

LOWERING GAY MEN’S SEXISM:
PERCEIVED SIMILARITY FRAMING AS A
PREJUDICE REDUCTION STRATEGY

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Strategy

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The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of an intraminority prejudice reduction strategy on gay men's sexism. Previous work has found that focusing people's attention on shared experiences of oppression with an outgroup reduced prejudice toward that outgroup (Cortland et al., 2017). The present experimental study aimed to reduce gay men's sexism by manipulating the salience of gay men's shared experiences of discrimination with women. Gay men ($N = 365$) prompted to think about women's discrimination as "similar" to their own experiences of discrimination were less sexist compared to gay men in a control condition; the similarity manipulation did not, however, increase support for a women's political issue (reproductive choice). These results have implications for future intraminority prejudice reduction research and can potentially encourage fruitful coalitions between gay men and women.

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Gay Men's Sexism:

Perceived Similarity Framing as a Prejudice Reduction Strategy

A robust psychological literature has consistently demonstrated numerous negative consequences of being the target of prejudice (for a review, see Swim & Stangor, 1998). These consequences impact targets' lives in many domains, including negative mental and physical health outcomes (Harnois & Bastos, 2018; Hope, Hoggard, & Thomas, 2015; Meyer, 2013). Consequently, many social psychological researchers have focused their work on developing prejudice reduction strategies and understanding which are the most successful in different social contexts. Prejudice reduction strategies often focus on dismantling in-group favoritism and out-group contempt. Therefore, a review of prejudice reduction strategies (Paluck & Green, 2009) highlights the contact hypothesis and social identity and categorization theories as two major theoretical contributions in the domain of prejudice reduction strategies.

The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) posits that cooperative contact with out-group members reduces prejudice by increasing familiarity and dispelling irrational beliefs (i.e., negative stereotypes), but particularly if group members have equal status and authority. However, a meta-analysis ($N = 696$ samples) determined that equal status and authority were not necessary; instead, contact reduced prejudice provided it was psychologically meaningful (e.g., emotionally engaging; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Taking a different approach, social identity theorists suggest that prejudice reduction by encouraging in-group members to reframe their group identities to be more inclusive. For example, when participants were induced to perceive a common fate with an out-group, they displayed lower levels of out-group derogation compared with a control group

(Gaertner et al., 1999). These findings are consistent with the common ingroup identity model (CIIM) of prejudice reduction (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). According to the CIIM, expanding group boundaries reduces prejudice and conflict by transforming zero-sum, competitive ("us vs. them") perceptions into a shared ingroup ("we"). In fact, the CIIM argues that contact is most effective when group members' perceptions are transformed in this way through cooperative endeavors (Gaertner et al., 1993).

Although prejudices are often held by people who have a higher social status than the targets of their prejudicial attitudes, minority group members may also be biased against other minority groups. For example, researchers have investigated the racial biases of ethnic minorities using the Implicit Association Test (IAT). Demonstrating colorism, Hispanics showed an implicit preference for in-group members with lighter skin (Uhlmann, Dasgupta, Elgueta, Greenwald & Swanson, 2002). Black Americans who implicitly showed a preference for Whites also associated Whites (more than Blacks) with attractiveness (Rudman & McLean, 2015). Additionally, research has demonstrated the gender biases of women. For example, both men and women automatically favored male versus female authority figures (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). Further, both genders explicitly rated an agentic female leader as less likable and less hireable than a male counterpart (Rudman, Moss-Racusin, Phelan & Nauts, 2012). Finally, my prior research demonstrated that gay men's sexist attitudes are similar to, or stronger than, heterosexual men's sexist attitudes (Cultice & Rudman, 2019).

Taken together, these results suggest psychological barriers that undermine the ability of minority groups to form effective coalitions. Consequently, researchers have

sought to determine how to effectively reduce minority group members' negative attitudes toward other minority group members. A consistent finding is that rather than perceiving opportunities for solidarity, marginalized group members may see themselves as competing with other minorities for attention to their grievances; as a result, perceiving discrimination against one's in-group can increase prejudice toward minority out-group members (Young & Sullivan, 2016). To combat this tendency, researchers have increased the salience of shared disadvantage among members of different groups, finding that it reduces prejudicial attitudes. For example, Craig and Richeson (2012) found that Asian and Latino participants primed with in-group discrimination reported less anti-Black prejudice (compared with unprimed controls), and that perceived similarity with Blacks mediated this effect. Using an experiment, Cortland et al. (2017) found a similar pattern for racial minorities' attitudes toward sexual minorities, such that increasing the similarity of shared experiences with discrimination increased empathy, political support, and positive attitudes on the part of racial minorities toward sexual minority group members. Additionally, Cortland et al. (2017) found that when pervasive sexism was made salient, inducing a "similarity-seeking" mindset in women reduced subsequent negative racial biases. Thus, it appears that one means of increasing perceived similarity is to focus people's attention on shared experiences of oppression. As a result, two groups that might normally be in conflict can be transformed into a common ingroup, even without contact, as the CIIM would predict (Gaertner et al., 1999).

To build on these prior investigations, I conducted an experimental study that investigated whether gay men (targets of sexual minority discrimination) might reduce their sexist attitudes if encouraged to perceive women's oppression as similar to their

own. First, however, I will discuss the intersection of gender and sexuality, specifically in the context of considering why gay men are prejudiced against women (Cultice & Rudman, 2019).

Gay Men's Sexism: The Intersection of Gender and Sexuality

Social psychologists have repeatedly demonstrated that men around the world are more sexist than women are (Glick et al., 2000; Rudman & Glick, 2008). These findings, however, originate from predominately heterosexual samples. In fact, many theories of sexism are rooted in the constructs of heterosexual relationships. For example, social role theory posits that gender stereotypes endowing men with competence and women with warmth stem directly from traditional labor divisions in heterosexual marriages (Eagly, 1987).

