Closets Breed Suspicion:

Environments that Stigmatize Concealable Identities

Raise Doubts about Claims to Contrasting Non-Stigmatized Identities

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I articulate a theory of identity suspicion, informed by research on attribution theory's discounting principle (Kelley, 1971) and on suspicious mindsets (Fein, Hilton, & Miller, 1990). Identity suspicion is a function of concealable identity and social environments that stigmatize (i.e., socially mark; Brekhus, 1996) the concealable identity. Such stigmatizing environments incentivize concealing (i.e., closeting) the marked identity. The awareness of this incentivized closet creates suspicion around actors' claims to the contrasting unmarked identity because these claims have at least two plausible causes (i.e., self-protection or authentic self-expression). To resolve their suspicion, people become close observers of each other's behaviors, looking for attributes that are socially coded as cues of the contrasting marked identity. Where observed, these attributes augment the identity suspicion produced by actors' claims to the contrasting unmarked identity.

Across nine experimental studies (N = 2467), I found consistent support for my theory of identity suspicion. Participants were more suspicious of an actor's claim to an unmarked concealable identity (e.g., being straight) when he was situated in an environment that stigmatized (vs. affirmed) the contrasting concealable identity (e.g., homophobic environment stigmatizing being gay). As expected, observers in the stigmatizing environment reported more identity suspicion when I described the actor as having certain attributes stereotypically associated with the stigmatized identity. However, even when the actor's attributes were stereotypically associated with the contrasting *non-stigmatized* identity, observers in the identity-stigmatizing (vs. –affirming) environment still expressed suspicion of his identity claim (Study 3).

In Studies 4a-5, I found that observers' perception of the actor's motivation to conceal behaviors or attributes stereotyped as cues of the stigmatized identity mediated the social environmental effect on identity suspicion. These results support my theorizing and suggest observers intuitively recognize how identity-stigmatizing environments create secondary closets in which, to avoid suspicion they possess the stigmatized identity, everyone is incentivized to conceal behaviors and attributes stereotyped as cues of the stigmatized identity.

Keywords: identity suspicion, suspicious mindsets, discounting principle, attribution theory, sexuality, homophobia, person perception

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my younger brother, Steve, who was tragically killed in a plane crash on July 23, 2019. Our last conversation was about this dissertation and my defence of it. You said you were proud of me for pursuing my dream and excited to attend my convocation. It breaks my heart that you will not get to see me finish my PhD. I would gladly give up this dream—and every other—to have you back with us.

I also dedicate this dissertation and my PhD to my father. You have supported me from the sidelines while I live out your dream of pursuing higher education. This one's for you, papa.

Finally, I dedicate my PhD to anyone who has grown up or is growing up being told they will never amount to anything. The voices are wrong. Dare to dream and have the audacity to hope for the impossible. If I got here, you can too.

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Chapter 1: Literature Review

Closets breed suspicion. When an identity is both socially stigmatized and concealable, people are incentivized to hide it. Sometimes they will do this by claiming the contrasting, non-stigmatized concealable identity (e.g., claiming to be straight to hide that one is gay). Ironically, where concealment of a stigmatized identity is strongly incentivized, anyone's assertion of the contrasting non-stigmatized identity has the potentital to elicit suspicion. This suspicion arises because such identity claims have more than one possible explanation—authentic self-expression or self-protection—which results in attributional ambiguity. To disambiguate such identity attributions, people become close readers of one another's behavior, searching for outward signs that may indicate the other's concealed membership in the stigmatized group. This hypervigilance often involves attending to behaviors and attributes socially coded as identity cues—and thereby stereotypically associated with the stigmatized group—and using them as signifiers of "true"[1] identity (see Dean, 2014). In this way, people infer identity from behavior, discounting explicit identity claims. I label this phenomenon *identity suspicion*.

To illustrate one instantiation of identity suspicion, consider the classic murder mystery (stigmatized concealable identity: murderer). Characters claim innocence and provide alibis (explicit claims of contrasting, non-stigmatized concealable identity), while participants discount these protestations and search instead for clues that will reveal the murderer's identity. The character(s) that is(are) guilty is finite, but to participants attempting to solve the crime, the

[1] The notion of *true* identity is epistemologically situated within a post-positivist tradition (Crotty, 1998) and reflects Pepper's (1942) articulation of a formistic world hypothesis. I assert such approaches to identity are misguided because they erroneously assume an objective criterion against which to test the validity of self-theories (Berzonsky, 1994) and worse, situate expertise of identity within observers rather than actors. Nonetheless, I recognize that observers' perceptions of actors constrain the latter's autonomy and ways of being in the world (Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; McNamara & Reicher, 2019), making them an important phenomenon to study. Here and throughout, I use "true" to disrupt the notion of true identity and to (re)locate identity within the actor and not the observer.

possibilities are infinite. All characters are suspects. A litany of otherwise inconsequential observations can suddenly take on new meaning as potential clues to the murderer's (or murderers') identity. Similarly, when group identity is stigmatized and concealable—motivating group members to "closet" their membership—previously insignificant behaviors take on new meanings as potential signs of "true" identity. In this fashion, closets tend to produce "the multiplication of signs" (Beaver, 1981, p. 105).

In this paper, I draw on attribution theory (Gilbert, 1998; Kelley, 1971) and suspicious mindsets (Fein, 1996; Fein & Hilton, 1994; Fein et al., 1990) to propose a theory of identity suspicion. I suggest that identity suspicion illuminates a part of the process by which societies become obsessed with certain concealable stigmatized identities and go to great lengths to determine who secretly holds these identities. Examples of this process include the hunt for hidden Communist agents under McCarthyism in the US during the late 1940s to 1950s (Schrecker, 1998); the Salem, Massachusetts witch trials from 1692-1693 (Wallenfeldt, 2019); and, the Spanish Inquisition in early modern Spain, which sought to determine whether converts to Catholicism were secretly maintaining their Jewish faith (Netanyahu, 1995). In articulating my theory of identity suspicion, I will focus on the role of social environments in promoting or attenuating social climates of suspicion. Through this analysis, I will conclude that identity suspicion arises not from individual bias, but from suspicious mindsets triggered by formally correct applications of attribution theory's discounting principle. I experimentally test several hypotheses arising from this proposition by examining the effect of social environments on people's propensity to form suspicions of a person's identity claim. Ultimately, my data lead us to conclude that when communities stigmatize a concealable identity, this stigma drives members of the group into the metaphorical closet. The existence of this closet, in turn, fuels

rampant suspicion that nearly anyone might secretly bear the stigma. As Erikson (1966) intriguingly observed: "[those] who fear witches soon find themselves surrounded by them" (p. 22).

Social Markedness

To aid in my explanation of identity suspicion, I draw on Brekhus's (1996, 1998, 2003) articulation of social markedness. At its simplest, social markedness describes the process of socially *marking* certain identities as deviating from the norm by actively drawing attention to some "non-normative" characteristic of the identity (e.g., being gay in a predominantly straight society).[2] By marking an identity, a contrasting "unmarked" identity is automatically (and passively) defined by the lack of the marked characteristic (e.g., being straight in a predominantly straight society). These two identities are then paired in people's minds as contrasting sides of a binary. Of critical importance to the notion of social markedness is "the ways the 'social mind' actively perceives one side of a contrast while ignoring the other side as epistemologically unproblematic" (1996, p. 500). That is, marked identities receive disproportionate social attention while unmarked identities go relatively unnoticed. This is seen in the disproportionate amount of social attention that people who identify, or are perceived as, gay receive on account of their sexuality, relative to the attention directed at people who identify, or are perceived as, straight. In heteronormative society, being gay is a marked identity while being straight is its "epistemologically unproblematic" contrast (p. 500).

In my work, I sometimes use the terms "marked/unmarked" interchangeably with "stigmatized/non-stigmatized," respectively. This choice is deliberate and reflects (a) the reality

[2] Please note my use of "non-normative" is intended only to reflect Brekhus's (1996) articulation of social markedness distinguishing identities that differ from the norm. If heterosexuality is taken to be the sexuality norm, then by Brekhus's account, any other sexuality is non-normative. As such, my use of "non-normative" should not be interpreted as a statement on the moral or normative "correctness" of either or any sexuality.

that (un)marked identities in my theory of identity suspicion are also (non-)stigmatized identities (though not all marked identities are necessarily stigmatized identities; Brekhus, 1996), and (b) the centrality to identity suspicion of socially perceived identity binaries (e.g., gay/straight: though not the only two sexualities that exist, sexuality is generally perceived in this binaristic way; Elizabeth, 2013; Leck, 2000; Morgan & Davis-Delano, 2016; Waites, 2005).

The Attributional Logic of the Closet

Identity suspicion is a function of concealable identity and social environments that stigmatize (i.e., socially mark) the concealable identity. As outlined in my introduction, such stigmatizing social environments incentivize concealing (i.e., closeting) the marked identity. The awareness of this incentivized closet creates suspicion around claims to the contrasting unmarked identity because these claims have multiple plausible causes (i.e., self-protection vs. authentic self-expression). To resolve this suspicion, people become close observers of each other's behaviors, looking for attributes that are socially coded as cues of the contrasting marked (and concealable) identity. Where observed, these attributes augment the suspicion created by the stigmatizing social environment and, in turn, amplify the identity suspicion produced by explicit claims to the contrasting unmarked identity.

To better understand how identity claims, behavioral cues, and social environments can interactively produce identity suspicion, I must consider attribution theory and the discounting principle. Rooted in the logical approach to attribution, the discounting principle stems from Heider's articulation of the need to "factor out extraneous environmental influences on … performance … to estimate [an] actor's [traits]" (Gilbert, 1998, p. 92), and Jones and Davis's (1965) focus on external factors' influence(s) on behavior. Formally articulated by Kelley (1971), the discounting principle states that "the role of a given cause in producing a given effect

is discounted if other plausible causes are also present" (p. 8). Where discounting is warranted, certainty of the "true" cause is diminished, and attributions are made with less confidence. Despite this attributional ambiguity, though, observers try to disambiguate their attribution through various means, such as searching for unifying explanations (Asch, 1946; Marchand & Vonk, 2005; Vonk, 1998), applying various attributional rules (Fein, 1996; Jones & Davis, 1965), or taking into consideration contextual cues (Heider, 1958; Marchand & Vonk, 2005; Vonk, 1998) and/or psychological contstraints (Gilbert & Malone, 1995). In sum, observers strive to form coherent impressions of others, even when the process of doing so is complex and requires they discount certain plausible causes of, impressions of, or inferences about an actor's behavior or disposition.

My analysis of the emergence of identity suspicion in situations where concealable identities are stigmatized is fully consistent with previous theory and research on attribution theory and suspicious mindsets. Classic work on attribution theory indicates that when "a reason of high assumed social desirability" can account for an actor's behavior, observers will doubt whether the behavior reflects that actor's authentic characteristics (Kelley, 1971, p. 10). When a concealable identity is stigmatized, this creates a strong social-desirability pressure for anyone who possesses that identity to publicly disclaim it. Observers' awareness of this pressure should lead them to apply the discounting principle and question the authenticity of other people's claims to the contrasting non-stigmatized identity.

Despite the logic behind the discounting principle, people frequently fail to apply it. This failure is known as the fundamental attribution error or correspondence bias (e.g., Gilbert, 1998; Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Ichheiser, 1943) and it is one of the most robust findings in attribution theory (Gilbert, 1998; Ross, 1977). While fairly automatic and notoriously difficult to overcome

(Berry & Frederickson, 2015), research by Fein suggests that when "[observers] actively entertain multiple, plausibly rival, hypotheses about the motives or genuineness of a person's behavior" (1996, p. 1165), they become suspicious of the person's "true" motive. This suspicious mindset, in turn, promotes the effortful cognitive processing that helps observers overcome the fundamental attribution error and invoke the discounting principle. As such, observers in identity-stigmatizing environments should recognize the "multiple, plausibly rival" (p. 1165) motives behind other people's claims to a non-stigmatized identity and question the authenticity of these claims.

Although the phenomenon of identity suspicion can be derived directly from classic attribution theory, to my knowledge, this specific implication of attribution theory has not previously been examined. Indeed, previous attribution theory and research have largely focused on observers' inferences about others' personality traits, attitudes, abilities, and motivations, but have largely neglected to apply attribution theory to analyses of observers' inferences about others' self-professed identities. Extending attribution theory to interpretations of people's identity presentations in situations of identity stigmatization reveals problematic social consequences of people's formally correct use of the discounting principle. This extension contrasts previous work, which has largely focused on the problems that relate to observers' underutilization of the discounting principle. This previous research has extensively documented how perceivers' underutilization of the discounting principle leads them to exaggerate how closely people's beliefs, attitudes, or feelings align with their overt behavior (Gilbert & Malone, 1995), which contributes to a variety of social problems (e.g., Berry & Frederickson, 2015). My analysis shifts the focus to explore how—in the context of identity stigmatization—observers' formally correct application of the discounting principle may also contribute to social problems,

specifically by fueling people's suspicions of each other's identity claims. Additionally, I examine how this identity suspicion is perceived to influence individuals' suppression of interests and feelings stereotypically associated with the marked identity to avoid suspicion that they secretly hold it. My work thus extends research on attribution theory and the discounting principle into the relatively understudied domain of identity attribution and documents ways that formally correct attributions in identity-oppressive environments might exacerbate problematic social climates, specifically by fueling climates of identity suspicion. Indeed, my analysis suggests that climates of rampant identity suspicion can emerge from purely rational attributional processes, as opposed to other accounts that might assume that such suspicions reflect irrational, paranoid thought processes (Demos, 2004; Erikson, 1966; Hofstadter, 2008; Robins & Post, 1997).

To illustrate the discounting principle at play in identity suspicion, imagine a man with attributes socially coded as gay, such as being a hairdresser (Madon, 1997). If observers learn that he explicitly claims to be straight, but also that he is a hairdresser, his identity will be somewhat ambiguous to them. This ambiguity results from the contradictory inferences primed by his profession (i.e., gay) and his explicit identity claim (i.e., straight). To disambiguate these inconsistent inferences, observers can look to the man's social environment to contextualize his behavior (Heider, 1958; Marchand & Vonk, 2005; Vonk, 1998). When considering that homophobic environments stigmatize and oppress non-straight sexualities, thereby incentivizing people to self-present as straight, a formally correct application of the discounting principle would lead observers to regard the man's claim to be straight with suspicion. This suspicion reflects the possibility that the man's claim is motivated by a self-protective desire to avoid being stigmatized (Kelley, 1971). That he is a hairdresser, which is socially coded—for men—as a cue

of being gay, further supports this application of the discounting principle and amplifies observers' identity suspicion. Notably, the formally correct application of the discounting principle suggests observers need not personally endorse hostile attitudes toward a marked identity to demonstrate identity suspicion. Rather, they merely need to be socially aware of prevalent norms that stigmatize the marked identity and incentivize its concealment.

Examples of identity suspicion can be found in previous observational studies. For example, men frequently question each other's claims of being straight in everyday contexts such as the schoolyard and the locker room (Anderson, 2009; Pascoe, 2005, 2007; Short, 2013). Although not necessarily so, these contexts are frequently characterized by men's homophobia (Epstein, 1997; Pascoe, 2005; Taylor et al., 2011). The identity questioning that occurs in these settings can range in form from seemingly harmless teasing to violent confrontations. Another intriguing demonstration of identity suspicion within homophobic settings comes from analyses of Google traffic patterns that found searches posing the question, "Is my husband gay?" are much more frequent within U.S. states that have higher levels of anti-gay norms (Stevens-Davidowitz, 2017). I suggest identity suspicion in both examples stems from recognizing that the stigmatizing social environment incentivizes anyone with the marked identity to conceal it, warranting the discounting of anyone's claim to be straight.

Alternatively, when social contexts do not stigmatize the marked identity—thus providing no incentive to conceal it—observers are not likely to question a person's claim to the contrasting unmarked identity. For example, nonhomophobic social environments do not incentivize the concealment of non-straight identities. Although a man working as a hairdresser and explicitly claiming to be straight may still create some ambiguity around his "true" identity, contextualizing his behavior gives observers little reason to discount the man's identity claim

because the nonhomophobic environment presents no incentive to falsely self-present as straight.[3] In a community where all sexualities have equal social value, a wife would have no more reason to suspect her husband is secretly gay than a man would have to suspect his husband is secretly straight. Additionally, men would have no reason to question each other's sexuality because there would be no reason for any of them to conceal a non-straight sexuality. Though such nonhomophobic environments may seem possible only in one's imagination, a recent ethnographic study of boys in the 6th form (i.e., Grades 11 & 12) at several British secondary schools (McCormack, 2012) demonstrated that they do exist.

