroup members as individuals (see Experiments 1–4) or their group in general (see Experiment 4) followed by the opportunity to evaluate ingroup members who are categorized as nonprototypical. Consistent with this general hypothesis, Rivera and Margevich (2016) reminded American non-Hispanic participants of the realistic and symbolic threats immigrants pose to the United States and its citizens. When these participants received an American group affirmation, strong American identification was associated with *higher* implicit anti-Hispanic bias; by comparison, this relation did not emerge among those participants in a control condition. These data suggest that Hispanics are perceived as nonprototypical Americans and thus threaten Americans' group positive distinctiveness. Future research should continue to test the boundary conditions of the present effects such as identifying the psychological constructs that may serve as moderator variables.

The flip side to the present research is when a group affirmation can have a positive effect on judging others. Several studies have demonstrated that a group affirmation can have beneficial effects—it enhances performance, reduces defensive biases, and improves psychological well-being (Derks et al., 2006, 2007, 2009; Glasford et al., 2009; Sherman et al., 2007). With respect to judging others, Villicana et al. (2016; also see McGregor et al., 2008) argued that, consistent with social identity and self-categorization theories (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), the presence of a clearly defined outgroup can cause individuals to self-categorize with their social identity and activate the motivation to protect positive ingroup distinctiveness by expressing prejudice. They predicted, however, that a group-affirmation should satisfy group-image needs and minimize the potential threat outgroups may pose, thereby reducing the likelihood of expressing prejudice. Consistent with this prediction, they demonstrated that White American participants (especially those who strongly identified with their group) who received an ethnic-racial or national group affirmation subsequently exhibited *less* prejudice against outgroups. Thus, this research elucidates the conditions under which a group affirmation can benefit intergroup relations.

Conclusion

The previous and present lines of research suggest that a group affirmation may sometimes function like a two-faced Janus. Under the present conditions, feeling good about oneself as a member of a group has negative consequences for others. To the extent that people are motivated to maintain the group's positive distinctiveness, a group affirmation has negative consequences for individuals who do not fit the ingroup norm leaving them vulnerable to derogation. Consistent with this hypothesis, the present data support the cautionary note that affirming one's group can sometimes paradoxically increase prejudice, which may have particularly important implications for men, masculinity, and extreme cases of homophobia. One such case may be the atrocity that occurred in Orlando, Florida, where a man marched into a gay nightclub on June 12, 2016, and carried out the worst mass shooting in United States history, leaving 50 people dead and 53 wounded (most of them gay men; Alvarez & Perez-Peña, 2016). This atrocity, coupled with the pervasive hate crimes caused by gender and sexuality biases (second only to racial bias hate crimes; Federal

Bureau of Investigations, 2016), highlight the importance of understanding motivational mechanisms.

Through the lens of the present research, hate against gay men stems in part from motives rooted in masculine identity. Research thus far has established that one motivational source is masculinity threat (e.g., Talley & Bettencourt, 2008; Vandello et al., 2008; also see Experiment 2). However, the paradox of the present research is that gender identity motives for men may be rooted in masculinity affirmation as well. Altogether, the effects of masculinity threats and affirmations demonstrate the precariousness of masculinity (see Vandello et al., 2008). One way to intervene is to eliminate the social structural factors that promote and maintain the notion that masculinity is a social status that men ought to achieve (for a discussion, see Howson, 2006). Given the challenges of changing pervasive and powerful structural forces, an alternative is to intervene at the individual level. Interestingly, one such intervention is rooted in the very theory that informs the present research, self-affirmation theory (Steele et al., 1993). Self-affirmation theory posits that individuals have numerous sources of self-worth, such as values and traits that are tied to their personal and group identities. When one important life domain is threatened, people may draw from an alternative source of self-worth to restore the integrity of their overall self-image and well-being. In the case of men and masculine identity, a self-affirmation can be operationalized by providing them with as many opportunities to build, strengthen, and maintain their relationships with important others such as friends, parents, siblings, and their children. Affirming alternative important, but less precarious, identities has the potential to satisfy men's overall group identity needs and minimize the perception of threats posed in their environment, thereby promoting favorable attitudes toward all individuals and groups.

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(Appendices follow)

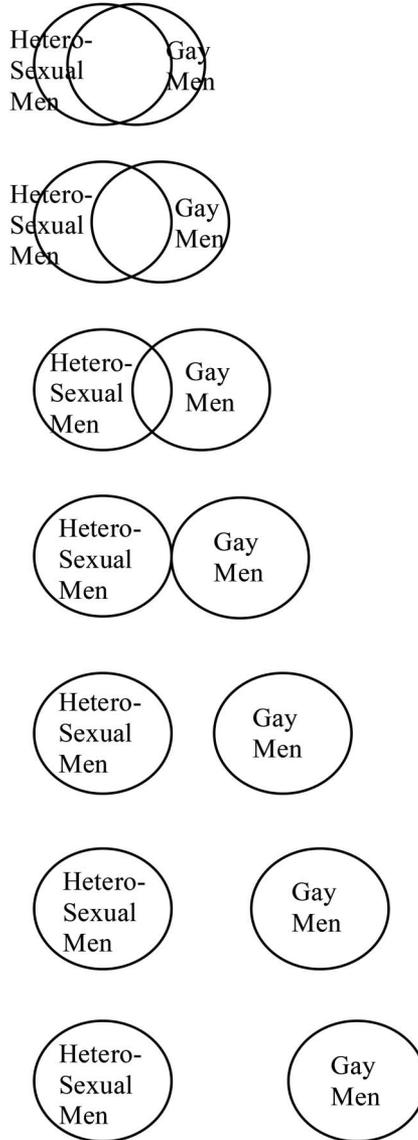
Appendix A**Pictorial Stimuli of Same-Sex and Different-Sex Couples Used in the Implicit Associations Test (IAT; Experiment 1)**

The above images from Pixabay are close approximates to the ones used in Experiment 1. All images on Pixabay are released free of copyrights under Creative Commons CC0 (<https://pixabay.com/en/blog/posts/public-domain-images-what-is-allowed-and-what-is-4/>).

(Appendices continue)

Appendix B

Sample of Venn-Like Diagram That Categorizes Heterosexual Men Relative to Gay Men (Experiment 4)



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