Also, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996), one of the most prominent measures of sexism, consists of two subscales that *each* theoretically rely on the constructs of heterosexual relationships. For example, the benevolent sexism subscale addresses men's patronizingly positive attitudes toward women (e.g. "No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman"), while the hostile sexism subscale addresses a more blatantly aggressive attitude toward women (e.g. "Many women get a kick out of teasing men by seeming to be sexually available and then refusing male advances.").¹

Although it is important to show how sexism is often a feature of heterosexuality, it is equally imperative that researchers take an intersectional approach to studying sexism. Gay men hold social positions of power because of their male gender, but they also are frequent and systemic targets of discrimination because of their sexual

orientation. According to intersectional frameworks of masculinity, because minority men are less likely to benefit from male privilege than majority men, they should be less prejudiced against women (Harnois, 2017). Consistent with this theory, Warriner, Nagoshi and Nagoshi (2013) found that gay men scored lower than heterosexual men did on both the benevolent sexism and hostile sexism subscales of the ASI; however, their gay male sample was small, they compared gay men to heterosexual men across two different time periods (spanning five years), and the ASI is a problematic measure for gay men, whose sexist attitudes are not based on the interdependencies of romantic relationships with women.

In order to address this gap in the literature, I developed and validated a measure of sexism, the Inclusive Sexism Scale (ISS; Cultice & Rudman, 2019). This measure was specifically designed to measure men's sexist attitudes regardless of their sexual orientation (see Appendix A). This was accomplished by including items that do not require sexual attraction to women as a pre-requisite to having sexist attitudes. The measure includes a global evaluation of women, combined with zero-sum attitudes suggesting that women's rights put men at a disadvantage (e.g., "As women face less sexism, men end up facing more bias against them"); endorsement of sexual beliefs that privilege men (e.g., "In my opinion, the sexual double standard is good and should be maintained") and that address gay men's disgust for women's reproductive capabilities (e.g., "Female reproduction [periods, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation] disgusts me"). In two studies, the ISS showed (1) a unidimensional factor structure with high internal consistency; (2) known groups validity (men outscored women); and (3) robust concurrent and convergent validity (e.g., it correlated well with hostile sexism). Of more

interest, gay men consistently scored higher than heterosexual men on the ISS. They also scored similarly on hostile sexism and other measures of gender bias, while scoring lower only on benevolent sexism.

In a third study, we speculated that gay men's sexism has been overlooked by social psychologists due to theoretical assumptions that gay men are not likely to be sexist, either because of their relatively low status (as intersectional frameworks argue; Harnois, 2017) or because they have a lower stake in sexism given they are not dependent on women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Do lay people share these assumptions? To find out, we asked a predominately heterosexual sample of American adults to complete the ISS as either a typical gay man or a typical straight man would (Cultice & Rudman, 2019, Study 3). As predicted, participants estimated that gay men would score lower than heterosexual men on the ISS, when in fact, our findings showed the reverse (in two studies). Then we asked them to report their attributions for why people in general assume that gay men are less sexist than straight men. Results showed that lay people significantly agreed with intersectional theorists, endorsing items such as "People think that gay men are less sexist than straight men because gay men have more empathy for the kind of prejudice women face," and "because gay grow up having been bullied, and it strengthens their bond with women." Moreover, to the extent that people endorsed these items, they were more likely to estimate higher ISS scores for straight men than gay men. These findings suggest that people assume that gay men are relatively less sexist because of their perceived solidarity with women (due to shared experiences of discrimination). Thus, lay people agreed with intersectional frameworks, even though our findings contradicted this view.

Nonetheless, findings reviewed above by Cortland et al. (2017) suggest that there is some truth to the intersectional theory's argument that shared experiences of discrimination should reduce prejudicial attitudes between members of differently stigmatized groups (Harnois, 2017). However, it likely depends on drawing attention to group members' similarities. As noted, Cortland et al. found that increasing the salience of shared discrimination increased racial minorities' political support, positive attitudes, and empathy toward sexual minority out-group members. Thus, in the present research, I hypothesized that by experimentally manipulating gay men's similarity with women (via shared experiences of discrimination), gay men in the similarity condition will score lower on the ISS (i.e., demonstrate less sexism), show increased levels of empathy for women, and express greater political support for abortion rights, a woman's health issue, compared with a control group.

Study Overview and Hypotheses

The present experimental study aimed to lower gay men's ISS scores and increase their political support for and empathy toward women. This study did so by manipulating the perceived salience of gay men's shared experiences of discrimination with women. Sexist attitudes were measured using the ISS (Cultice & Rudman, 2019), a measure of sexism that has been shown to correlate with many other frequently used measures of sexism, thus bolstering its practicality in this study. Additionally, the women's rights issue chosen for the purpose of this study was abortion rights. This political issue was specifically chosen for this study because in addition to the topic being currently politically relevant, it is also a women's issue that gay men ostensibly have less stake in. However, I measured religious identity for use as a covariate because of its relevance to

support for abortion rights. For example, Stets and Leik (1993) found religiosity to be among the factors that separate those who are “pro-life” from those who are “pro-choice.” My hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis 1. The ISS will negatively correlate with gay men's empathy for abortion rights and pro-abortion attitudes, controlling for strength of religious identity.

Hypothesis 2. In accord with the CIIM (Gaertner et al., 1993) and to extend Cortland et al.'s (2017) findings, gay men who are experimentally induced to see women's discrimination as similar to their own will score lower on the ISS and show increased empathy and support for women's abortion rights, compared to gay men in the control condition, controlling for strength of religious identity.

Craig and Richeson (2014) discovered an unexpected correlate of inter-minority prejudice, such that perceived *group* discrimination predicted higher, whereas perceived *personal* discrimination predicted lower, levels of out-group prejudice. Because the reason for this pattern is unclear and effect sizes were small, I have not described it in the introduction. The authors speculated that, "a personal connection with discrimination and/or disadvantage may help to increase perceptions of commonality with stigmatized outgroups [and] thus, facilitate more positive intergroup attitudes" (p. 172). Therefore, I included measures of both personal and group-based discrimination in an effort to conceptually replicate their results. Of more interest, I speculatively hypothesized that level of discrimination might interact with experimental condition in the following way:

Hypothesis 3. The similarity manipulation will be more effective for gay men reporting personal discrimination, as opposed to group-based discrimination. That is, group-based discrimination will be positively associated with sexism regardless of

condition, whereas personal discrimination will facilitate decreased sexism particularly in the similarity condition, controlling for strength of religious identity.