Across five months and more than 500 hours of participant observation at one of these schools, McCormack (2011) reported witnessing no homophobia among the boys. Instead, these boys seemed to equally value diverse sexualities. In this nonhomophobic context, the students never seemed to question one another's identity claims, in line with my theorizing. Students who claimed to be straight were taken at their word, even when they behaved in ways that are stereotypically coded as gay (in homophobic environments), such as demonstrative acts of affection towards same-sex peers. Given the accepting culture of this school, the students saw little reason to suspect that one of their straight-identifying classmates might secretly be gay, even though some of his behavior fit gay stereotypes. In their words, "[H]e'd tell us if he was [gay]… Yeah, why wouldn't he" (McCormack, 2012, p. 79).

Reading Behavioral Cues to Resolve Identity Suspicion

[3] I maintain that nonhomophobic social environments would not produce stereotypic associations of attributes (e.g., behaviors, interests, talents) with sexuality. For my purposes here, though, I retain my reference to this stereotypic association in reflection of the homophobic nature of current society, and to avoid the added cognitive burden of envisioning the implications of a related but distal outcome of a social context that already contrasts quite sharply with current society.

When people cannot trust one another's identity claims because they are aware of pressures to conceal stigmatized identities, they may scrutinize each others' behavior for cues that are conventionally considered to be indicators of the stigmatized identity. For example, the suspicion that individuals who claim to be straight might secretly be gay often relies on gendered cues—i.e., behaviors, interests, talents, etc., that are socially coded as masculine or feminine and thus befitting men or women, respectively—to discern whose claims to straight identity might be especially suspect. This reliance on gendered cues to infer possible same-sex sexuality reflects the traditional assumption that same-sex sexuality is rooted in gender inversion (Bem, 1993; Butler, 1990; Sedgwick, 1990). That is, feminine behaviors and interests expressed by men, or masculine behaviors and interests expressed by women, suggest the person may be gay or a lesbian, respectively (Ambady, Hallahan, & Conner, 1999; Butler, 1993; Connell, 1992; Parry & Johnson, 2007; Pascoe, 2005, 2007). In particular, the credibility of men's claims to straight identity often hinges on their adherence to hegemonic masculine norms and their lack of behaviors and traits traditionally coded as feminine (e.g., Carnaghi, Maass, & Fasoli, 2011; Hunt, Fasoli, Carnaghi, & Cadinu, 2016; McGuffey & Rich, 1999; Plummer, 1999; Pollack, 1999; Vandello & Bosson, 2013).

Secondary Closets

Where identity suspicion exists, people are likely to be motivated to avoid becoming a target of suspicion by concealing those characteristics that define the identity as marked. Importantly, I suggest this pressure to conceal stereotypic characteristics of the marked identity will be felt not only by actual members of the marked group, but also by members of the unmarked group. For example, theory and research on precarious manhood (Vandello & Bosson, 2013) indicates that men seek to downplay feminine attributes to demonstrate their masculinity

to themselves and others, because many laypeople assume a polar opposition of masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1993; Prentice & Miller, 2007). I propose that, within homophobic environments, men who identify as straight may be motivated to closet their feminine characteristics not only to project a credible image of masculinity, but also to avoid suspicion that they are secretly gay. Indeed, work on homophobia highlights how it serves to regulate straight men's masculinity-related behavior (Whitley, 2001). Men who want to be seen as straight by others—in homophobic social environments—must conform to the particular gender norms of their environment (Anderson, 2008; McCreary, 1994). Thus, environments that pressure same-sex attracted individuals into the closet may, as a consequence, generate a secondary closet in which gay *and* straight men alike must conceal any characteristics stereotyped as gay.

As is widely understood, identity de-stigmatization directly benefits members of a marked group by reducing their oppression and allowing them to openly express their identity without fear of harassment. I draw attention, however, to a less recognized way that identity de-stigmatization benefits everyone, including those in the unmarked group. As Yep (2005) writes, "Most straight men are afraid to be sensitive, tender, and emotional because of the fear of being perceived or labeled 'sissy' or 'faggot'…" (pp. 395-396). In response, my analysis suggests that de-stigmatizing concealable marked identities eliminates the incentive to conceal such identities. By eliminating this incentive, alternative explanations for discrepancies between behavioral cues and identity claims are also eliminated. As these alternative explanations invoke the discounting principle and are thereby the basis of identity suspicion, their elimination should also eliminate identity suspicion, freeing men up to express themselves as they want to, without concern of having their sexuality called into question.

Accounting for Default Normativity Assumptions

The hypothesis that identity-stigmatizing environments lead people to suspect that others secretly belong to the marked group might at first seem inconsistent with the well-known tendency of people to assume by default that others belong to the unmarked group, which is often in the numeric majority (Brekhus, 2003; Hegarty & Pratto, 2004; Zerubavel, 2018). As Brekhus (2003) notes, "Since an unmarked identity is the default assumption, absent any clear signifiers of a marked status, one often does not have to do anything to be perceived as a member of the unmarked category" (pp. 14-15). For example, many gay people routinely experience situations where others implicitly assume they are straight (e.g., asking girls and boys if they have a boyfriend or girlfriend, respectively; having a reference to one's spouse be assumed to imply someone of the opposite sex). This default assumption that people are straight is known as heteronormativity. Although membership in the unmarked group is typically assumed by default, I hypothesize that this membership is vulnerable to suspicion when the stigma directed at the marked group is made salient. In other words, the default assumption that individuals belong to the unmarked group may be readily discarded when observers consider the stigmatization of the marked group and the concomitant incentives to conceal this identity.

Current Studies

Hypotheses

A series of experiments test three primary hypotheses arising from my attributional model of identity suspicion:

1. ***Environmental Context Hypothesis***. When a person exhibits attributes commonly associated with a marked concealable identity but also asserts a contrasting *unmarked* concealable identity, perceivers will experience attributional ambiguity. To resolve this

ambiguity, perceivers will consider the climate of that person's surrounding social environment to disambiguate their identity attributions. Specifically, when the person is situated in an environment that stigmatizes and oppresses—versus accepts and affirms—the concealable marked identity, their identity claim will elicit more identity suspicion.

Studies 1a to 4b tested this hypothesis by experimentally varying whether participants first read about a homophobic or nonhomophobic high school, and then (all) read about a young man in the school who exhibited (in most conditions) attributes stereotypically associated with gay men (i.e., marked concealable identity) but who said he was straight (i.e., contrasting unmarked concealable identity). Participants then estimated the likelihood that the young man is straight. To test the cross-stimulus generalizability of identity suspicion, his specific gender-nonconforming attributes varied across studies, and were experimentally contrasted in Study 3 against attributes stereotypically associated with straight men. Study 5 tested these hypotheses in a novel domain: religious identity in medieval Spain. Specifically, I experimentally varied whether participants read a description of the Spanish Inquisition or *la convivencia*, a time of relatively tolerant 'coexistence' among medieval Spanish Muslims, Christians, and Jews (Wolf, 2009). Next, all participants read a description of a man who identified as Christian, but exhibited several attributes commonly associated with Judaism. Participants then estimated the likelihood that he was a Christian. This study provides preliminary tests of cross-domain generalizability of my key hypothesis.

To assess the process by which social environments shape identity attribution, I tested two corollary hypotheses about whether identity-stigmatizing environments alter people's perceptions of others' identity-related concerns:

2. ***Attribute Concealment Hypothesis***. A person who exhibits attributes commonly associated with a marked concealable identity, but who asserts a contrasting unmarked concealable identity, will be perceived as more motivated to hide those attributes when situated in an identity-stigmatizing (vs. identity-affirming) environment.
3. ***Peer Suspicion Hypothesis***. Similarly, the perceived likelihood of identity suspicion among the person's peers—were they to find out about the stereotyped attributes—will increase when that person is situated in an identity-stigmatizing (vs. identity–affirming) environment.

Studies 4a-5 tested these two corollary hypotheses by asking participants about their perceptions of the social environment's implications for the high school student in Studies 4a & 4b and the Spanish man in Study 5, prior to my standard questions about identity suspicion.

A Note on Definitions

Here, I label a young man who says he is straight but exhibits attributes stereotypically associated with gay men as "*gender-nonconforming*," despite these attributes being stereotypically associated with sexuality (i.e., being gay/not being straight) more so than gender per se (at least in the US). While a full discussion of the relationship between gender and sexuality is far beyond the scope of my work here, my choice to use "gender-nonconforming" was deliberate. Many masculinity theorists have argued that men's gender and sexuality are so strictly policed that saying a man is masculine in effect says he is straight (e.g., Dean, 2014), hence the term *heteromasculinity*. I use "gender-nonconforming" with the understanding that, for men, failure to conform to the expectations of their gender often equates failure to conform to the expectation of being straight. For this reason, men with gender-nonconforming attributes are more likely to be seen as gay (Anderson & McCormack, 2016; McCormack & Anderson, 2014).

At the same time, I resist the idea that gender expression is reducible to markers of sexuality. Gender is, to a large extent, a social construction (e.g., Budgeon, 2014; Dean, 2014; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013; Rahilly, 2018; Walker & Eller, 2016). Specific gender norms are inherently unstable and informed by history, geography, culture, race, social class, urbanity, and many other factors (e.g., Budgeon, 2014; Dunlap & Johnson, 2013; Hegarty & Pratto, 2004; McCormack & Anderson, 2014b; Pascoe & Diefendorf, 2019; D. Plummer, 2014; Smith, Parrott, Swartout, & Tharp, 2015). As such, the examples of gender nonconformity I have adopted in my research are bound to a specific sociohistoric and cultural moment; it is entirely possible they may not apply in the future. Rejecting, then, the idea that gender expression is an *essential* marker of sexuality, I have adopted the term "gender-nonconforming" in recognition of its social and academic usefulness in articulating my theory of identity suspicion.

Sampling and Exclusions

Because this work examines a novel effect, I followed recommendations (Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2013) for effects of unknown magnitude and aimed for sample sizes of approximately n = 100/cell, plus 10% to account for necessary exclusions. Participants came from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) crowdsourcing platform. MTurkers residing in the US were eligible to participate. Additionally, given the mixed reports on data quality on MTurk at the time I conducted these studies (2016-2017; e.g., Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Casler, Bickel, & Hackett, 2013; Chandler, Mueller, & Paolacci, 2014), only MTurkers with a minimum HIT approval rate of 50% were eligible to participate. I chose this approval rate to avoid recruiting either only expert MTurkers or numerous careless responders. To ensure data quality, I also applied several a priori exclusion criteria. Analyses excluded participants who (a) withdrew their data after debriefing, (b) came from identical IP addresses within or across

studies, (c) provided more than one nonsense response on open-ended questions, or (d) failed all attention checks (see Table 1 for frequencies).

Data Withdrawal. Due to my use of deception, participants were given the opportunity to withdraw consent for us to use their data after they had been fully debriefed on the study. Those who withdrew consent were excluded from analyses.

Duplicate IP Addresses. I used TurkPrime.com to launch my studies. Each successive study excluded participants who had participated in a previous study so as to prevent repeat participants across studies. I also screened IP addresses within studies to ensure I did not have repeat participants within any one study. Where duplicate IP addresses were found (both within and across studies), usually the first record indicated the participant had not advanced beyond the consent form, so I retained their data from the complete record. In some cases, participants had seen the experimental material, but none of the dependent variables in the first record. In these cases, if participants were assigned to the same condition(s) on their full record, I retained their data because they were not aware of the differing conditions in my study. However, if participants were assigned to a different condition on their full record, I excluded them for having a duplicate IP address. In cases where participants saw and/or answered any of the dependent variables on their first record, I excluded their subsequent record(s) for having a duplicate IP address.

Across studies, if a participant did not see the experimental material in their first and incomplete record on one study, I retained their data for the subsequent study they participated in. However, if they saw the experimental materials in the first study, I excluded them on any subsequent study for having a duplicate IP address. In this way I strove to maximize my use of

participants' data while ensuring that I did not have repeat participants within any one study, or across all studies as a whole.

Nonsense Responses. Each survey included multiple open-ended questions. A team of research assistants blind to my hypotheses coded these responses for nonsensical entries (e.g., blank entries; gibberish entries; entries unrelated to the question). Participants with more than one nonsense response were excluded.

Attention Checks. Each survey ended with two or three attention check questions (see below). A team of research assistants coded these responses for accuracy. Participants who failed all attention checks were excluded.

Chapter 2: Samples 1a – 1c

Study 1a provides an initial test of my claim that the social environment in which a straight, gender-nonconforming young man is situated influences observers' attributions regarding his sexuality. Specifically, I hypothesized that people reading about a straight-identifying young man who exhibits attributes stereotypically associated with gay men will report more identity suspicion (i.e., question to a greater degree whether he is straight) when he is situated within a homophobic compared to nonhomophobic environment. In the current study, I primarily cued men's gender-nonconformity by drawing on the stereotype that gay men love fashion (e.g., Madon, 1997; Massey, 2009, 2010; Morrison & Bearden, 2007).

Method

Participants and procedure. I aimed to recruit a final sample of 200 MTurk workers. Initially, 260 people started the study; 40 (15.4%) did not complete it.[4] After 19 additional exclusions, the final sample comprised 201 participants (see Table 1 for demographics & exclusions).

Participants signed up for a short online survey entitled "Social Perceptions." The cover story described my study's purpose as "examin[ing] impressions of environments and the people within them." After providing consent, participants were randomly assigned to read one of two descriptions of a high school in England (Standard High) characterizing the social environment at the school as either homophobic or nonhomophobic. All participants then read the same profile of a gender-nonconforming, straight-identified male student (Steve) at Standard High, after which they completed questionnaires assessing their perceptions of Steve's sexuality, Standard High, and their social network's general attitudes toward sexual minorities. Finally,

[4] Attrition did not differ by condition, $\chi_2(1) = 1.89$, $p = .169$.

participants reported their demographics, read about the study's true purpose (with the option to withdraw their data), received thanks, and were paid $0.75 USD for their participation.[5]

Stimulus materials. I developed novel stimuli for this study.

Social environment description. People read the following description of "Standard High", presented as an excerpt from McCormack (2011a) ethnographic report of a British 6th form. Wording in brackets was included in the nonhomophobic versus homophobic conditions, respectively:

> The [absence/sheer prevalence] of homophobic behavior is the most striking finding at Standard High. Throughout the five months of data collection, including over 500 hours of participant observation, I [never heard/heard] the term "gay" used in derogatory ways [/almost daily]. Additionally, phrases such as "that's so gay" are [not/frequently] used by these students. [Instead/In fact], the word "gay" is [only/rarely] used in its literal sense (i.e., when referring to homosexuality). Homophobic insults [have fallen out of usage altogether/are a normal part of daily discourse]. Tom provides more data supporting [an absence/the prevalence] of homophobia at Standard High. [An openly gay/A gay] student in the 12th Grade, he [insists/says] that he [does not hear/regularly hears] homophobic slurs and [does not feel/feels] subordinated by his peers. "I [like/don't like] it here," he says. "The other guys [are/aren't] cool with it. … Nobody is [bothered/accepting]."
>
> Furthermore, [the boys/most of the boys] at Standard High stand firmly and publicly against [homophobia/homosexuality]. When the issue of [homophobia/homosexuality] is raised in private interviews, [all/nearly all] participants position themselves against it. They maintain this is true of their fellow students, too. For

[5] In this and all remaining studies, I included several additional measures that I do not discuss in my main text. For a full list of measures, please see Appendix A.

example, Matt, an athletic and popular boy, suggests that if someone was [homophobic/homosexual], he would be [policed/rejected] by his peers. Justin adds, "They wouldn't get away with [homophobia/being gay]. We'd tell them it's not ok." Sam, a quieter student, agrees, "You might find [homophobia before the 11th Grade/gays tolerated at other schools], but not here. It's just not [acceptable anymore/acceptable]." Thus, it seems that anyone at this school that is gay would have [no difficulty/difficulty] coming out. [Rather than homophobia being/Homophobia is] an integral part of the school climate at Standard High[,/;] boys here [stigmatize homophobic behaviors instead/heavily stigmatize homosexuality].

Notably, the *nonhomophobic* description comes almost verbatim from McCormack (2011a). I developed the homophobic description to mirror it as closely as possible in form and content to maximize internal validity.

Profile. After the randomly assigned social environment description, everyone read the following profile:

Steve is in the 12th grade at Standard High. He is a gifted musician, having studied piano since he was 5 years old. When auditions for the school's annual musical came round, he landed the leading role. I asked him about his hobbies and interests outside of school in his private interview and he answered, "I love fashion! In my spare time, I love to sketch my own designs. I haven't shown them to anyone because I'm not sure they're any good, but maybe someday." When I laughingly joked that I have no fashion sense, Steve excitedly responded, "Oh my god! I should take you shopping! I could help you put together a whole new wardrobe, maybe get some new glasses to frame your face better, and definitely some new shoes," as he looked down at my worn sneakers. Later in the

> interview, when I asked Steve about his sexuality, he laughed and said, “Wouldn't you like to know.” He then added, “You might think I'm gay, but I'm straight. Just because I like fashion doesn't mean I'm gay, any more than a gay guy liking football makes him straight.”

Several points related to this profile bear mentioning. First, the stereotype of gay men having an interest in fashion is pervasive and well-documented (Lippa, 2005; Madon, 1997; Massey, 2009, 2010; Morrison & Bearden, 2007), with some arguing it originates with Oscar Wilde (e.g., Sinfield, 1994; but see also Thienpont, 2005). Accordingly, Steve’s love of fashion should prime participants to associate him with this stereotype and therefore suspect he may be gay. Second, Steve’s explicit claim to be straight should counteract any perception of Steve as gay—he is, after all, the ultimate authority on his sexuality. I expected, however, that in line with the discounting principle (Kelley, 1971) and Fein's (1996) work on suspicious mindsets, participants would be suspicious of Steve’s sexuality because his explicit claim contradicts the stereotypic association of men loving fashion with being gay.

My decision to provide conflicting messages about Steve’s sexuality was deliberate. The attributional ambiguity created by such identity cue conflict allows us to examine whether participants look to the social environment for situational cues to disambiguate their impression of Steve’s sexuality, in line with attribution theory models (see Gilbert, 1998). Specifically, I wanted to know whether situating Steve in a homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) social environment would cause people to be more suspicious of his claim to be straight (reflecting identity suspicion).

Table 1

Demographic Descriptives by Study

Study	1a	1b	1c	2a	2b	3	4a	4b	5	Mega
Total Initiated	260	262	403	512	344	500	567	636	393	
Incomplete	40 (15.4%)	39 (14.9%)	73 (18.1%)	72 (14.1%)	43 (12.5%)	60 (12.0%)	65 (11.5%)	87 (13.7%)	43 (10.9%)	
Exclusions										
No Final Consent	2	3	7	4	3	5	10	6	1	
Nonsense Responses	0	1	0	3	3	4	1	1	4	
Failed Attention Checks	14	6	18	16	9	17	26	7	3	
Duplicate IP Address	3	3	6	7	2	4	0	5	0	
Incomplete main DV	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
Final *N*	201	209	298	410	284	410	465	529	342	2467
Age (*Mdn*)	38.5	38.7	35.0	37.0	37.0	36.0	35.0	37.0	33.5	36.0
Sex (% Female)	57.7[a]	58.9	57.0	60.0	57.7	63.2	58.3[a]	67.1	52.3	61.2[a]
Cisgender (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	98.2	97.8	98.5	97.7	99.7	98.0[b]
Exclusively Straight (%)	79.1[c]	75.6	79.9	78.8	76.1[c]	73.7[c]	75.3[c]	72.8[c]	79.2	76.0[c]
Non-White (%)	17.9	21.1	17.1	18.8	18.7	21.2	21.4	17.8	29.8[d]	19.2
Income (*Mdn*)	$50,001 - $75,000	$35,001 -$50,000	$35,001 - $50,000	$50,001 - $75,000	$50,001- $75,000	$50,001 - $75,000	$50,001 -$75,000	$35,001 - $50,000	$50,001 - $75,000	$50,001 -$75,000
Education (*Mdn*)	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree	College Degree

No HS Kids (%)	84.6[e]	87.1[e]	84.9[e]	85.9[e]	87.3[e]	86.8[e]	87.5	90.0[e]	N/A	88.5[e]

Note. Total initiated = everyone who clicked on the Mturk HIT to initiate the study; No Final Consent = withdrew consent/data after debriefing; Duplicate IP Address = duplicate IP address within or across studies; Cisgender = natal sex (i.e., sex assigned at birth) aligns with their gender identity; N/A = these demographics were not collected; HS = high school.

[a]Unspecified sex: Study 1a (*n* = 2); Study 4a (*n* = 1); Mega-Analysis (*n* = 3). Intersex/Other: Study 4a & Mega-Analysis (*n* = 1).

[b]Unspecified gender identity: Mega-Analysis (*n* = 879). This large number reflects the fact I did not measure gender identity in Studies 1a-2a.

[c]Unspecified sexuality: Study 1a (*n* = 2); Study 2b (*n* = 2); Study 3 (*n* = 4); Study 4a (*n* = 6); Study 4b (*n* = 6); Mega-Analysis (*n* = 18).

[d]A revised race measure (see Methods) increased the proportion of non-Whites in my sample.

[e]Unspecified number of children in high school: Study 1a (*n* = 4); Study 1b (*n* = 4); Study 1c (*n* = 7); Study 2a (*n* = 10); Study 2b (*n* = 5); Study 3 (*n* = 6); Study 4b (*n* = 6); Mega-Analysis (*n* = 33).

Measures. After reading the social environment description and profile, participants completed measures of my primary construct (identity suspicion) and potential confounds, moderators, and covariates. Here and in future studies, I present variables in analysis order and, for brevity's sake, highlight only measures discussed in my results (for a full list of measures in viewing order by study, please see Appendix A). I reserve tests of potential confounds, moderators, and covariates—environment believability, actor likeability, relevant attitudes of one's closest social network, demographics (including sexuality)—for Chapter 6, where I conduct mega-analyses to maximize analytical power and, therefore, confidence in the results.

Primary hypothesis: Identity suspicion. My primary dependent variable was the perceived likelihood that Steve was straight, reverse-scored to index identity suspicion. To prevent potential reluctance to report suspicion of Steve's claimed sexuality (based on socially desirable responding), Study 1a included the following preamble (removed in later studies):

> As you may know, adolescence is a time when identity begins to emerge. Teens may experiment with hairstyles, fashion, and various hobbies or interests as they try to work out their own identity. Sometimes, they will also present themselves as having a certain sexual orientation that is not their true orientation.

Next, on a sliding scale from 0% (*No chance at all*) to 100% (*Absolutely guaranteed*), people indicated, "How likely do you think it is:" that (a) "Steve is straight", (b) "Steve is bisexual", and (c) "Steve is gay". Sliders were set at a starting position of 50% (*Maybe/Maybe not*). I always tested the perceived likelihood of Steve being straight first, with subsequent presentation order for bisexual and gay randomized. In line with my main hypothesis, I report only analyses of the perceived likelihood that Steve is straight (results for bisexual and gay likelihood are reported in Appendix C).

To create a more intuitive index of identity suspicion, I reverse-scored participants' reports of the likelihood Steve is straight, such that higher scores indicate more intense suspicion. Thus, an originally estimated 15% likelihood of Steve being straight converts to 85% suspicion (i.e., 100% - 15%).

Results and Discussion

Data analysis strategy. Prior to analyses, I tested relevant assumptions and effects-coded social environments (−1 = nonhomophobic; +1 = homophobic). I tested my main dependent variable using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), which is quite robust to violations of normality in dependent variables (Howell, 2013). Because identity suspicion showed a non-normal distribution, however, I followed up the ANOVAs with non-parametric tests of median differences between social environments. Across all studies, non-parametric tests supported the results of parametric tests reported here (see Appendix B). Here and in future studies, bracketed values indicate 95% confidence intervals (CIs) unless otherwise indicated or, for η^2 or η_p^2 (which cannot be negative), where a 90% CI is equivalent to calculating a 95% CI for Cohen's *d* (see Lakens, 2014; Steiger, 2004). These 90% CIs correspond to a standard *F* test with alpha set to .05, allowing us to claim 95% confidence that the population value is not below the lower bound (Smithson, 2001). (For 90% CIs, a lower bound of .00 indicates non-significant test results.)

Primary analysis: Identity suspicion. As predicted, identity suspicion differed by social environment, $F(1, 199) = 11.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$ [.01, .11]. Specifically, people were more suspicious of Steve's claim to be straight in the homophobic ($M = 44.79$, $SD = 27.41$) than nonhomophobic ($M = 31.67$, $SD = 27.21$) environment. Some raw percent likelihood estimates were not additively correct (summing to more or less than 100%), so I computed relative

estimates by dividing the perceived likelihood that Steve is straight by the sum of all likelihood judgments (i.e., straight, bisexual, gay). These relative likelihood estimates paralleled raw estimates closely, $r(200) = .87$, $p < .001$, and differed by environment: Participants reported more identity suspicion in the homophobic than nonhomophobic environment (see Table 2).

Table 2

Additively Corrected Likelihood Estimates of Identity Suspicion (Studies 1a-5).

			Omnibus Results				NH vs. H			NH vs. CTRL		
					90% CI			95% CI			95% CI	
#S	Cond	*M* (*SD*)	*F*	η_{p2}	LL	UL	*d*	LL	UL	*d*	LL	UL
1a	NH	48.90 (28.08)	5.05*	.03	.002	.07						
	H	57.74 (27.62)										
1b	NH	49.40 (28.03)	3.91*	.02	.00003	.06						
	H	56.92 (26.97)										
1c	NH	45.72 (26.85)	2.62†	.02	.00	.05	0.27†	–0.00	0.55	0.03	–0.25	0.30
	H	53.07 (26.71)										
	CTRL	45.04 (26.88)										
2a	NH	30.88 (27.00)	2.60†	.01	.00	.03	0.28*	0.04	0.52	0.12	–0.12	0.35
	H	38.41 (25.55)										
	MH	34.04 (28.68)										
2b	NH	30.66 (23.57)	1.11	.01	.00	.03	0.22	–0.07	0.51	0.08	–0.20	0.36
	H	36.23 (26.94)										
	MH	32.80 (25.85)										
3	NH	16.52 (18.91)	52.00***	.11	.07	.16						
	H	31.64 (24.17)										
	GC	20.59 (20.62)	11.36**	.03	.01	.06						
	GNC	27.46 (24.61)										
	INT	__	4.01*	.01	.0001	.03						
4a	NH	31.04 (23.32)	30.10***	.06	.03	.10						
	H	43.25 (24.69)										
4b	NH	35.42 (24.56)	12.39***	.02	.01	.05						
	H	42.77 (23.49)										
5[6]	RT	39.27 (22.72)	41.94***	.11	.06	.17						
	AJP	56.59 (26.58)										

Note. NH = nonhomophobic social environment; H = homophobic social environment; CTRL = control social environment; #S = Study number; Cond = condition; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; GC = gender-conforming profile; GNC = gender-nonconforming profile; INT = Social

[6] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 340) = 4.74$, $p = .030$, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 333.1) = 42.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .11$ [.06, .17].

Environment × Men's Gender Cue interaction; RT = Religious tolerance; AJP = Anti-Jewish persecution.
†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Study 1b

Study 1a provided initial support for my primary identity suspicion hypothesis. People reported more identity suspicion when Steve was in a homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) social environment. In Study 1b, I tested a boundary condition of the environmental effect on identity suspicion. Specifically, Anderson (2008) reported that 40% of the 68 straight-identifying male cheerleaders he interviewed reported having engaged in "limited forms of same-sex sex" (p. 104). Importantly, none of them perceived their straightness to be contested by these same-sex sexual experiences. In Study 1b, I aimed to test environmentel effects on participants' suspicion of a young man's sexuality if he identified as straight and reported having previously engaged in same-sex sexual behavior. According to identity suspicion theory, participants should report less identity suspicion toward this young man's claim to be straight when he is situated in a nonhomophobic (vs. homophobic) environment because it presents no incentive to conceal a non-straight sexuality, whereas the homophobic environment does.

Method

Participants and procedure. I aimed to recruit a final sample of 200 MTurk workers. Initially, 262 participants initiated the study; 39 (14.9%) did not complete it.[7] After excluding an additional 14 participants, my final sample comprised 209 participants (see Table 1 for demographics and exclusions).

The procedure mirrored Study 1a, using updated stimuli described below.

[7] Attrition rates did not differ by condition, $\chi_2(1) = 0.30$, $p = .862$.

Stimulus materials. Revised stimuli included a new profile featuring past same-sex sexual experience as Steve's form of gender-nonconformity.

Profile. After reading their randomly assigned environmental description, everyone read the following description of Steve's profile:

> Steve is in the 12th grade at Standard High. He is generally well liked by his peers and is somewhat popular. He plays tennis on the school team and is a member of Student Council. When asked about homosexuality in his private interview, he said he has no issues with anyone being gay. Referring to Tom, a gay student at Standard High, he said, "He's a cool guy, a bit shy, but I enjoy spending time with him." When I responded by asking if he had ever done anything sexual with a guy, he answered, "Yeah, I've experimented before. I got drunk at a party once and made out with this guy. We fooled around a bit too." Still, he said, "I don't perceive myself as gay. I like women far too much for that." When asked if he identifies as bisexual, he replied, "No. I'm straight; I'm just not a homophobe. Fooling around with a guy doesn't make me gay any more than a gay guy having sex with a woman makes him straight."

My description of Steve's past same-sex sexual experience defies the one-time rule of homosexuality for men (Anderson, 2008). That is, "one same-sex sexual experience is [all that it takes for a man to be] equated with a homosexual orientation in masculine peer culture" (p. 105). While limitations to this rule exist, such as same-sex sex in all-male prisons (Hensley, Tewksbury, & Wright, 2001; Saum, Surratt, Inciardi, & Bennett, 1995), and in limited circumstances wherein men engaging in same-sex sex simultaneously affirm their straightness (Ward, 2008), in North American culture, men are generally held to the one-time rule if they

hope to attain both straightness and masculinity (Anderson, 2005; Butler, 1990). As such, Steve's profile cues a particularly strong association with being gay.

Measures. Everyone completed the measure of identity suspicion from Study 1a (M = 36.61, SD = 27.72).

Results and Discussion

Primary analyses: Identity suspicion. Unlike Study 1a, identity suspicion did not differ significantly by social environment, $F(1, 207) = 2.47$, $p = .118$, $\eta_{p2} = .01$ [.00, .05]. Nonetheless, the pattern of means were in the hypothesized direction. Participants reported descriptively more identity suspicion when Steve was situated in the homophobic environment (M = 39.57, SD = 28.09) compared to the nonhomophobic (M = 33.56, SD = 27.13) environment. As in Study 1a, I calculated the relative likelihood estimates to correct for non-additivity in raw estimates. As before, the relative estimates closely paralleled raw estimates, $r(209) = .89$, $p < .001$. Contrasting the result using raw estimates, participants reported significantly more identity suspicion in the homophobic than nonhomophobic condition.

Though the raw estimates of identity suspicion did not differ significantly, the pattern of means were in the hypothesized direction. This is worth noting because the gender-nonconforming cue in Steve's profile represents a particularly strong marker of being gay. Given that society generally polices men's sexual behavior very strictly (e.g., one-time rule of homosexuality; Anderson, 2008), it is relatively surprising that participants in the nonhomophobic environment reported a descriptively lower amount of identity suspicion than their counterparts in the homophobic environment. Nonetheless, I caution against overinterpretation of this result, as the difference between means was not statistically significant.

Study 1c

Studies 1a and 1b provided initial support for my primary hypothesis. People reported more identity suspicion—statistically in Study 1a and descriptively in Study 1b—when Steve was in a homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) social environment. Without a baseline condition, however, I cannot identify which social environment drives this effect. Accordingly, in Study 1c I added a third environment that made no mention of sexuality and focused instead on a positive aspect of life at Standard High. By omitting mention of sexuality in the environmental description, participants have no contextual information to resolve the inconsistency of identity cues in Steve's profile. Accordingly, I intended for identity suspicion ratings in this environment to serve as a baseline against which to compare identity suspicion ratings in the (non)homophobic environments.

This study also used a different form of men's gender-nonconformity: emotional expressivity regarding same-sex friendships. Past work on masculinity has demonstrated a strong norm for emotional stoicism among men (Levant, Hall, & Rankin, 2013; Way, 2013), especially within same-sex friendships (Way, 2013). As such, I hypothesized that in a homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) social environment, people would be more suspicious of Steve's sexuality because he spoke candidly about the emotional intimacy between himself and his same-sex best friend, Connor. By using a new cue of men's gender-nonconformity, Study 1c also tests the generalizability of identity suspicion across cues of gender-nonconformity.