Finally, recall that prior research found that perceived similarity with out-group members mediated the effect of a solidarity manipulation on prejudice (Cortland et al., 2017). Because gay men's oppression is inextricably tied to their stereotyped "similarity" to women, I instead used a measure of perceived closeness with women. I hypothesized that closeness would moderate the condition effect; if so, I would test it as a mediator.

Hypothesis 4. The extent to which gay men in the similarity treatment group indicate more positive attitudes toward women than controls will depend on the degree to which they perceive themselves to be close to women, controlling for strength of religious identity.

Method

Participants

A power analysis showed that 392 participants were needed for 80% power to detect a small interaction effect. Therefore, I recruited 400 gay, cisgender male participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk who participated in exchange for \$0.50. Only those who were at least 18 years old and a US citizen were allowed to participate. In addition, 16 participants were removed because they inconsistently reported their gender and/or sexual orientation from the beginning to the end of the survey, and an additional 19 failed the attention check. Data from the remainder ($N = 365$) were analyzed. Of these, 75.1% were White, with an average age of 33.65 years ($SD = 11.65$).

Materials

Perceived group and personal discrimination. Using items from Craig and Richeson (2014), participants indicated their *personal* discrimination (“In your life, how often have you personally experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your sexual orientation?”) and their *group based* discrimination (“To what degree do you think discrimination against gay people in America is a problem?”) on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*).

Closeness to women. Participants responded to two items on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*): “I have many close friends who are women”; and “I often feel better after I interact with women.” Scores were averaged to form an index of perceived closeness to women ($\alpha = .64$; $r = .47$, $p < .001$).

Experimental manipulation. Participants were randomly assigned to the similarity condition or the control condition. This methodology was modeled from prejudice reduction efforts with racial minorities and their attitudes toward sexual minorities (Cortland et al., 2017).²

All participants were introduced to the topic of interest: women’s reproductive health and access to choice. However, condition was manipulated by introducing the topic in a manner that either made the similarities between gay men’s and women’s discrimination salient or not salient. In the similarity condition, participants read: “In this study we are interested in a civil rights issue. This issue has received a lot of attention lately and is similar to the struggles of the gay community in their quest for equal rights. The civil rights issue that we will be focusing on is protecting women’s reproductive choice and health.” In the control condition, the participants read a similar introduction,

however without any mention of similarities between gay men's and women's discrimination: "In this study we are interested in a women's rights issue. The women's rights issue that we will be focusing on today is one that has received a lot of attention lately: protecting women's reproductive choice and health." The remaining survey measures were identical for all participants, regardless of experimental condition.

Inclusive Sexism Scale. Participants completed the Inclusive Sexism Scale (ISS; Cultice & Rudman, 2019). Appendix A shows the full measure. Items were scored on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 10 (*strongly agree*) except that the first item was scored on a scale from 1 (*very warm/favorable*) to 10 (*very cold/unfavorable*). Sample items include, "Efforts to reduce discrimination against women have led to increased discrimination against men;" and "Female reproduction (periods, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation) disgusts me." After item 8 was reverse scored, the 11 items were averaged together ($\alpha = .92$). Higher scores on the ISS reflect more sexist attitudes.

Pro-abortion attitudes. Participants completed a five item measure of support for abortion rights (Stets & Leik, 1993) to indicate their political support of women (see Appendix B). Sample items include, "Abortion should remain legal under federal law"; and "The government has no right to tell a woman what to do with her body." The scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). After reverse scoring, all items were averaged such that higher scores indicate greater political support for women's access to reproductive healthcare and choice ($\alpha = .78$).

Political similarity. For use as a manipulation check, participants completed a two-item measure of political similarity with women on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). These items were, "I think women and gays share a

common interest in fighting oppression”; and “I think gay men and women are similar in their social justice goals.” These two items were averaged ($\alpha = .82$; $r = .70$, $p < .001$).

Empathy for abortion rights. A two-item measure of empathy for women's abortion rights (adapted from Cortland et al., 2017) was scored using a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*). The items were, “To what extent would you feel sympathy for a woman denied access to abortion care?” and “To what extent would you feel bad for a woman denied access to abortion care?” Scores for these items were averaged ($\alpha = .90$; $r = .82$, $p < .001$).

Demographics. Participants indicated their gender identity (Man, Woman, Transgender man, Transgender woman, Genderfluid, None of the above) and their sexual orientation (Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual, Other) at the beginning and end of the survey. These items served to screen out ineligible participants.

At the end of the survey, participants completed a two-item index of their religious identity ($\alpha = .82$; $r = .69$, $p < .001$) for use as a covariate. The items were, “Would you describe yourself as religious?” and “What are your feelings toward orthodox (strict, devout) religious beliefs?” Items were scored using scales from 1 (*not at all*) to 6 (*very much*) and 1 (*very unfavorable*) to 6 (*very favorable*), respectively. For descriptive purposes, they also indicated their age, racial identity (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Biracial, Other), and political identity on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very liberal*) to 5 (*very conservative*).

Procedure

After consenting to participate, eligible participants completed the closeness to women measure, then the perceived discrimination items (personal and group-based).

Then were randomly assigned to either a similarity condition (in which they read about women's discrimination framed as "similar to gay men's discrimination") or a control condition. Then they completed attitudes toward abortion, during which I embedded an attention check ("Answer strongly agree if you are paying attention!"), followed by empathy for abortion rights, political similarity, and the ISS.

Subsequently, participants were screened again so that those providing inconsistent answers for their gender and sexual orientation could be excluded (as were those who failed the attention check). After completing additional demographics (age, political identity, race, and religious identity), they were debriefed, thanked, and compensated.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas (where applicable), and bivariate correlations for all measures used in the study. Notably, personal discrimination was positively related to the ISS, whereas group based discrimination was negatively related to the ISS, which is the opposite of the pattern shown by Craig and Richeson (2014). However, perceived discrimination, both personal and group based, was positively related to all measures indicating support for women (columns 2-5). In other respects, results were not surprising: Religious and conservative political identity were positively related to the ISS, and negatively related to empathy for abortion rights, pro-abortion attitudes, and closeness with women.