Method

Participants and procedure. I aimed to recruit a final sample of 300 MTurk workers. Initially, 403 participants initiated the study; 73 (18.1%) did not complete it.[8] After excluding an

[8] Attrition rates differed marginally by condition, $\chi_2(2) = 5.39$, $p = .067$, with slightly less attrition in the nonhomophobic (11.9%) than homophobic (21.6%) and extra-curricular (20.9%) conditions.

additional 31 participants, along with one who skipped the main dependent measure, my final sample comprised 298 participants (see Table 1 for demographics & exclusions).

The procedure mirrored Study 1a, using updated stimuli described below.

Stimulus materials. Revised stimuli included a third social environment and same-sex emotional intimacy as the gender-nonconformity in Steve's profile.

Social environments. To create a baseline against which to compare the social environments from Study 1a, I included a third description of a social environment without information about homophobia. Specifically, people read the following:

> The sheer prevalence of extracurricular activity is the most striking finding at Standard High. Throughout the five months of data collection, including over 500 hours of participant observation, I constantly heard students chatting about which clubs and after-school activities they were taking part in. Additionally, the staff at Standard High seem excited to be involved with the different extra-curricular activities. Instead of complaining about the demands on their time outside of school, the staff frequently commented about how their involvement in extracurriculars enriched their relationships with students. This view is reflected in how highly the students seem to regard their teachers. Tom provides more data supporting students' positive views of the teaching staff at Standard High. He insists that he does not hear of his peers talking negatively about the staff. "*The teachers here are cool*," he says. "*They're willing to supervise all our school clubs, which means we get to have more fun outside of the class. … Nobody complains.*"
>
> At a recent divisional school board meeting, the boys at Standard High stood firmly and publicly against a proposed policy that would require teachers to supervise

extracurricular activities without pay. When the issue of the proposed policy was raised in private interviews, all participants positioned themselves against it. They maintained this is the view of their fellow students, too. For example, Matt, an athletic and popular boy, suggested that if the student sports council decided to organize a protest against the policy, all the students would be supportive and join in. Justin adds, "*They* [the division] *wouldn't get away with cutting funding. We'd tell them it's not ok.*" Sam, a quieter student, agrees, "*You might find support for this policy in other places, but not here. It's just not acceptable to any of us.*" Thus, it seems that the students and teachers at this school regard each other with a great deal of respect. Rather than the apathy one might expect from male students at this age, the boys at Standard High are highly invested in supporting their teachers.

As can be seen, the structure of this description closely mirrored that of the other two social environments to maximize internal validity.

Profile. Next, everyone read the following description of Steve's profile:

Steve is in the 12th grade at Standard High. He has a small, tightly knit group of friends, plays tennis on the school team, and loves playing video games. In his private interview, I asked about his best friend, Connor. Steve answered, "Connor and I are really close, like emotionally. Whenever I see him, I'm instantly cheered up. And if there's a day when he's out from school I feel quite down, like I miss him, you know? We're very comfortable with each other, and spend a lot of time together." I asked how he and Connor had become such close friends and he replied, "Last year my parents divorced and it was kind of rough. I'd text and ask Connor if I could stay at his and we would bunk up in his bed and chat, sometimes for hours. I don't know what I would've done without

him. There's nobody I'm closer too, friend or family, and the same is true for him." When asked if it felt odd sharing a bed with another guy, he replied, "No man, it's just not a big deal," and added, "Connor's my closest friend. I love him, but we're both straight; it's not a sexual thing."

My description of Steve's expressivity about the emotional intimacy between Connor and himself defies men's gender norms around both emotional expressivity and same-sex emotional intimacy. Extensive research on masculinity norms has found that boys and men are traditionally expected to show emotional stoicism (e.g., Eisen & Yamashita, 2017; Jansz, 2000; Levant, Hall, & Rankin, 2013; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016; Thompson Jr. & Pleck, 1986). Male peers uphold this norm particularly strongly (Reigeluth & Addis, 2016), resulting in what some have called an "epidemic of loneliness" in older men (Greene, 2015; Reiner, 2016). Relative to women, men report wanting the same level of intimacy in their friendships (Way, 2013), but are less likely to achieve it due to masculine gender norms that stereotype emotional expressivity as characteristic of gay men (e.g., Massey, 2009; Morrison & Bearden, 2007). As such, Steve's profile again cues readers to associate him with stereotypes of gay men.

Measures. Everyone completed the measure of identity suspicion from Study 1a (M = 32.57, SD = 24.43).

Results and Discussion

Primary analyses: Identity suspicion. Identity suspicion differed significantly across the three social environments, $F(2, 295) = 4.13$, $p = .017$, $\eta_{p2} = .03$ [.003, .06]. Post-hoc analyses[9] supported my primary hypothesis: Participants reported more identity suspicion when Steve was situated in the homophobic (M = 38.59, SD = 24.52) than nonhomophobic (M = 29.95,

[9] With only 3 levels and a significant omnibus test, no correction for familywise error is needed (Howell, 2013).

SD = 23.86) environment, $p = .012$, $d = 0.36$ [0.10, 0.63], replicating Study 1a. Identity suspicion in the extracurricular environment ($M = 29.79$, $SD = 24.21$) was lower than in the homophobic environment, $p = .013$, $d = 0.36$ [0.10, 0.65], and comparable to the nonhomophobic environment, $p = .962$.

As in Study 1a, I calculated the relative likelihood estimates to correct for non-additivity in raw estimates. As before, the relative estimates closely paralleled raw estimates, $r(297) = .89$, $p < .001$, and differed by environment: Participants reported marginally more identity suspicion in the homophobic than nonhomophobic condition and significantly more than in the extracurricular environment (see Table 2). The extracurricular and nonhomophobic environments were comparable.

These results suggest it is the *presence* of homophobia that introduces identity suspicion, rather than the absence of homophobia reducing an otherwise ever-present phenomenon of identity suspicion. That is, when participants were not given any contextual information to resolve the inconsistency of Steve's identity cue conflict, their identity suspicion ratings were comparable to the nonhomophobic environment, where the lack of incentive to conceal being non-straight was made explicit. As such, these results suggest identity suspicion is not a default characteristic of gender-nonconformity. Rather, they are in line with Brekhus's (1996) notion of social markedness in that homophobic environments mark and stigmatize non-straight identities, thereby producing identity suspicion toward men's claims to be straight.

Chapter 3: Samples 2a & 2b

My first set of studies provides converging evidence for identity suspicion. When a young man who loved fashion, admitted to a same-sex sexual experience in his past, or openly described same-sex emotional intimacy also said he was straight, people looked to his surrounding social environment to disambiguate their perceptions of his sexuality. When he was situated in a homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment, they expressed more identity suspicion (i.e., questioned to a greater extent whether he was straight). These results are in keeping with the discounting principle. That is, homophobic environments create an incentive to conceal being gay. This incentive provides participants the opportunity to create a coherent impression of Steve by discounting his claim to be straight as an attempt to conceal being gay—as his behaviors suggest he might be—due to the environmental homophobia surrounding him. In Study 2a, I sought to directly replicate the primary analyses in Study 1a and extend my tests of social environments to include an environment with mixed attitudes toward being gay.

I tested two competing hypotheses across these three social environments. First, I hypothesized that if perceptions of Steve's sexuality depend on the degree of homophobia in the environment, a linear trend would emerge across environments with the homophobic environment demonstrating the most identity suspicion, followed by the mixed-homophobia and then nonhomophobic environments (i.e., *linear trend hypothesis*). Alternately, I hypothesized that if homophobia in social environments functions as an all-or-nothing influence, I would see little to no difference in identity suspicion between the homophobic and mixed-homophobia environments, with the nonhomophobic environment differing from each (i.e., *all-or-nothing hypothesis*).

Method

Participants and procedure. I aimed to recruit a final sample of 400 MTurk workers. Initially, 512 participants initiated the study; 72 (14.1%) did not finish.[10] After 30 additional exclusions, my final sample comprised 410 participants (see Table 1 for demographics & exclusions).

I followed the procedure from Study 1a with one new environment description.

Stimulus materials. This study retained the Study 1a profile of Steve that featured his love of fashion, and added a third (mixed homophobia) social environment.

Social environments. In the new social environment, most, but not all, boys were nonhomophobic (mixed homophobia). Specifically, participants read the following:

> The mixture of homophobic discourse and support for gays is the most striking finding at Standard High. Throughout the five months of data collection, including over 500 hours of participant observation, I often heard the term "*gay*" used in derogatory ways. Additionally, phrases such as "*that's so gay*" are frequently used by certain groups of students. At the same time, certain other groups of students only use the word "gay" in its literal sense (i.e., when referring to homosexuality). For them, homophobic insults have fallen out of usage altogether. Tom provides more data supporting the mixed attitudes at Standard High. An openly gay student in the sixth form, he says that although he regularly hears homophobic slurs from a few guys, he does not feel subordinated by most of his peers. "*I don't mind it here*," he says. "*Sure, some guys aren't cool with it … but in general, nobody is bothered*."

[10] Attrition rates did not differ by condition, $\chi_2(2) = 1.78$, $p = .411$.

> In support of his statement, only some of the boys at Standard High stand firmly and publicly against homosexuality. In fact, when the issue of homosexuality[11] is raised in interviews, most participants position themselves against it. They maintain that this is true of many of their fellow students too, though not all. For example, Matt, a sporty and popular boy, suggests that if someone was gay, he would be safe if he avoided the "*homophobes*". Justin adds, "*He wouldn't be beat up for being gay. We'd tell them [the "homophobes"] it's not ok.*" Sam, a quieter student, agrees, "*You might find gays getting beaten up at other schools, but not here. It's just not acceptable.*" Thus, it seems that, while homophobia exists, it is not an integral part of the school climate at Standard High; most boys here do not condone homophobic behavior.

As in Study 1c, the narrative structure of this environment mirrored that of the (non)homophobic environments to maximize internal validity.

Measures. I refined my measure of identity suspicion (see below) and included two new measures: (a) participants' certainty of their ratings of Steve's sexuality, and (b) their endorsement of the dissociation of gender-nonconformity and sexuality. Fein and colleagues (1990) demonstrated that when observers became suspicious of an actor's "true" motive, they also became less certain of their dispositional inferences. Accordingly, I tested whether participants in the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment reported greater uncertainty due to the possibility that Steve might be self-presenting as straight to avoid stigmatization for being gay.

[11] Due to human error, this description erroneously included "homosexuality" here when it should have been "homophobia." Given the mixed homophobia of the environment, together with the quotes that follow this sentence, it seems likely participants understood that not all boys at Standard High were homophobic.

I have theorized that identity suspicion emerges as a function of rational suspicion, as per the discounting principle, rather than individual bias. To test this claim, I compared participants' endorsements of gender and sexuality's dissociation across environments. If random assignment to environment was successful, ratings on this measure should not differ because participants with varying scores on this measure would have been relatively equally distributed across environments. As such, a null effect would support my theorizing that identity suspicion is an outcome of rational suspicion, not individual bias.

Identity suspicion. In Studies 1a to 1c, I presented participants with a preamble that licensed them to express suspicion of Steve's claim to be straight. From Study 2a onward, I dropped this preamble and simply instructed participants to "think about the profile of Steve that [they] just read." Additionally, I combined the two items asking participants how likely they thought it was that Steve was bisexual or gay, because participants' ratings in Studies 1a to 1c did not reliably differentiate between the two.[12] From here on in, participants read, "How likely do you think it is that Steve is bisexual or gay?" As before, participants always rated the likelihood of Steve being straight—our key indicator of identity suspicion—first (M = 30.15, SD = 27.09). Results of the combined bisexual or gay item are available in Appendix C.

Certainty of perceived sexuality. On a separate page, I reminded participants of their rating for the likelihood of Steve being straight. Specifically, they read: "You indicated that the likelihood that Steve is straight is x%" ("x" = participant's respective rating). I then asked, "How certain are you of the likelihood of Steve being straight" (hereafter called *certainty*). People

[12] Within-subjects tests comparing responses to the likelihoods Steve was bisexual or gay provided mixed results. In Sample 1a, the interaction between perceived sexuality and environment was significant, $F(1, 199) = 7.52$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .03$ [.01, .09], but the differences between perceived sexualities did not vary as a function of the environment, $F(1, 199) = 2.30$, $p = .131$, $\eta^2 = .01$ [.00, .05]. The interaction observed in Sample 1a was not significant in Sample 1b, $F(2, 295) = 1.41$, $p = .247$, $\eta^2 = .01$ [.00, .03], or in Sample 1c, $F(1, 207) = 3.84$, $p = .051$, $\eta^2 = .02$ [.00, .06]. Accordingly, we combined bisexual and gay into one category.

indicated their certainty from 0 (*Not at all certain*) to 4 (*Absolutely certain*) (M = 2.13, SD = 1.22).

Agreement with Steve. To assess beliefs about the association between men's gender-nonconformity and being gay, I asked participants to indicate the extent to which they (dis)agreed with Steve's final statement: "Just because I like fashion doesn't mean I'm gay, any more than a gay guy liking football makes him straight" (hereafter called *agreement with Steve*). People responded from –3 (*Strongly disagree*) to 3 (*Strongly agree*) (M = 2.12, SD = 1.28).

Results and Discussion

Primary analyses: Identity suspicion. Consistent with the linear trend hypothesis, a planned contrast revealed a significant linear pattern across the homophobic, mixed-homophobia, and nonhomophobic environments, $F(1, 407) = 4.91$, $p = .027$, $\eta_{Linear2} = .01$ [.001, .04].[13] Post-hoc tests of identity suspicion were consistent with an incremental linear effect of increased homophobia on increased suspicion: the mixed-homophobia environment (M = 30.70, SD = 28.24) fell descriptively between the nonhomophobic (M = 26.13, SD = 26.42) and homophobic environments (M = 33.45, SD = 26.19), and did not differ from either significantly: $p = .162$, d = 0.17 [0.00, 0.40], and $p = .396$, d = 0.10 [0.00, 0.34], respectively. Replicating Studies 1a and 1c and the pattern of Study 1b, people were more suspicious of Steve's sexuality when he was situated in the homophobic than nonhomophobic environment, $p = .027$, d = 0.27 [0.04, 0.51]. These results support my claim that increased pervasiveness of homophobia within social environments amplifies the strength of identity suspicion emerging within those environments.

Secondary analyses. I submitted both certainty and agreement with Steve to exploratory ANOVA and linear trend models and followed-up with post-hoc analyses.

[13] Identity suspicion varied marginally across social environments, $F(2, 407) = 2.50$, $p = .084$, $\eta_{p2} = .01$ [.00, .03].

Certainty. Participants' certainty of their ratings of Steve's sexuality showed a significant linear trend, $F(1, 407) = 5.06$, $p = .025$, $\eta_{Linear2} = .01$ [.001, .04]. In line with Fein and colleagues (1990), participants reported less certainty in the homophobic ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 1.32$) than nonhomophobic ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.13$) environment, $p = .025$, $d = 0.27$ [0.03, 0.51], while the mixed-homophobia environment ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.18$) fell descriptively between the two, differing marginally from the homophobic environment, $p = .079$, $d = 0.21$ [–0.03, 0.44], but not the nonhomophobic environment, $p = .593$.

Agreement with Steve. Participants' endorsement of the dissociation between gender cues and sexuality did not vary across environments, $F(2, 407) < 1$. Further, endorsement of this dissociation was strong across all environments. Although participants explicitly agreed—regardless of environment—that gender cues do not signal specific sexualities, their attributions did not reflect these beliefs. These contrasting results suggest identity suspicion is not a function of homophobia or individual bias, but rather rational suspicion as per the discounting principle. I discuss this account in more detail later when I present mega-analytic tests of moderation.

Study 2b

In Study 2b, I sought to directly replicate the results from Study 1c. As in Study 2a, I included the mixed-homophobia social environment, testing the linear trend of identity suspicion (and observed differences in certainty) across environments.

Method

Participants and procedures. I aimed to recruit a final sample of 300 MTurk workers. Initially, 344 participants started the study; 43 (12.5%) did not finish.[14] After 17 additional exclusions, my final sample comprised 284 people (see Table 1 for demographics & exclusions).

[14] Attrition rates differed significantly by condition, $\chi^2(2) = 6.98$, $p = .031$, with somewhat more attrition in the homophobic (19.1%) than the mixed-homophobia (9.6%) and nonhomophobic (8.8%) conditions.

I followed the same procedures as in Study 2a, with the stimuli noted below.

Stimulus Materials. This study used the three social environments from Study 2a and the profile of Steve from Study 1c, in which he describes the emotional intimacy he shares with his same-sex best friend, Connor. Accordingly, I had to change my measure of participants' agreement with Steve. Here, the interviewer asked Steve if it felt odd sharing a bed with another young man, to which Steve replied, *"No man, it's just not a big deal."* As before, participants indicated their level of (dis)agreement with Steve's response from –3 (*Strongly disagree*) to 3 (*Strongly agree*). For consistency, I retained the label from Study 2a (i.e., *agreement with Steve*).

Measures. Participants completed measures of identity suspicion (M = 28.35, SD = 25.45), certainty (M = 2.02, SD = 1.16), and agreement with Steve (M = 1.17, SD = 1.76).

Results and Discussion

Primary analyses: Identity suspicion. As hypothesized and replicating Study 2a, a planned contrast revealed a significant linear trend across all 3 conditions, $F(1, 281) = 4.39$, p = .037, $\eta_{linear2}$ = .02 [.001, .05]. As in Study 2a, post hoc analyses showed that the nonhomophobic (M = 24.57, SD = 23.53) and homophobic (M = 32.40, SD = 27.03) environments differed significantly, p = .037, d = 0.31 [0.02, 0.60], and that the mixed-homophobia environment (M = 28.48, SD = 25.67) fell descriptively between them but did not differ from either, both ps > .280. Together with Study 2a, these results lend support to my theorized positive association between the pervasiveness of homophobia within social environments and the strength of identity suspicion emerging within those environments.

Secondary analyses. As with Study 2a, I submitted both certainty and agreement with Steve to ANOVA models and followed-up with post-hoc analyses.

Certainty. In contrast to Study 2a, neither the main effect of social environment on certainty, $F(2, 281) = 1.08$, $p = .342$, $\eta_{p2} = .01$ [.00, .03], nor any post-hoc comparisons were significant, all *p*s > .193. Descriptively, participants were less certain of their identity suspicion ratings in the homophobic ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 1.23$) than nonhomophobic ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.06$) environment, replicating Study 2a, but the mixed-homophobia environment ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 1.19$) matched the homophobic environment. Thus, additional studies are needed to determine the replicability, and general size, of any environment-driven differences in certainty ratings.

Agreement with Steve. Agreement with Steve's statement about it "not [being] a big deal" to share a bed with his best friend Connor did not vary by environment, as hypothesized: $F(2, 281) < 1$. Once again, the lack of environmental effects for agreement with Steve contradicted participants' identity suspicion ratings, providing additional support for the latter emerging as a function of rational suspicion and not individual bias.

Chapter 4: Sample 3

My first five studies have provided converging evidence that a homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) social environment increases people's suspicion about a gender-nonconforming young man's assertion of his straight sexuality. Further, I have replicated this effect across two distinct forms of men's gender-nonconformity, as attribution theory predicts I should. Nonetheless, the median identity suspicion estimates in the nonhomophobic environment never dropped below 17% across my four samples (*Mdn* range: 17%-29%)[15]. In Study 3, I addressed the question of why people remain somewhat suspicious of Steve's sexuality in the nonhomophobic environment despite his lack of an immediate incentive to falsely present as straight. I did so by contrasting Steve's gender-nonconforming profile with a gender-conforming profile and testing competing hypotheses. I reasoned that if identity suspicion in the nonhomophobic environment arises primarily from how strongly U.S. society stereotypes men's gender-nonconformity as a marker of being gay—despite both Steve's explicit claim to be straight and the pro-LGB environmental context—then a gender-conforming profile should produce dramatically less identity suspicion (*stereotype persistence hypothesis*). Alternately, if identity suspicion in the nonhomophobic environment arises not from gender-nonconformity but some other source instead (e.g., lay theories about the prevalence of specific sexual identities), I should expect to see similar levels of identity suspicion across the gender-conforming and -nonconforming profiles in the nonhomophobic environment (*equivalence hypothesis*).

In line with my reasoning, I tested the following hypotheses: identity suspicion will (a) increase when Steve has gender-nonconforming (vs. -conforming) interests; (b) increase in

[15] I refer here to medians instead of means because the former are less susceptible to extreme scores in the tails of identity suspicion's distributions across environments and because identity suspicion was nonnormally distributed across environments.

homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environments (i.e., *environmental context hypothesis* demonstrated in Studies 1a, 1c-2b); and (c) vary interactively as a function of gender-(non)conformity and the social environment. Specifically, people will report more identity suspicion when Steve has gender-noncomforming interests in the homophobic environment relative to (d) having gender-conforming interests in this environment and (e) having gender-nonconforming interests in the nonhomophobic environment. I remained agnostic about the simple effect of social environment for the gender-conforming profile, so I treat this test as exploratory.

Method

Participants and procedures. I aimed to recruit a final sample of 400 MTurk workers. Initially, 500 participants started the study; 58 (11.6%) did not finish it.[16] After 30 additional exclusions, my final sample comprised 410 participants (see Table 1 for demographics & exclusions).

I followed the same procedure as in prior studies, with the stimuli noted below.

Stimulus materials. This study dropped the mixed-homophobia social environment, added a gender-conforming profile, and made minor revisions to the gender-nonconforming profile.

Profiles. To increase internal validity between profiles, I made the following changes to the gender-nonconforming profile: (a) I dropped the expression, "Oh my god!" from the following excerpt, "Steve excitedly responded, "Oh my god! I should take you shopping!"; (b) I changed the introduction to asking about Steve's sexuality to increase the plausibility of the interviewer asking this question in the gender-conforming profile (i.e., instead of, "when I asked

[16] Attrition did not differ by social environment, $\chi_2(1) = 0.27$, $p = .605$, by gender cue, $\chi_2(1) = 0.34$, $p = .560$, or across the four cells produced by their interaction, $\chi_2(3) = 0.61$, $p = .895$.

Steve about his sexuality," participants read, "when I got to the part where I asked students about their sexuality"); (c) I dropped the flirtatious, "Wouldn't you like to know," in response to the interviewer's question about Steve's sexuality; and (d) I changed the following excerpt, "He then added, 'You might think I'm gay, but I'm straight'," to simply, "I'm straight." These changes allowed me to maintain the gender-nonconformity of Steve's interests while also maximizing internal validity via greater consistency across conditions. It is worth noting, however, that these changes also decreased the extent of gender-nonconformity in the profile featuring Steve's love of fashion. I return to this point in the results.

Participants were randomly assigned a profile. Those in the gender-conforming condition read the following profile:

> Steve is in the 12th grade at Standard High. He is a gifted musician, having played the drums since he was 5 years old. When student council elections came round, he was elected sports council representative. I asked him about his hobbies and interests outside of school in his private interview and he answered, "I love rugby! In my spare time I love to watch my favorite team play. I haven't tried out for a team yet because I'm not sure I'm any good, but maybe someday." When I laughingly joked that I knew nothing about rugby, Steve excitedly responded, "I should take you to a match! I could explain the game to you and teach you everything there is to know about rugby. Who knows, you might even want to start playing!" He chuckled at the look of disbelief on my face. Later in the interview, when I got to the part where I asked students about their sexuality, Steve laughed and said, "I'm straight."

I chose rugby as Steve's interest in the gender-conforming profile because it is a very physical and sometimes violent sport (Naurright & Chandler, 1996), and because both sports and physical

aggression are closely aligned with masculinity (e.g., Anderson & McGuire, 2010; Berke, Reidy, Miller, & Zeichner, 2017; Levant et al., 2013; Smith, Parrott, Swartout, & Tharp, 2015).

Measures. Everyone completed measures of identity suspicion (M = 24.04, SD = 22.94) and certainty (M = 2.20, SD = 1.20). I dropped agreement with Steve because I did not include a comparable statement in the gender-conforming profile.

Results and Discussion

Primary analyses: Identity suspicion. I conducted a 2 (Social Environment: Nonhomophobic vs. Homophobic) × 2 (Men's Gender Cue: Conforming vs. Nonconforming) factorial ANOVA to test my hypotheses.[17] Overall, participants expressed more identity suspicion of Steve's sexuality when they read the gender-nonconforming (M = 27.46, SD = 24.61) compared to gender-conforming (M = 20.59, SD = 20.62) profile, $F(1, 406) = 11.36$, p = .001, η_{p2} = .03 [.01, .06], and when he was situated in the homophobic (M = 31.64, SD = 24.17) compared to nonhomophobic (M = 16.52, SD = 18.91) social environment, $F(1, 406) = 52.00$, p < .001, η_{p2} = .11 [.07, .16]. These main effects were qualified by the predicted two-way interaction, $F(1, 406) = 4.01$, p = .046, η_{p2} = .01 [.0001, .03] (see Figure 1). As hypothesized, tests of simple effects confirmed that when participants read the gender-nonconforming profile in the homophobic environment (M = 37.36, SD = 25.82), they reported more identity suspicion than: (a) those who read the gender-conforming profile in the same environment (M = 26.03, SD = 21.09), $F(1, 202) = 11.80$, p = .001, d = 0.48 [0.20, 0.76]; and (b) those who read the gender-nonconforming profile in the nonhomophobic environment (M = 17.93, SD = 19.14), $F(1, 204)$ = 37.82, p < .001, d = 0.86 [0.57, 1.14]. The null effect of men's gender cue on identity suspicion

[17] The data violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance, $F(3, 406) = 10.95$, p < .001, so I conducted simple effects analyses using restricted (rather than pooled) error terms. Because only mild heterogeneity of variance emerged, with the largest s^2 less than 2 times greater than the smallest s^2 (well below the recommended threshold of 4; (Howell, 2013), no further corrections were applied.

in the nonhomophobic environment is consistent with the equivalence—not persistent association—hypothesis. That is, participants who read about a nonhomophobic environment were comparably likely to believe Steve's claim to be straight, regardless of whether he liked fashion or rugby (M = 15.05, SD = 18.65), $F(1, 204) = 1.20$, $p = .275$, $d = 0.15$ [–0.12, 0.43].

The exploratory simple effect of social environment for the gender-conforming profile mirrored—though less strongly—the difference observed for the gender-nonconforming profile. Even when Steve described liking rugby, a hypermasculine sport, people were still more suspicious of his claim to be straight when he was situated in the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment, $F(1, 202) = 15.50$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.55$ [0.27, 0.83].[18] Despite the interesting implications of this result, I reiterate its exploratory nature and urge caution in its interpretation.

[18] Correcting for non-additivity of identity suspicion did not change the results. The main effect of environment and gender cue were significant, both ps < .001, as was their interaction, $p = .046$. The homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment produced more identity suspicion for both gender cues, both ps ≤ .001. The gender-nonconforming cue produced more identity suspicion than the gender-conforming one in the homophobic environment, $p < .001$, but not in the nonhomophobic environment, $p = .182$.

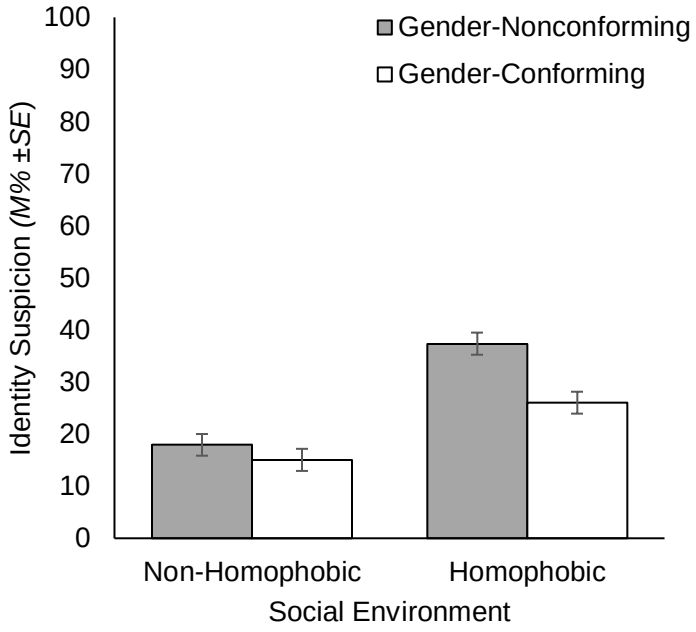


Figure 1. Social environment and gender cue interactively predict identity suspicion in Study 3. (Error bars indicate restricted *SE*.)

Summary. While at first it may seem counterintuitive that belief in a stereotypically masculine young man's claim to be straight would vary as a function of the homophobia in his social environment, this outcome aligns with my theorizing of identity suspicion—as informed by the discounting principle—and Anderson's (2009) homohysteria (i.e., the "[conceptualization of] the contexts when homophobia effects (*sic*) (or is used to police) heterosexual men's gendered behaviors;" McCormack & Anderson, 2014a, p. 153). Environments that oppress a marked concealable identity incentivize people with that identity to closet it. In such environments, explicit claims to the contrasting unmarked concealable identity are subject to identity suspicion, because these claims may be self-protective. It is already known that homophobic environments are oppressive toward sexual minorities. What my data add to this understanding is that homophobic environments also negatively affect the sexual majority (in my data, straight men), even when they embody stereotypically masculine interests.

I note that identity suspicion for the gender-nonconforming profile in the nonhomophobic environment was substantially lower in this study (M = 16.52) than in Studies 1a and 2a (24.57 < M < 31.67). Though I cannot speak empirically to the cause of this specific decrease in identity suspicion, I highlight my removal of several elements of gender-nonconformity from the profile and speculate that this removal may have decreased the amount of identity suspicion aroused in the nonhomophobic environment.

Secondary analysis: Certainty. A factorial ANOVA tested participants' certainty in their estimates of Steve's sexuality across conditions. The data again violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance, $F(3, 406) = 3.77$, $p = .011$, so I conducted simple effects analyses using restricted error terms.[19]

Participants were less certain of their ratings in the homophobic (M = 1.88, SD = 1.23) than the nonhomophobic (M = 2.51, SD = 1.09) environment, $F(1, 406) = 30.74$, $p < .001$, η_{p2} = .07 [.04, .11], in line with Study 2a and Fein and colleagues (1990). Descriptively, participants were also less certain of their ratings for the gender-nonconforming (M = 2.12, SD = 1.28) than the gender-conforming (M = 2.28, SD = 1.11) profile, but this difference was not significant, $F(1, 406) = 2.17$, $p = .142$, η_{p2} = .01 [.00, .02]. The two-way interaction was marginally significant, $F(1, 406) = 3.27$, $p = .071$, η_{p2} = .01 [.00, .03]. On an exploratory basis, tests of simple effects found that participants reported less certainty in their ratings of Steve's sexuality when they read the gender-nonconforming (M = 1.69, SD = 1.30) than the gender-conforming (M = 2.07, SD = 1.13) profile in the homophobic environment, $F(1, 202) = 4.83$, $p = .029$, η_{p2} = .02 [.001, .07].[20] Replicating Study 2a, participants who read the gender-nonconforming profile expressed less

[19] Because only mild heterogeneity of variance emerged, with the largest s_2 less than 1.6 times greater than the smallest s_2 (well below the recommended threshold of 4; (Howell, 2013), no further corrections were applied.
[20] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 202) = 7.09$, $p = .008$, driven by more variance in the gender-nonconforming condition, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 197.0) = 4.81$, $p = .029$, η_{p2} = .02 [.001, .07].

certainty about their ratings in the homophobic than nonhomophobic environment (M = 2.53, SD = 1.13), $F(1, 204) = 24.58$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .11$ [.05, .18].[21] Mirroring the results for the gender-nonconforming profile, participants who read the gender-conforming profile also expressed less certainty about their ratings in the homophobic than nonhomophobic (M = 2.50, SD = 1.06) environment, albeit to a lesser degree, $F(1, 202) = 7.77$, $p = .006$, $\eta_{p2} = .04$ [.01, .09]. Similar to my results for identity suspicion, certainty ratings did not differ by gender cue in the nonhomophobic environment, $F(1, 204) < 1$.

Summary. It is noteworthy that the results for certainty so closely mirrored those of identity suspicion. I examined their (negative) correlation across all four cells and found they were strongly associated, $|.60| < rs(101\text{-}105) < |.70|$, suggesting that suspicion and uncertainty occur in tandem, as hypothesized and demonstrated by Fein and colleagues (1990).

[21] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 204) = 5.01$, $p = .026$, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 197.5) = 24.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .11$ [.05, .18].

Chapter 5: Samples 4a & 4b

In Study 3, I replicated the effect of social environment on identity suspicion and provided initial evidence that this effect is attenuated but not eliminated for a gender-conforming young man who says he is straight. Despite Steve's gender-conforming interest in the hypermasculine sport of rugby, participants still expressed more suspicion of his sexuality in the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment. Of equal interest, the nonhomophobic environment enabled comparable trust in Steve's claim to be straight, regardless of whether he was interested in fashion or rugby. Studies 4a and 4b therefore return to focusing on a gender-nonconforming individual.