Manipulation check. The experimental manipulation was designed to increase gay men's political similarity to women (i.e., believing that women and gay men share a

common interest in fighting oppression, and are similar in their social justice goals).

Therefore, I compared gay men's political similarity scores by condition. However, there was no significant difference between gay men's reported political similarity to women in the control condition ($n = 181$, $M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.38$) and the similarity condition ($n = 184$, $M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.49$), $t(363) = 1.66$, $p = .098$. This calls into question subsequent analyses that rely on the effect of the experimental manipulation. This is addressed in the limitations section of the Discussion.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 was that the ISS would negatively correlate with gay men's political empathy for women and political similarity with women, as well as with support for abortion policies, considering religious identity as a covariate. To test this this hypothesis, I ran a series of partial correlations including the ISS, political empathy, political similarity, and support for abortion policy, and additionally religiosity as a covariate. Confirming hypothesis 1, the ISS was negatively correlated with empathy for abortion rights ($r = -.23$, $p < .001$), pro-abortion attitudes, ($r = -.35$, $p < .001$), and political similarity with women ($r = -.11$, $p = .045$), controlling for strength of religious identity. These findings support the convergent validity of the ISS as a measure of sexism (Cultice & Rudman, 2019).

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 was that compared to gay men in the control condition, gay men in the similarity condition will score lower on the ISS and show increased empathy for abortion rights and pro-abortion attitudes, controlling for religious identity. To test these predictions, I ran three separate multiple regression analyses, including religiosity and

condition (coded 1 = *control condition*, 2 = *similarity condition*) as predictors of either (1) ISS scores, (2) empathy for abortion rights, or (3) pro-abortion attitudes.

Results did not support these predictions. Experimental condition, controlling for strength of religious identity, did not significantly predict ISS scores, $R^2 = .24$, $F(2, 362) = 0.34$, $p = .561$; greater empathy for abortion rights, $R^2 = .04$, $F(2, 362) = 0.38$, $p = .538$; or pro-abortion attitudes, $R^2 = .17$, $F(2, 362) = 1.98$, $p = .161$. In fact, results for the ISS were in the opposite direction as predicted.³

Hypothesis 3

Despite the absence of support for the manipulation check and hypothesis 2, I next tested whether perceived discrimination would moderate the effect of condition on gay men's sexist attitudes. Hypothesis 3 states that the similarity manipulation will be more effective for gay men reporting personal discrimination, as opposed to group-based discrimination. Specifically, after adjusting for religious identity, I expect group-based discrimination to be positively associated with sexism regardless of condition, whereas personal discrimination will be negatively associated with sexism in the similarity condition. I tested this hypothesis for three focal outcomes: the ISS, empathy for abortion rights, and pro-abortion attitudes.

In order to test these hypotheses, I ran six separate multiple regression analyses, one each for personal discrimination and group based discrimination, using the PROCESS Macro (Model 1), which provides 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals from 5,000 bootstrapped estimates (Hayes, 2013). In each analysis, I included experimental condition (coded 1 = *control*, 2 = *similarity condition*), perceived personal (or group based) discrimination, the interaction term (condition X perceived

discrimination), and religious identity as predictors for (1) lower ISS scores, (2) higher empathy for abortion rights, and (3) greater pro-abortion attitudes.

ISS. The model including personal discrimination was significant, $R^2 = .25$, $F(4, 360) = 30.32$, $p < .001$. Moreover, the interaction of experimental condition and personal discrimination significantly predicted ISS scores, $b = -.30$, $t(360) = -0.25$, $p = .012$. Results of this regression analysis are summarized in Table 2 (top half).

Simple effects analyses, shown in Figure 1, did not support hypothesis 3. Among gay men in the control condition, higher reported personal discrimination significantly predicted higher ISS scores, $b = .20$, $SE = .08$, $t = 2.37$, $p = .018$, 95% CI = 0.03, 0.37. Gay men who experienced more personal discrimination scored higher on the ISS in the absence of the similarity intervention. In the similarity condition, there was no significant effect of personal discrimination on ISS scores, $b = -.10$, $SE = .09$, $t = -1.16$, $p = .245$, 95% CI = -0.27, 0.07.. In other words, the similarity condition mitigated the positive relationship between personal experiences of discrimination and sexist attitudes (seen also in Table 1, Column 1).

Next, I repeated this analysis using perceived group based discrimination as a moderator. The overall model was again significant, $R^2 = .28$, $F(4, 360) = 34.66$, $p < .001$. Unexpectedly, so was the Condition x Group Based Discrimination interaction, $b = -.28$, $t(360) = -0.25$, $p = .026$. Results of this regression analysis are summarized in Table 2 (bottom half).

Simple effects analyses, shown in Figure 2, revealed no significant effect of reported group discrimination on ISS scores in the control condition, $b = -.10$, $SE = .09$, $t = -1.06$, $p = .291$, 95% CI = -0.27, 0.08. However, gay men in the similarity condition

showed a negative relationship between group based discrimination and ISS scores, $b = -.37$, $SE = .09$, $t = -4.38$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = -0.54, -0.20. Thus, the negative correlation between group based discrimination and gay men's sexism seen in Table 1, was only significant when gay men are reminded of the similarity between their own and women's quest for equal rights.

Empathy for abortion rights. Comparable regression analyses for empathy for abortion rights did not conceptually replicate the findings for ISS scores. For personal discrimination, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .19$, $F(4, 360) = 21.24$, $p < .001$. However, the Condition X Personal Discrimination interaction was not significant, $b = .10$, $t(360) = 1.09$, $p = .278$. Likewise, for group based discrimination, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .30$, $F(4, 360) = 37.85$, $p < .001$, but the interaction term was not, $b = .08$, $t(360) = 0.88$, $p = .381$.

Results of these regression analyses are summarized Table 3. As in Table 1 (Column 2), there were positive main effects of personal discrimination, $b = .40$, $SE = .05$, $t(360) = 8.18$, $p < .001$, and group discrimination, $b = .53$, $SE = .05$, $t(360) = 11.38$, $p < .001$, on empathy for women's abortion rights. Implications of these findings will be included in the discussion section.