Having demonstrated converging evidence of the effect of social environments on identity suspicion in six separate samples, I shifted my focus in the next set of studies to testing my theorized mechanism of identity suspicion. That is, I theorized identity suspicion emerges as a function of people's recognition of the incentive to closet certain marked concealable identities. In this study, I formally test this proposition by examining whether people recognize how social environments affect perceptions of a straight-identifying, gender-nonconforming man's sexuality. Specifically, I hypothesized that in the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) social environment: participants would perceive (a) a greater likelihood of identity suspicion among Steve's peers (hereafter called *peer identity suspicion*) and (b) greater motivation for Steve to conceal his gender-nonconformity from his peers (hereafter called *motivation to conceal*). Additionally, I hypothesized a mediation model in which peer identity suspicion mediated the impact of social environments on motivation to conceal. Most importantly, I tested mytheory's claim that recognition of an incentivized closet in identity-oppressive environments gives rise to

identity suspicion. Specifically, Ihypothesized a mediation model in which motivation to conceal mediated the effect of environment on participants' identity suspicion.

This study also tested whether stigmatizing social environments carry downstream costs for gender-nonconforming individuals. Here, I assessed whether the environment effect would extend to people's perceived likelihood of Steve pursuing a gender-nonconforming opportunity (hereafter called *downstream costs*). Specifically, I hypothesized that people who read about the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment would perceive Steve as less likely to pursue the opportunity to win a scholarship in a gender-nonconforming domain.

Method

Participants and procedure. I aimed for a final sample of 500 MTurk workers to attain sufficient power to test a mediation model. Of the 564 people who started the study, 65 (11.5%) did not complete it.[22] After 34 additional exclusions, my final sample comprised 465 participants (see Table 1 for demographics & exclusions).

The procedure matched Study 2a, with the removal of the mixed-homophobia environment and the addition of several new measures immediately following Steve's profile and preceding all other dependent measures.

Measures. Everyone completed measures of identity suspicion (M = 32.45, SD = 25.21) and certainty (M = 1.96, SD = 1.26). Additionally, participants completed three new measures: peer identity suspicion, motivation to conceal, and downstream costs.

Peer identity suspicion. Participants rated the likelihood of identity suspicion among Steve's peers (i.e., "*If other students at Steve's school learned about his interest in fashion, how*

[22] Attrition varied marginally by condition, $\chi_2(1) = 2.99$, $p = .084$. Closer examination revealed a marginally higher rate of attrition in the homophobic (13.8%) than nonhomophobic (9.2%) environment.

likely do you think it is that they would question that he is straight?") from 0 (*Not at all likely*) to 4 (*Extremely likely*; *M* = 2.56, *SD* = 1.34).

Motivation to conceal. Next, participants indicated how motivated Steve was to conceal his gender-nonconformity from his peers (i.e., "*How much do you think Steve is motivated to conceal his interest in fashion from his peers?*") from 0 (*Not at all motivated*) to 4 (*Extremely motivated*; *M* = 1.96, *SD* = 1.26).

Downstream costs. To test perceptions of the costs the environment would hold for Steve, I provided a description of Steve's art teacher encouraging him to enter an annual citywide art competition in which the top three entries would win a £500 scholarship. Specifically, participants read the following description:

> Steve is enrolled in an art class at Standard High. One of the class's first major assignments is to create an art piece that is inspired by a popular television show set several centuries in the past. Steve chooses to design a costume for his favorite character on the show, one of the female leads. When everyone receives their grade for the assignment several weeks later, Steve gets a note instead, asking him to see the teacher after class.
>
> After the other students have left, he approaches his teacher and she looks up at him from her desk and smiles. "Hi Steve. Thanks for coming to see me. I wanted to talk to you about your costume design. I was so impressed by it! I think it's some of the best work I have ever seen by a student." Steve looks down and smiles, blushing slightly.
>
> "As you know, the annual art competition in London is coming up. I think you should submit this drawing. The best three pieces receive a £500 scholarship, and I think you would stand a good chance of placing in the top 3. If you're interested, you'd first

have to participate in the school-level competition here. We put up all the submissions in the main hall – including yours – with the artist's name beneath it. We display them for a week so that all the staff, teachers and students have a chance to see it. At the end of that week, everyone votes on the piece they think deserves to win, and the winner goes on to the citywide competition." The warning bell for the start of the next class rings, and she quickly adds, "Think about it and let me know by Friday what you decide." Steve nods and leaves for his next class.

After reading the description of the hypothetical scenario, participants rated on a 6-point scale from *Extremely unlikely* (here, scored 2.5) to *Extremely likely* (scored −2.5) their estimated likelihood that Steve would submit his costume design to the school-wide art competition (M = −1.07, SD = 1.32). Because estimates of lower likelihoods reflect higher perceived costs, I scored this measure such that higher scores indicate a greater perceived downstream cost to Steve.

Results and Discussion

Primary analyses. As hypothesized, participants anticipated a higher likelihood of peer identity suspicion in the homophobic (M = 3.39, SD = 0.90) than nonhomophobic (M = 1.77, SD = 1.21) environment, $F(1, 463) = 263.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .36$ [.31, .41].[23] They also believed Steve would be far more motivated to conceal his gender-nonconforming interest from his peers when he was situated in the homophobic (M = 2.84, SD = 1.17) than nonhomophobic (M = 1.11, SD = 1.23) environment, $F(1, 463) = 242.43$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .34$ [.29, .39]. Similarly, participants also perceived more downstream costs for Steve when he was located in the homophobic (M = −0.48, SD = 1.37) than nonhomophobic (M = −1.63, SD = 0.98) environment, $F(1, 463)$ =

[23] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 463) = 42.77$, $p < .001$, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 439.9) = 268.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .38$ [.32, .43].

110.47, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .19$ [.14, .24].[24] In other words, participants thought Steve would be substantially less likely to enter the art competition in the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment (though participants still believed it was at least "slightly likely" Steve would enter the competition), presumably because doing so would involve showcasing his gender-nonconformity (and thereby increase the risk he might be perceived as gay). Finally, replicating previous studies, participants rated their own identity suspicion higher in the homophobic (M = 38.41, SD = 26.37) than nonhomophobic (M = 26.82, SD = 22.73) environment, $F(1, 463) = 25.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .05$ [.02, .09].[25]

These results provide initial evidence that people expect homophobic environments create secondary closets by driving straight-identifying men to conceal their gender nonconformity for fear of not being perceived as straight. Here, participants perceived sufficiently strong negative effects of a homophobic environment to make a straight-identified young man only "slightly likely" (vs. "moderately likely" in the nonhomophobic environment) to pursue an opportunity to showcase his talent and win a scholarship, presumably because doing so would involve showcasing his gender nonconformity (and thereby increase the risk he might be perceived as gay).

[24] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 463) = 25.72$, $p < .001$, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 405.0) = 108.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .21$ [.16, .27].
[25] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 463) = 5.70$, $p = .017$, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 444.7) = 25.62$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .05$ [.03, .09].

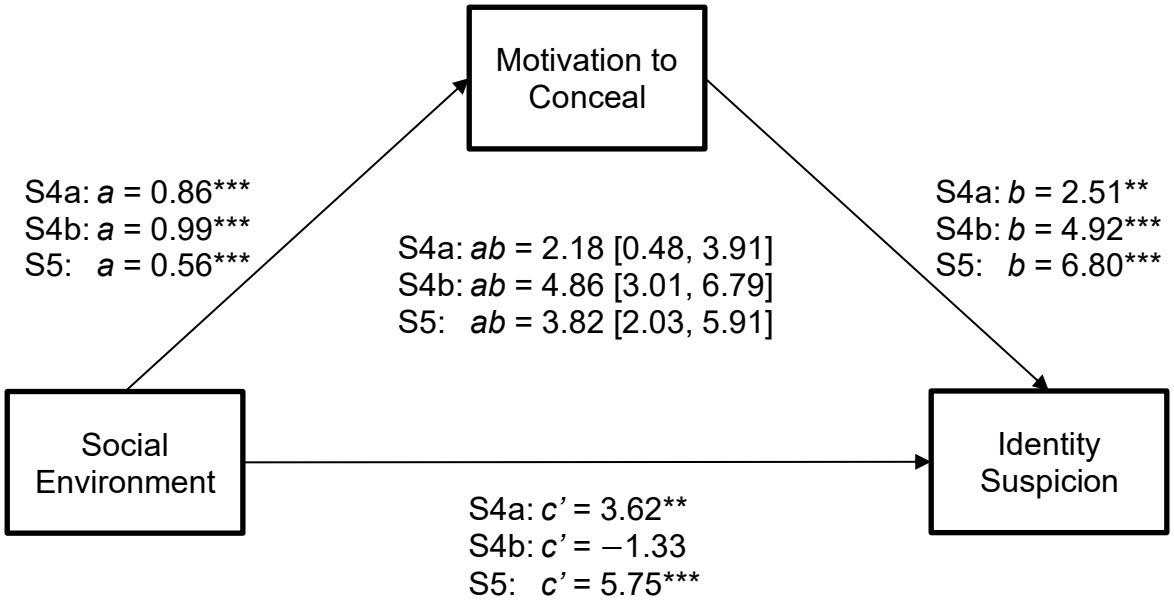


Figure 2. Mediation model with motivation to conceal mediating the effect of social environment (–1 = nonhomophobic; +1 = homophobic) on identity suspicion in Studies 4a-5. I report unstandardized coefficients for the paths and bootstrapped 95% CIs for the indirect paths. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

Mediation analyses. In line with my theorizing, motivation to conceal significantly mediated the effect of social environment on participants' identity suspicion, as indicated by a 95% CI for the indirect effect excluding zero (see *Figure 2*). These results provide initial evidence that people intuitively recognize that homophobic environments create secondary closets in which straight-identifying men are driven to closet their gender-nonconformity for fear of not being perceived as straight. I examine this conclusion in greater detail in Chapter 8.

As hypothesized, peer identity suspicion significantly mediated the effect of social environment on motivation to conceal, as indicated by a 95% CI for the indirect effect excluding zero (see

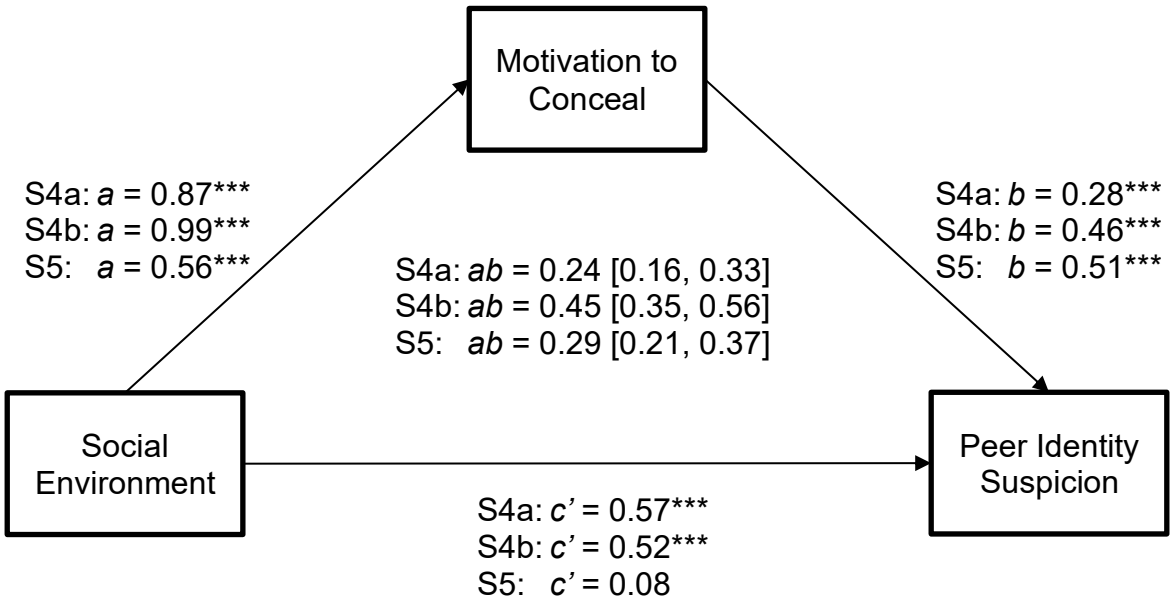


Figure 4.). An alternate model swapping motivation to conceal with peer identity suspicion was equally viable (see

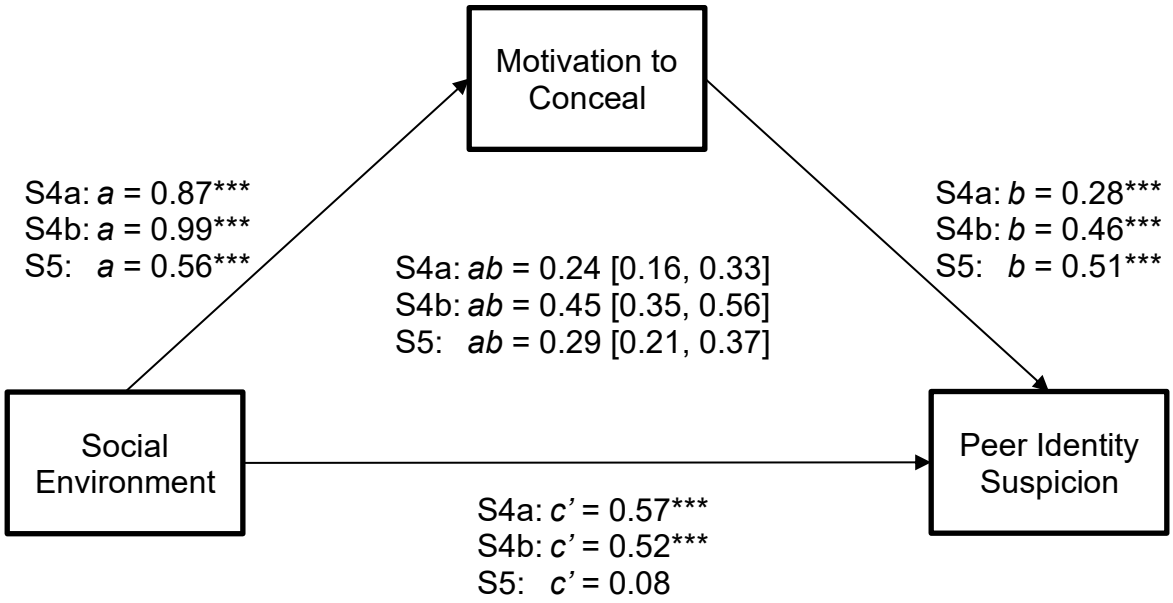


Figure 4.), suggesting both models are empirically plausible. Accordingly, I refrain from drawing any inferences until I have rerun these analyses in Study 4b.

Table 3

Bivariate Correlations of Demographics and Potential Moderators and Covariates with Identity Suspicion across Studies 1a-5.

	Study								
Variables	1a	1b	1c	2a	2b	3	4a	4b	5
Age	.05	.03	–.07	.06	–.06	.07	–.02	–.03	.11†
Participant Sex	.10	.04	.03	.06	**.20*** **	.01	**.10***	.05	.02
Education	.00	–.03	.04	–.03	.00	.05	.00	.03	.02
Income	–.03	–.09	.09	.00	.03	.07	.07	–.01	–.06
Race[a]	–.01	.07	–.03	–.06	–.07	–.04	–.08	.07	**–.12***
Religion[b]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.09†
Importance of Religion	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**–.12***
Favorable Impressions	–.12†	**–.40*** **	**–.34*** **	**–.27*** **	**–.25*** **	**–.15****	–.09†	**–.33*** **	**–.25*** **
Importance of Own Gender Identity	.04	.12	–.02	.02	–.05	–.04	**–.10***	—	—
Importance of Own Sexuality	.01	**.17***	–.02	–.03	–.09	–.06	**–.10***	—	—
Friends' LGB Allyship	–.06	**–.16***	.03	**–.13***	–.03	–.01	**–.10***	–.08†	—
Friends' Pro-LGB Attitudes	–.12†	**–.19****	–.11†	–.05	–.05	.05	–.05	–.04	—
Number of LGB Friends	.00	**–.14***	.03	—	—	—	—	—	—
Believability	**–.14***	–.09	**–.18****	**–.23*** **	–.07	.02	.03	**–.16*** **	—
Own High School Similarity	.04	–.01	**–.12***	–.03	.05	**.22*** **	.09†	.06	—
U.S. High Schools' Similarity	.05	.01	–.05	–.03	–.01	.10	**.13****	–.03	—
Certainty	—	—	—	**–.58*** **	**–.69*** **	**–.69*** **	**–.57*** **	**–.57*** **	**–.40*** **
Agreement with Steve	—	—	—	**–.56*** **	**–.55*** **	—	—	**–.49*** **	—
Peer Identity Suspicion	—	—	—	—	—	—	**.22*** **	**.33*** **	**.37*** **
Motivation to Conceal	—	—	—	—	—	—	**.23*** **	**.28*** **	**.38*** **
Friends' Attitudes Toward Christians	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**–.21*** **
Friends' Attitudes Toward Jews	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	**–.12***

Knowledge of Medieval Spain	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.01
Knowledge of Spanish Inquisition	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.05
Knowledge of La Convivencia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.04
Knowledge of Christian Culture	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	–.07
Knowledge of Jewish Culture	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.03

Note: Significant correlations are in bold. LGB = lesbian, gay, bisexual; U.S. = United States.
[a]Race is effects coded: –1 = White, 1 = Other races.
[b]Religion is effects coded: –1 = Christian, 1 = Other religions.
†$p < .09$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Secondary analyses. Consistent with Studies 2a and 3, participants in the homophobic environment were less certain (M = 1.65, SD = 1.19) of their identity suspicion ratings than in the nonhomophobic (M = 2.25, SD = 1.26) environment, $F(1, 463) = 27.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .06$ [.03, .09].