Pro-abortion attitudes. Comparable regression analyses for gay men's pro-abortion attitudes also did not support hypothesis 3. For personal discrimination, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .24$, $F(4, 360) = 28.63$, $p < .001$; however, the interaction of condition and personal discrimination was not, $b = .11$, $t(360) = 1.36$, $p = .175$. For group based discrimination, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .24$, $F(4,$

360) = 28.63, $p < .001$, but the interaction of condition and group based discrimination was not, $b = .11$, $t(360) = 1.36$, $p = .175$.

Results of these regression analyses are summarized Table 4. Echoing Table 1 (see Column 3), significant main effects of personal discrimination, $b = .23$, $SE = .04$, $t(360) = 5.50$, $p < .001$, and group discrimination, $b = .39$, $SE = .04$, $t(360) = 9.91$, $p < .001$, emerged such that stronger perceptions of both types of discrimination predicted more positive attitudes toward abortion. Implications of these findings will be included in the discussion section.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 was that the relationship between experimental condition and men's sexist attitudes will be moderated by participants' perceived closeness to women. In order to test this hypothesis, I ran three separate multiple regression analyses using the PROCESS Macro (Model 1). I included experimental condition (coded 1 = *control*, 2 = *similarity condition*), closeness to women, the Condition X Closeness interaction, , and religious identity as predictors for (1) lower ISS scores, (2) higher empathy for abortion rights, or (3) stronger pro-abortion attitudes .

These predictions were not supported. The interaction of experimental condition and closeness to women (adjusting for religious identity) did not significantly predict ISS scores ($p = .721$), political empathy for women ($p = .277$), or support for abortion policy ($p = .100$). Additionally, no significant main effects of closeness to women emerged as a predictor for these outcomes. Because closeness to women did not moderate the condition effect, I did not test it as a mediator. Table 1 (Row 4) shows no significant relationship between closeness and pro-abortion attitudes (or ISS scores), but a positive

relationship between closeness and empathy for abortion rights that became nonsignificant in the presence of condition and religious identity.

Discussion

Because prior research using the ISS showed that gay men have more sexist attitudes than heterosexual men (Cultice & Rudman, 2019), the next logical step is to try to reduce their sexist attitudes. Research has shown that for stigmatized group members, increasing the salience of shared experiences of discrimination can reduce prejudice and increase political support for out-group members (Cortland et al., 2017; Craig & Richeson, 2012; Craig & Richeson, 2014).

The present research builds on this literature by testing whether gay men's sexist attitudes may be lowered by making salient their shared experiences of discrimination with women. Specifically, I hypothesized that when the similarities between gay men's and women's experiences of discrimination are made salient to gay male participants (compared to controls), gay men will report lower ISS scores, increased empathy for abortion rights, and increased political support for women in the form of pro-abortion attitudes. I also hypothesized that this relationship might be moderated by the degree to which gay men *personally* face discrimination, or the degree to which gay men feel close to women. The first moderator was necessary because if gay men have not faced discrimination, they will be unlikely to view women's experiences with oppression as similar to their own. The second moderator was necessary because not all gay men are likely to experience the manipulation as equally effective. Also, I used religious identity as a covariate due to its relevance for support for abortion (Stets & Leik, 1993).

Only hypothesis 1 was supported: The ISS negatively correlated with empathy for abortion rights, pro-abortion attitudes, and political similarity with women, controlling for strength of religious identity. These results support the convergent validity of the ISS (Cultice & Rudman, 2019).

However, the similarity intervention did not predict attitudes toward women on its own. I found no significant differences by condition on any of the focal measures, including the manipulation check (political similarity to women). This suggests that either the similarity manipulation was too weak to produce the hypothesized results, or there are important moderator variables. The latter is what was predicted in hypothesis 3 and hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 3 expected that personal discrimination (“In your life, how often have you personally experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your sexual orientation?”) would moderate, such that the similarity condition would produce the most favorable attitudes toward women among gay men who personally experienced discrimination. This prediction was not supported, even though personal discrimination interacted with condition. In the control condition, gay men scored higher on the ISS (i.e., were more sexist) if they reported experiencing more personal discrimination; in the similarity condition, this relationship was reversed (albeit not significantly; see Figure 1). This suggests that the similarity intervention mitigated the significant, positive relationship between *personal* experiences of discrimination and ISS scores for men in the control condition.

Additionally, I hypothesized that group based discrimination (“To what degree do you think discrimination against gay people in America is a problem?”) would be

positively related to sexist attitudes regardless of condition. Prior research found that group based discrimination covaried with out-group discrimination (Craig & Richeson, 2014). Table 1 contradicts their result: the relationships for group based discrimination were either negative (the ISS) or positive (e.g., for empathy for abortion rights and pro-abortion attitudes). Further countering my hypothesis, the interaction between condition and group based discrimination was significant, but only when predicting ISS scores. In the similarity condition, the link between group based discrimination and the ISS was significantly negative, but there was no relationship in the control condition (see Figure 2). That is, gay men in the similarity condition were more likely to score lower on the ISS (i.e., be less sexist) to the extent that they perceived more *group* level discrimination.

Although these results were not hypothesized, they provide insight into gay men's sexist attitudes and what might be required to change them. Previous work would suggest that perceptions of group-level discrimination would lead to negative out-group attitudes by invoking zero-sum fears; alternatively, more experiences of personal discrimination should not invoke group-based power struggles, and should result in greater empathy for members of other minority groups (Cortland et al., 2017). However, the present findings suggest the opposite: if gay men report experiencing more personal experiences of discrimination, they are more likely to be sexist in the absence of the similarity intervention. While the similarity intervention mitigates this effect, it is not able to reverse it. Further, reporting more perceived discrimination towards gay men as a group predicted lower ISS scores, and this effect was amplified by the similarity intervention. These findings show support for the CIIM; when reminded that gay men and women both experience political and social disadvantage as minority groups, gay men showed less

prejudice toward women, thus invoking support for (rather than a competitive attitude toward) members of another minority group.

The interactions between experimental condition and perceived discrimination (both personal and group based) did not significantly predict empathy for abortion rights or pro-abortion attitudes, despite adjusting for religious identity. Instead, these analyses echoed Table 1's findings, in which both personal and group discrimination predicted higher pro-abortion attitudes and empathy for abortion rights. Although previous work (Cortland & Richeson, 2014) found a positive link between experiences of group-level discrimination and prejudice toward other minority groups (likely invoking competition for rights and resources; Young & Sullivan, 2016), the present findings show that experiencing prejudice (whether group-level or personal) *increased* empathy and political support for women.

Finally, no support was shown for hypothesis 4; there was no interaction between experimental condition and perceived closeness to women when predicting sexist attitudes toward women or support for abortion policy. Cortland and colleagues (2017) found that perceived *similarity* to the target minority group mediated the effect of a similarity manipulation used in their studies. Because assumed similarity between gay men and heterosexual women is a tired, heterosexist stereotype, I replaced *perceived similarity* as a moderator with *perceived closeness to women*. Perhaps *similarity* and *closeness* are not as conceptually alike as I had assumed, although Table 1 shows positive relations between closeness and political similarity, as well as both types of discrimination. Thus, my null results are perplexing.

Limitations and Future Directions

Because gay men in the similarity condition didn't report higher political similarity to women compared to gay men in the control condition, all results relying on this manipulation must be called into question. Cortland et al. (2017) showed evidence for the success of both a blatant manipulation like mine, which directly states that the women's rights issue in question is "similar to the struggles of the gay community in their quest for equal rights," and for a subtle manipulation, which referenced the women's rights issue in question as a "civil rights issue" without directly drawing a comparison to gay men's struggle for civil rights. They note that the success of one method instead of another may vary based on the target minority group. Future work might explore the present hypotheses using a more subtle manipulation in the event that it is less reactive. I would also suggest re-examining the intervention using a less reactive attitude object than abortion.

Another limitation of the present research is that the sample was predominantly White (75%). Would gay men of color respond differently (possibly more favorably) to the similarity manipulation used in the present study? Future research will recruit a more racially diverse sample to test this hypothesis. I suggest this future direction with caution because it is based on an additive notion of intersectionality. Thus, I would be hypothesizing that gay men of color would have increased sympathy for women because they have *two* minority statuses (i.e., "gay" + "racial minority"). However, more complex intersectional theorizing would consider gay men of color to have their own unique experience of gender and race that differs from those of White, gay men and heterosexual men of color. It is therefore unjustified to assume that gay men of color would be more empathetic toward women's political struggles.

Conclusion

The goal of the present study was to investigate the potential for a similarity mindset intervention to lower gay men's sexist attitudes toward women. Although the hypotheses were mainly not supported, unexpected and interesting results have the potential to shape and improve future prejudice reduction work. Notably, the similarity mindset significantly reduced sexism to the extent that gay men reported greater group-based discrimination; it also mitigated the positive relationship shown in the control group between sexism and personal discrimination. Additionally, because there are few studies to date that have studied gay men's sexist attitudes (Cultice & Rudman, 2019), the present work contributes to this developing area of research. Discovering how best to reduce sexism in gay men is vital for improving their ability to form alliances with women. Reducing gay men's sexist attitudes would increase the likelihood and prevalence of coalitions between gay men and women, who no doubt share a desire for progressive political and social change.

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Notes

1. Although the term *benevolent sexism* seems “oxymoronic,” Glick and Fiske (1996) define it as paternalism (i.e., viewing women as excellent caregivers who depend on men for provision and protection). Notably, benevolent sexism positively correlates with hostile sexism for both men and women (Glick & Fiske, 1996) and cross-culturally (Glick et al., 2000).

2. Two experimental methods, a “blatant” and a “subtle” similarity manipulation, were used interchangeably among the many studies reported in past work (Cortland et al., 2017). The method utilized in the present research resembles the “blatant” method, in which the similarity condition directly acknowledges the similarities between gay men’s and women’s experiences of discrimination; the control condition makes no such distinction. The “subtle” method, if used, would have simply addressed women’s rights as a “civil rights issue” in the similarity condition, and a “women’s issue” in the control condition. The authors suggest, due to the inconsistent success of each type of manipulation, that either could be effective depending on the target (Cortland et al., 2017).

3. This analysis was also run considering strength of conservative political identity as a control (in lieu of strength of religious identity), and additionally *without* controlling for religious identity, and the same pattern of non-significant results emerged.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. ISS	(.92)								
2. Empathy for abortion rights	-.312**	(.90)							
3. Pro-abortion attitudes	-.479**	.719**	(.78)						
4. Closeness to women	-.013	.276**	.062	(.64)					
5. Political similarity	-.044	.468**	.303**	.479**	(.82)				
6. Religious identity	.486**	-.195**	-.412**	.136**	.098	(.82)			
7. Political identity	.473**	-.289**	-.372**	.066	-.070	.503**	(--)		
8. Personal discrimination	.135**	.343**	.170**	.250**	.459**	.194**	.011	(--)	
9. Group based discrimination	-.182**	.508**	.424**	.267**	.486**	-0.14	-.219**	.552**	(--)
<i>M</i>	3.82	5.27	5.12	4.79	5.00	2.84	2.45	4.59	5.16
<i>SD</i>	2.08	1.60	1.43	1.41	1.44	1.52	1.26	1.60	1.51
Likert Scale	1 - 9	1 - 7	1 - 7	1 - 7	1 - 7	1 - 6	1 - 5	1 - 7	1 - 7

Note: $N = 365$. Entries on the main diagonal are Cronbach's alpha.

** $p < .01$.

Table 2

Perceived Personal and Group Discrimination, and Experimental Condition in Predicting Sexism via Inclusive Sexism Scale

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% LLCI	95% ULCI	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Personal Discrimination						30.32	<.001	.25
Overall Model								
Personal Discrimination	.05	0.80	.424	-.07	.17			
Condition	-.10	-0.53	.600	-.48	.27			
Personal Discrimination X Condition	-.30	-0.25	.012	-.54	-.07			
Religious Identity	.65	10.16	<.001	.52	.78			
Group Discrimination								
Overall Model						34.66	<.001	.28
Group Discrimination	-.23	0.80	.001	-.36	-.11			
Condition	-.12	-0.53	.558	-.48	.26			
Group Discrimination X Condition	-.28	-0.25	.026	-.52	-.03			
Religious Identity	.67	10.16	<.001	.54	.79			

Note: Condition was coded 1 = *control*, 2 = *similarity*. Higher scores on religious identity indicate a stronger religious identity. Regressions run using PROCESS macro (Model 1); 95% Bias-Corrected CIs from 5,000 bootstrapped estimates.