Exploratory analysis. Given the primary mediation results involving peer identity suspicion and motivation to conceal—and their strong correlations with downstream costs (see Table 3)—Itested a parallel multiple mediation model with these two variables as parallel mediators of the social environments' effect on downstream costs (see Figure 3). The total and direct effects of environment on downstream costs were significant. While the total indirect effect was also significant, B = –0.29 [–0.40, –0.19], this result was driven by the significant indirect effect via motivation to conceal. A contrast comparing the difference between the indirect effects via motivation to conceal and peer identity suspicion was significant, B = 0.21 [0.06, 0.36]. In other words, motivation to conceal—but not peer identity suspicion—mediated the effect of environment on downstream costs. Notably, however, these two proposed mediators—motivation to conceal and peer identity suspicion—were highly correlated, $r(465) = .55$, $p < .001$. Conceivably, Steve's perceived motivation to conceal might indirectly influence the perceived likelihood of him incurring downstream costs (to avoid revealing his gender-nonconforming interest in fashion) via peer identity suspicion (see Figure 4B). Future experimental studies are needed to replicate these results and determine the mediational path of the environments' effect on downstream consequences.

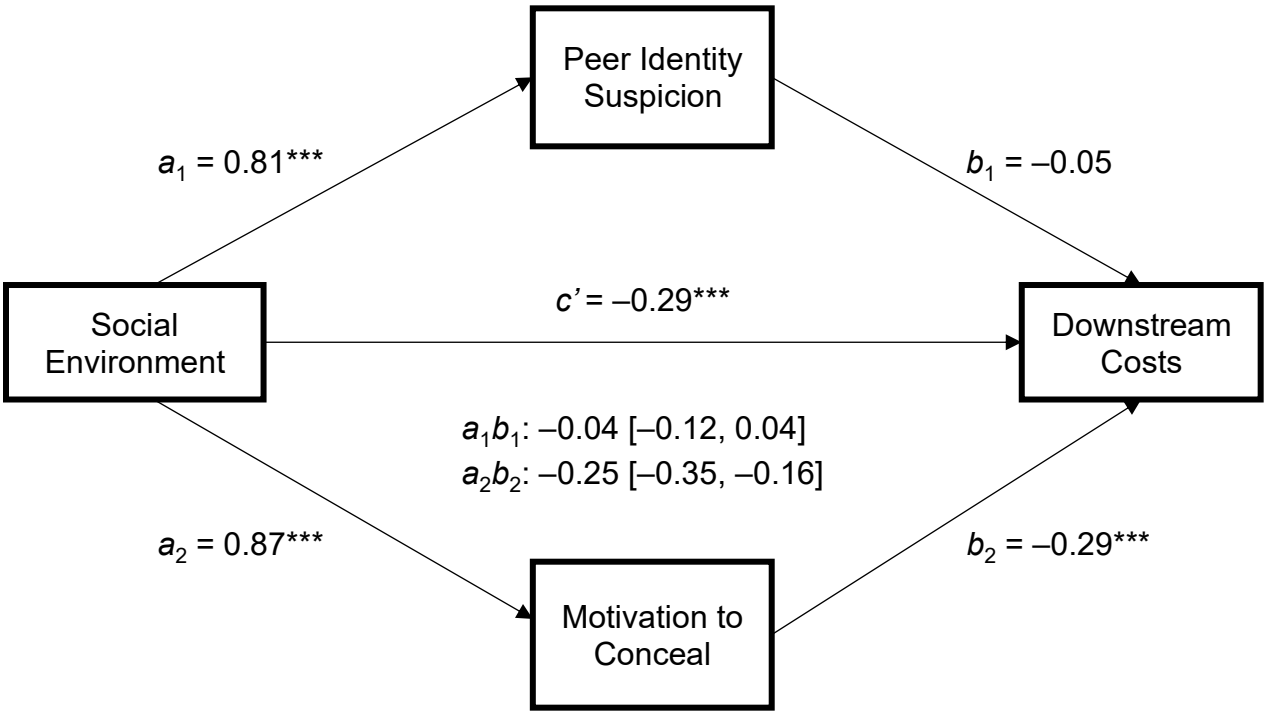


Figure 3. Exploratory parallel mediation model with peer identity suspicion and motivation to conceal mediating the effect of social environment (–1 = nonhomophobic; +1 = homophobic) on downstream costs in Study 4a. I report unstandardized coefficients for the paths and bootstrapped 95% CIs for the indirect paths.
***p < .001.

Study 4b

Study 4a provided initial evidence for awareness of how social environments affect perceptions of gender-nonconforming, straight-identifying men's sexuality. Specifically, in the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment, participants anticipated more identity suspicion among Steve's peers, increased motivation for Steve to conceal his gender-nonconformity from his peers, and his decreased likelihood of entering an art competition to win a scholarship. I found support for my theoretical mediation model, suggesting participants intuitively recognize how homophobic environments create secondary closets in which straight men conceal behaviors and attributes coded as markers of not being straight. I also found support for my hypothesized mediation model, though swapping the mediator and outcome variables produced an equally

viable model. In the current study, I aimed to replicate the results for my hypotheses for peer identity suspicion, motivation to conceal, and my two mediation models using the same-sex emotional intimacy profile from Studies 1c and 2b.

Method

Participants and procedure. As in Study 4a, I sought to recruit a final sample of 500 MTurk workers. Of the 636 participants who started the study, 87 (13.7%) did not finish.[26] After 20 additional exclusions, my final sample comprised 529 participants (see Table 1 for demographics & exclusions).

I followed the same procedure as in Study 4a, excluding the measure of downstream costs (less relevant to a profile featuring relationships) and restoring the measure of agreement with Steve (i.e., that sharing a bed with another guy is no big deal).

Stimulus materials. As in Studies 1c and 2b, the profile of Steve featured emotional intimacy with his same-sex best friend, Connor.

Measures. Participants completed measures of peer identity suspicion (M = 2.09, SD = 1.49), motivation to conceal (M = 1.80, SD = 1.54), identity suspicion (M = 35.33, SD = 24.33), certainty (M = 1.72, SD = 1.26), and agreement with Steve (M = 1.09, SD = 1.85).

Results and Discussion

Primary analyses. Replicating Study 4a, participants perceived a higher probability of peer identity suspicion when Steve was situated in the homophobic (M = 3.05, SD = 1.08) than nonhomophobic (M = 1.12, SD = 1.18) social environment, $F(1, 519) = 381.18$, $p < .001$, η_{p2} = .42 [.37, .47]. Similarly, they believed Steve would be more motivated to conceal this emotional intimacy in the homophobic (M = 2.78, SD = 1.26) than nonhomophobic (M = 0.81, SD = 1.09)

[26] Attrition did not differ by condition, $\chi_2(1) = 0.01$, $p = .908$.

environment, $F(1, 519) = 364.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .41$ [.36, .46].[27] Replicating all prior studies, participants expressed more identity suspicion in the homophobic ($M = 38.90$, $SD = 23.69$) than nonhomophobic ($M = 31.69$, $SD = 24.47$) environment, $F(1, 527) = 11.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .02$ [.01, .05].

Replicating Study 4a, perceived motivation to conceal mediated the effect of social environments on identity suspicion, as evidenced by a 95% CI excluding zero (see Figure 2). This result strengthens support for the conclusion that participants intuitively recognize that homophobic environments create secondary closets in which straight men are pressured to conceal behaviors and attributes that call into question their straightness. Further replicating Study 4a, both my hypothesized (social environment → peer identity suspicion → motivation to conceal) and alternate (social environment → motivation to conceal → peer identity suspicion) mediation models were significant (see

[27] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 519) = 4.78$, $p = .029$, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 510.6) = 364.81$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .42$ [.37, .46].

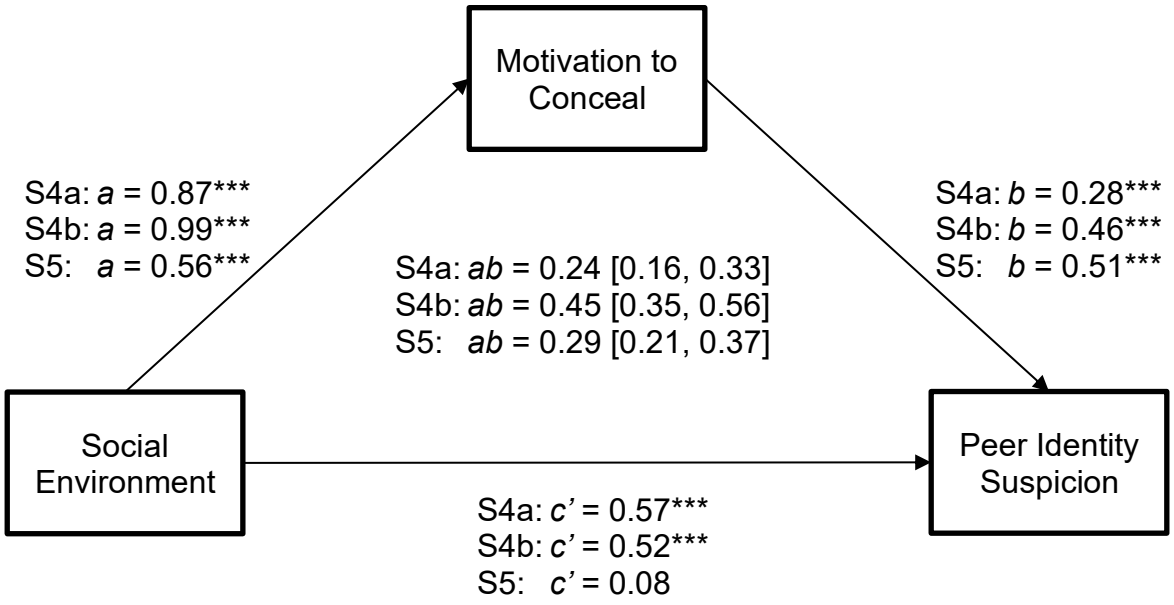
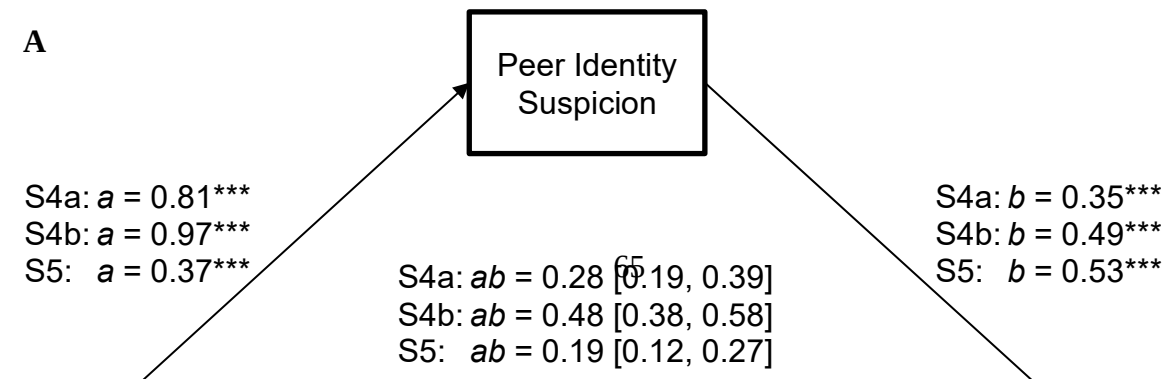


Figure 4.). Although I test this mediation model again in Study 5's novel context, determining the causal sequence of peer identity suspicion and motivation to conceal in relation to identity suspicion calls for future experimental studies (see Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005).

Secondary analyses. Consistent with Studies 2a, 3, 4a, and with Fein and colleagues (1990), participants in the homophobic environment were less certain (M = 1.60, SD = 1.25) of their identity suspicion ratings than in the nonhomophobic (M = 1.84, SD = 1.25) environment, $F(1, 527) = 5.04$, $p = .025$, $\eta_{p2} = .01$ [.001, .03]. As in Studies 2a and 2b, participants' agreement with Steve did not vary by environment, $F(1, 527) < 1$. This null effect strengthens my confidence in theorizing that identity suspicion does not rely on personal prejudices to arise. Despite social environmental effects on identity suspicion, the environment does not seem to shift participants' attitudes on the lack of association between gender-nonconformity and men's sexuality.



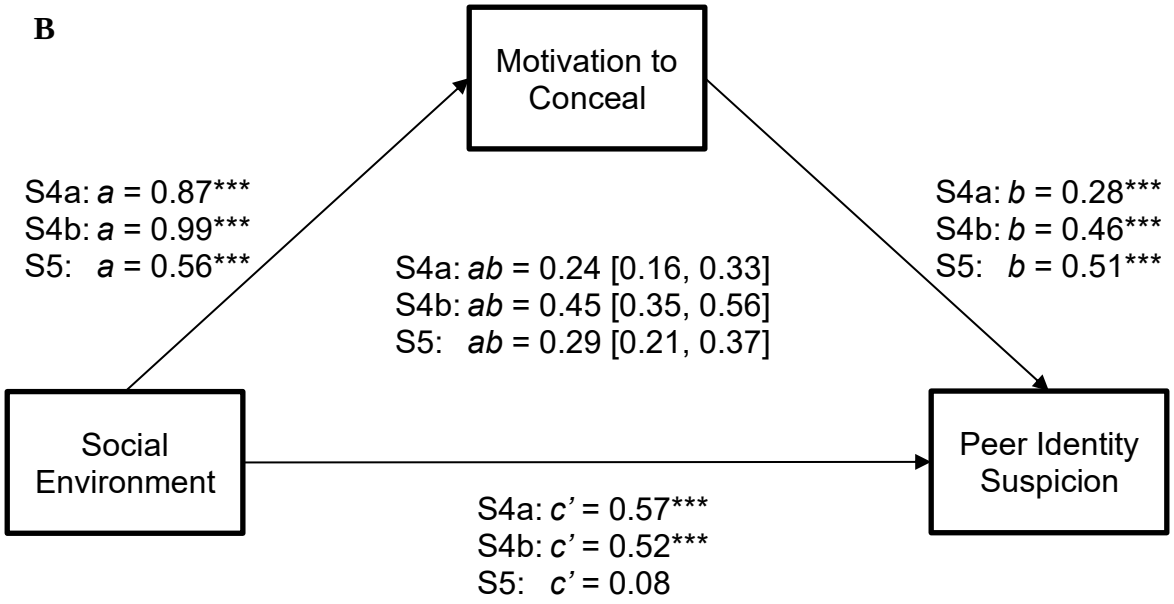


Figure 4. (A) Hypothesized and (B) alternate mediation models with social environment (–1 = nonhomophobic; +1 = homophobic), peer identity suspicion, and motivation to conceal in Studies 4a-5. S4a = Study 4a; S4b = Study 4b; S5 = Study 5. I report unstandardized coefficients for all paths and bootstrapped 95% CIs for indirect paths.
***$p < .001$.

Chapter 6: Mega-Analysis

Having found consistent support across eight independent studies for my hypothesized effect of social environment on identity suspicion, I turn now to the questions of potential confounds, covariates, and moderators. I combined the data from my eight independent samples and used mega-analysis to test potential moderators. Mega-analysis is the most robust test of moderation due to the increase in power and decreases in false positives and/or negatives associated with the pooled (i.e., larger) sample (Costafreda, 2009; Curran & Hussong, 2009; Schimmack, 2012; Sung et al., 2014).