Table 3

Perceived Personal and Group Discrimination, and Experimental Condition in Predicting Political Empathy for Women's Reproductive Rights

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% LLCI	95% ULCI	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Personal Discrimination						21.24	<.001	.19
Overall Model								
Personal Discrimination	.40	8.18	<.001	.30	.49			
Condition	-.02	-.12	.907	-.32	.28			
Personal Discrimination X Condition	.10	1.09	.278	-.08	.29			
Religious Identity	-.29	-5.59	<.001	-.39	-.19			
Group Discrimination								
Overall Model						37.85	<.001	.30
Group Discrimination	.53	11.38	<.001	.44	.63			
Condition	-.10	-0.72	.474	-.38	.18			
Group Discrimination X Condition	.08	0.88	.381	-.10	.27			
Religious Identity	-.20	-4.34	<.001	-.30	-.11			

Note: Condition was coded 1 = *control*, 2 = *similarity*. Higher scores on religious identity indicate a stronger religious identity. Regressions run using PROCESS macro (Model 1); 95% Bias-Corrected CIs from 5,000 bootstrapped estimates.

Table 4

Perceived Personal and Group Discrimination, and Experimental Condition in Predicting Abortion Policy Support

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% LLCI	95% ULCI	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Personal Discrimination						28.63	<.001	.24
Overall Model								
Personal Discrimination	.23	5.50	<.001	.15	.31			
Condition	-.14	-1.09	.278	-.40	.12			
Personal Discrimination X Condition	.11	1.36	.175	-.05	.27			
Religious Identity	-.44	-9.93	<.001	-.53	-.35			
Group Discrimination								
Overall Model						48.31	<.001	.35
Group Discrimination	.39	9.81	<.001	.32	.47			
Condition	-.19	-1.57	.116	-.43	.05			
Group Discrimination X Condition	.02	0.22	.823	-.14	.18			
Religious Identity	-.39	-9.67	<.001	-.47	-.31			

Note: Condition was coded 1 = *control*, 2 = *similarity*. Higher scores on religious identity indicate a stronger religious identity. Regressions run using PROCESS macro (Model 1); 95% Bias-Corrected CIs from 5,000 bootstrapped estimates.

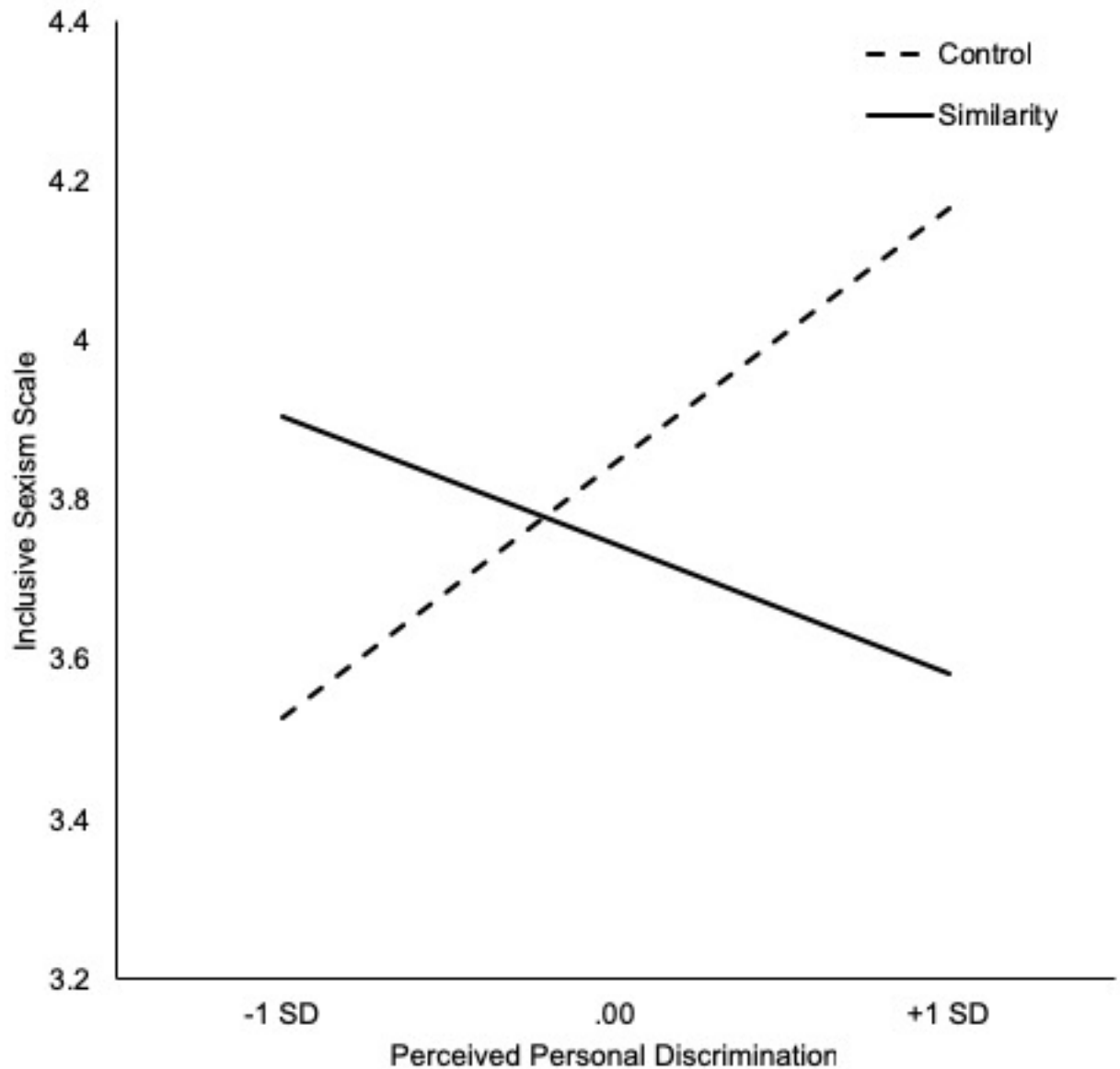


Figure 1. Perceived personal discrimination and experimental condition as predictors for Inclusive Sexism Scale. The dashed line represents the control condition; the solid line represents the similarity intervention condition. Higher scores on the Inclusive Sexism Scale indicate more sexist attitudes.

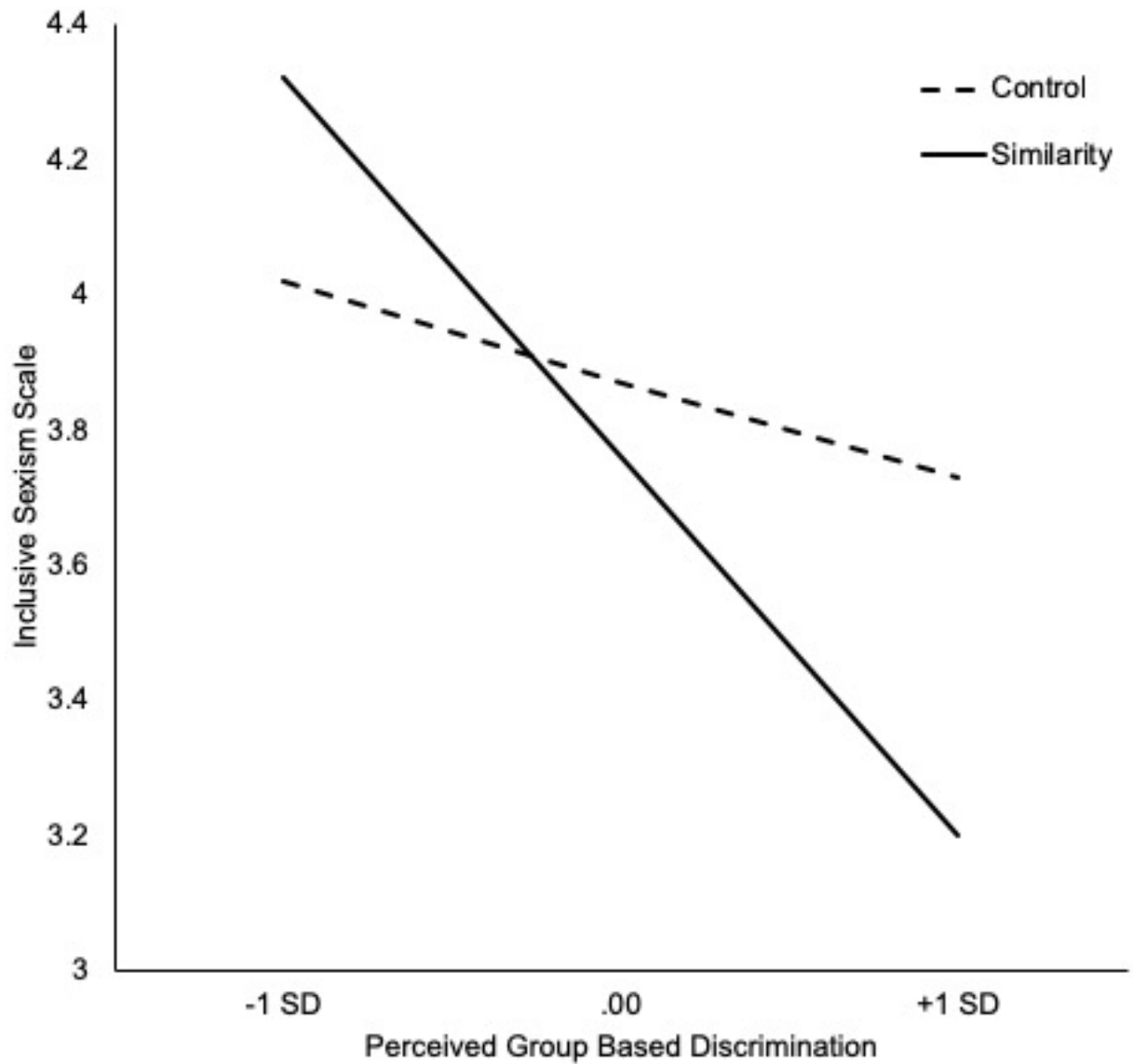


Figure 2. Perceived group based discrimination and experimental condition as predictors for Inclusive Sexism Scale. The dashed line represents the control condition; the solid line represents the similarity intervention condition. Higher scores on the Inclusive Sexism Scale indicate more sexist attitudes.

Appendix A

Inclusive Sexism Scale (Cultice & Rudman, 2019)

1. Please rate your feelings toward heterosexual women.
2. When women work they are taking jobs away from men.
3. When women get rights they are taking rights away from men.
4. Rights for women mean that men lose out.
5. As women face less sexism, men end up facing more bias against them.
6. Less discrimination against women means more discrimination against men.
7. Efforts to reduce discrimination against women have led to increased discrimination against men.

The sexual double standard is the idea that men have more freedom than women to engage in casual sex with many partners.

8. In my opinion, the sexual double standard is BAD and should be eliminated. (R)
9. In my opinion, the sexual double standard is GOOD and should be maintained.
10. Female reproduction (periods, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation) disgusts me.
11. Female genitalia disgust me.

Note. Items are scored on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 10 (*strongly agree*) except that the first item is scored on a scale from 1 (*very warm/favorable*) to 10 (*very cold/unfavorable*).

Appendix B

Support for Abortion Rights (Stets & Leik, 1993)

1. Abortion should remain legal under federal law.
2. The government has no right to tell a woman what to do with her body.
3. Whether to have an abortion should be entirely up to a woman and her doctor.
4. Men should have the right to prevent women from having an abortion. (R)
5. Laws severely restricting women's access to abortion infringe on their civil rights.

Note: Items are scored on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).