Method

Given that my focus in Studies 1a-4b was on the effect of homophobic and nonhomophobic environments on identity suspicion, I included only these two environments in my mega-analyses (total $N = 2467$). Following Curran and Hussong (2009), I created various variables to account for random between-study heterogeneity (please see Appendix D).

Variables. I included in my analyses those potential confounds, covariates, and moderators contained in at least two studies. For example, pooling samples improved my power to address on an exploratory basis participant sexuality as a moderating variable (Curran & Hussong, 2009), as outlined below. Studies 1a-4b included the following variables, except as noted.

Profile type. I created a dichotomous variable to test for differences between the fashion (−1) and emotional expressivity (+1) profiles of Steve. I included only these two profiles in this variable because the sexual experimentation and rugby profiles of Steve were only included in one study each, resulting in highly unequal group sizes, and because the bulk of my results pertain to these two profiles.

Suspicion licensing. As outlined earlier, my measure of identity suspicion in Studies 1a-1c included a suspicion licensing statement that I dropped in all subsequent studies. Accordingly, I created a dichotomous variable to test for differences in identity suspicion between studies that did (+1) and did not (−1) include the suspicion licensing statement.

Demographics. Because my vignettes of Steve drew on stereotypes of gay men, I included as potential moderators several demographic measures known to predict unfavourable impressions of gay men (see Table 1 for descriptives). These demographics included race (though results predicting homophobia are mixed across literatures) (Durell, Chiong, & Battle, 2007; Finlay & Walther, 2003; Hill, 2013; Walch, Orlosky, Sinkkanen, & Stevens, 2010a); older age (Johnson, Brems, & Alford-Keating, 1997; Snively et al., 2004; Walch, Orlosky, Sinkkanen, & Stevens, 2010b); being male (Johnson et al., 1997; J. L. Nagoshi et al., 2008; Roediger III, Meade, Gallo, & Olson, 2014; Snively et al., 2004; Walch et al., 2010b; Warriner, Nagoshi, & Nagoshi, 2013); and having relatively lower levels of education (Snively et al., 2004; Walch et al., 2010b).

Participants identified their primary racial group from among six options (White, East Asian, South Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Other). As seen in Table 1, my pooled sample was predominantly White, so I created a dichotomous variable to test for differences between White (−1) and non-White (+1) participants. Age was selected from a drop-down menu ranging from <16 to >50 in one-year increments. Participants reported their sex as *Male* (1), *Female* (−1), or *Intersex* (0)[28]. I measured education from "*Some high school"* (1) to "*Graduate degree"* (6). I also assessed household income, expecting it to produce similar patterns to education, given their frequent positive correlation. Household income was measured from "*Under $15,000*" (1) to

[28] Moderation analyses with participant sex were restricted to male-/female-identifying participants. Only 1 participant across all studies identified as intersex (see Table 1 in manuscript).

"*Over $150,000*" (8). Although age could serve as a proxy for high school graduation year, I also collected the latter information directly (reported range: 1958-2016). As expected, this variable was highly correlated with age, $r(195) = -.93$, $p < .001$, so I omitted it from my analyses.

Sexuality. Conceivably, people might view Steve's sexuality differently as a function of their own sexuality. In Studies 1a-2a, participants identified their sexual attraction on a 5-point scale from "Only attracted to females" to "Equally attracted to females and males" to "Only attracted to males" (including a separate "Unsure" option). I expanded the options available to participants in Studies 2b-4b, adding, "Only/Mostly attracted to gender-variant people," "I am attracted to everyone, regardless of their sex or gender," and "I do not experience sexual attraction to others." Using participants' self-reported sex, I created an index representing sexuality on a continuum from Exclusively Gay to Bisexual to Exclusively Straight, with separate categories for Unsure and each of the three new categories in Studies 2b-4b. For example, a participant reporting "male" as their sex and "Mostly attracted to females" as their sexual attraction was coded Mostly Straight, whereas a participant selecting an identical sexual attraction response but reporting "female" as their sex was coded Mostly Gay.

Given the large proportion (76%) of participants coded as Exclusively Straight in my pooled sample, I also created a dichotomous variable to differentiate them (+1) from the other participants with diverse sexualities (−1). Expanding my measure of sexuality to include Unsure, Pansexual, Asexual, and Attracted to Gender-Variant People resulted in a significant decrease in the proportion of participants classified as Exclusively Straight (pre-expansion: 77.8%, post-expansion: 74.1%), $\chi^2(1) = 4.17, p = .041$. Because a dichotomous variable differentiating studies with my initial (−1) versus expanded (+1) measures of sexuality did not significantly interact with participants' dichotomized sexuality to predict identity suspicion, $b = -0.91$ [−2.14,

0.32], $t(2458.1) = 1.45$, $p = .146$, subsequent analyses collapse across both versions of my sexuality measure.

Impressions of Steve. People who violate gender stereotypes tend to be less liked than those who conform to them (Moss-Racusin, Phelan, & Rudman, 2010). These differences emerge as early as for 3-year-old children (Sullivan, Moss-Racusin, Lopez, & Williams, 2018). More specifically, gender-nonconforming boys tend to draw out negative reactions and behaviors from both their peers and adults (Lamb, Easterbrooks, & Holden, 1980; Martin, 1990; Owen Blakemore, 2003; R. Young & Sweeting, 2004). In each study, everyone read the same profile of a gender-nonconforming young man. As such, no condition differences in perceptions of Steve were expected. It is plausible, however, that people who like him more might be less suspicious of his identity claim. Further, I speculated that people's sexuality might influence their impressions of Steve. To test both possibilities, I had participants rated Steve on six character traits (*likeable, trustworthy, friendly, warm, capable, competent*) from –3 (*Strongly disagree*) to 3 (*Strongly agree*), averaged to create an "impressions" composite ($\alpha = .94$). I then tested the main effect of impressions and an interaction between social environment, participant sexuality, and impressions of Steve.

Social environment perceptions. Additional measures addressed the potential for confounded perceptions of the social environments (on dimensions besides homophobia) contributing to different estimates of Steve's sexuality across experimental conditions. Given the high prevalence of homophobic bullying in schools (UK: Bradlow, Bartram, Guasp, & Jadva, 2017; US: Musu, Zhang, Wang, Zhang, & Oudekerk, 2018), I expected participants to find McCormack's (2011a) description of the nonhomophobic environment at Standard High less believable than my description of the homophobic environment, despite both being presented as

excerpts of McCormack's article. To control for any such differences, I assessed *believability*: Participants rated how believable they found the description of the social environment they read, from –3 (*Extremely unbelievable*) to 3 (*Extremely believable*).

To assess how this environment compared with perceivers' own social contexts, participants rated from –3 (*Extremely dissimilar*) to 3 (*Extremely similar*) how similar Standard High was to high schools in America today (*U.S. high school similarity*) and their own high school (*own high school similarity*). Lastly, they rated how similar their closest friends' attitudes toward homosexuality were to the boys described in the environment. I reverse-scored participants' ratings in the homophobic condition, so that across conditions this measure reflects similarity to behavioral allyship among participants' closest friends (*friends' LGB allyship*). This variable lends additional insight into LGB-related climates among participants' closest social networks. Rather than merely indexing the passive absence (or not) of negative attitudes toward LGB folks (as in *friends' pro-LGB attitudes*, described later), this measure assesses *active* acceptance and allyship behaviors among participants' closest friends.

Self-image. I speculated that personal salience or importance of one's own gender and sexuality might increase one's attunement to cues of gender and sexuality, and hence proneness to expressing identity suspicion in the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) social environment. Accordingly, I asked participants to rate their (dis)agreement with two statements about the importance of their gender identity (*gender identity self-importance*) and sexuality (*sexuality self-importance*) to their self-image from –2 (*Strongly disagree*) to 2 (*Strongly agree*). These items were adapted from the collective self-esteem identity subscale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

Friends' pro-LGB attitudes. I did not query participants' own attitudes toward LGB folks because of concerns that the preceding materials and questions about Steve's sexuality would introduce demand characteristics and socially desirable responding. (Notably, measuring these attitudes at the outset could have revealed the study aims, invalidating the results.) Instead, participants' reports about their immediate social network's attitudes served as a proxy for their own attitudes, because the tendency for people to affiliate with people who are similar to them (i.e., homophily) is one of the most robust findings in network science (e.g., Mcpherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). People indicated their friends' attitudes on a sliding scale situated under an emoticon whose facial expression ranged from a strong frown (–2 = *Very negative*) to a strong smile (2 = *Very positive*). The slider started in the neutral central position to avoid inducing a directional bias and changed the emoticon's expression (in place of anchor values) when moved.

Social network. To control for variation in the presence of LGB folks in participants' social networks, I asked them in Studies 1a-1c to "list the first names of up to 10 people you personally know who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual." If people did not know 10 such individuals, I instructed them to list as many as they knew and leave the remaining text boxes blank. I then counted how many LGB contacts people listed (M = 4.71, SD = 3.07).

Results and Discussion

Data analysis strategy. Prior to analyses, I effects-coded social environments (–1 = nonhomophobic; +1 = homophobic), mean-centered continuous moderators at the study level, and effects-coded dichotomous moderators. I conducted separate multi-level models regressing identity suspicion on social environment, each potential moderator, and their interaction, nested within studies so as to allow for study-level error variance (consistent with Costafreda, 2009).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Non-Demographic Variables across Studies 1a-4b.

		Study							
		1a	1b	1c	2a	2b	3	4a	4b
	Range	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)	*M* (*SD*)
Identity Suspicion	0 to 100	37.94 (28.02)	36.61 (27.72)	32.57 (24.43)	30.15 (27.09)	28.35 (25.45)	24.04 (22.94)	32.45 (25.21)	35.33 (24.33)
Favorable Impressions	–3 to 3	2.00 (0.85)	1.60 (0.93)	1.88 (0.82)	1.95 (0.86)	1.85 (0.79)	1.99 (0.79)	2.04 (0.71)	1.75 (0.90)
Believability	–3 to 3	0.92 (1.70)	0.87 (1.82)	0.96 (1.79)	1.30 (1.54)	1.33 (1.59)	1.19 (1.55)	0.96 (1.77)	1.05 (1.72)
U.S. High School Similarity	–3 to 3	–0.22 (1.84)	–0.04 (1.83)	–0.18 (1.83)	0.28 (1.79)	0.32 (1.79)	–0.08 (1.82)	–0.13 (1.90)	–0.14 (1.88)
Own High School Similarity	–3 to 3	–0.27 (2.12)	–0.38 (2.19)	–0.46 (2.11)	–0.15 (2.04)	–0.11 (2.12)	–0.24 (2.08)	–0.13 (2.12)	–0.18 (2.16)
Friends' LGB Allyship	–3 to 3	0.81 (1.94)	0.73 (1.98)	0.88 (1.99)	0.97 (1.81)	0.65 (1.90)	1.13 (1.90)	1.12 (1.81)	0.97 (1.93)
Gender Identity Self-Importance	–2 to 2	1.02 (0.87)	1.13 (0.89)	0.88 (0.92)	0.87 (0.96)	0.93 (0.97)	1.02 (0.91)	0.91 (0.97)	—
Sexuality Self-Importance	–2 to 2	0.72 (1.08)	0.89 (1.07)	0.79 (1.01)	0.69 (1.09)	0.75 (1.06)	0.73 (1.07)	0.66 (1.10)	—
Friends’ Pro-LGB Attitudes	–2 to 2	0.80 (1.22)	0.79 (1.19)	0.89 (1.18)	0.90 (1.17)	1.01 (1.13)	1.07 (1.14)	1.16 (1.01)	1.03 (1.17)
Certainty	0 to 4	—	—	—	2.13 (1.22)	2.02 (1.16)	2.20 (1.20)	1.96 (1.26)	1.72 (1.26)
Agreement with Steve	–3 to 3	—	—	—	2.12 (1.28)	1.17 (1.76)	—	—	1.09 (1.85)
Peer Identity Suspicion	0 to 4	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.56 (1.34)	2.09 (1.49)
Motivation to Conceal	0 to 4	—	—	—	—	—	—	1.95 (1.48)	1.80 (1.54)

Primary analyses. The mega-analytic effect of social environment on identity suspicion revealed more identity suspicion in the homophobic (vs. nonhomophobic) environment, $b = 4.95$ [3.97, 5.93], $t(2458.6) = 9.93$, $p < .001$.

Exploratory analyses. As seen in Table 5, four variables significantly moderated the effect of social environment on identity suspicion: profile type, friends' LGB allyship, friends' pro-LGB attitudes, and believability. For each of these moderators, I report which group (or level) revealed the predicted simple effect of social environment (i.e., more identity suspicion in the homophobic than the nonhomophobic environment) significantly more strongly, and whether this key effect remained significant across groups (or levels), followed by the alternative simple effects tests for completeness.

Profile type. The hypothesized simple effect of social environment was stronger for the fashion profile than the emotional expressivity profile, but was significant for each profile, $b = 6.13$ [4.69, 7.57], $t(2045.0) = 8.34$, $p < .001$, and $b = 3.83$ [2.22, 5.44], $t(2045.6) = 4.66$, $p < .001$, respectively. Though descriptively the effect of social environment was stronger for the fashion profile, the profiles did not differ significantly in either environment, both ts < 1, *ns*.

Friends' LGB allyship. The social environment simple effect was stronger for partipants whose friends were higher in LGB allyship, but emerged both among participants who rated their friends' LGB allyship relatively lower (–1*SD*), $b = 2.71$ [1.33, 4.08], $t(2455.5) = 3.86$, $p < .001$, and relatively higher (+1*SD*), $b = 7.24$ [5.87, 8.62], $t(2456.2) = 10.33$, $p < .001$, respectively. Higher ratings of friends' LGB allyship predicted less identity suspicion within the nonhomophobic environment, $b = –2.22$ [–2.96, –1.48], $t(2455.7) = 5.89$, $p < .001$, but not the homophobic environment, $t(2455.6) < 1$, *ns*.

Friends' pro-LGB attitudes. Similarly, the social environment simple effect was stronger for partipants whose friends had more pro-LGB attitudes, but emerged both among participants who rated their friend's pro-LGB attitudes relatively less positive (–1*SD*), $b = 2.92$ [1.55, 4.30], $t(2456.6) = 4.17$, $p < .001$, and more positive (+1*SD*), $b = 7.10$ [5.72, 8.48], $t(2457.9) = 10.12$, $p < .001$, respectively. More positive ratings of friends' pro-LGB attitudes predicted less identity suspicion within the nonhomophobic environment, $b = –2.22$ [–2.96, –1.48], $t(2455.7) = 5.89$, $p < .001$, but not the homophobic environment, $t(2455.6) < 1$, *ns*.

Believability. The simple effect of social environment was stronger for participants who rated the environmental description as more believable, but significant among participants who rated it as relatively less believable (–1*SD*), $b = 4.56$ [3.05, 6.07], $t(2456.8) = 5.93$, $p < .001$, and more believable (+1*SD*), $b = 7.78$ [6.39, 9.18], $t(2456.8) = 10.93$, $p < .001$, respectively. The more participants believed the nonhomophobic environment description, the less identity suspicion they expressed, $b = –3.21$ [–3.97, –2.46], $t(2456.0) = 8.34$, $p < .001$. A similar, albeit weaker, relationship emerged in the homophobic environment, $b = –1.32$ [–2.28, –0.36], $t(2456.3) = 2.71$, $p = .007$. In other words, the more participants tended to take the environmental description at face value, the more they also took Steve at his word when he asserted a straight identity. Despite this tendency, however, participants who found the descriptions of the environments especially believable—seeing them as plausible representations of real-world contexts—showed the largest social environment effects on identity suspicion.

Impressions × participant sexuality. As outlined in my methods, I speculated that impressions of Steve might vary as a function of participant sexuality to predict identity suspicion. I regressed identity suspicion on effects-coded social environment (–1 =

nonhomophobic, +1 = homophobic), participant sexuality (–1 = non-exclusively straight, +1 = exclusively straight), mean-centred impressions of Steve, and all possible interactions.

The main effects of environment and impressions of Steve were significant, $b = 5.19$ [4.08, 6.30], $t(2453.0) = 9.17$, $p < .001$, and $b = –6.16$ [–7.52, –4.80], $t(2452.3) = 8.89$, $p < .001$, respectively. More importantly, the 2-way interaction between impressions of Steve and participant sexuality was also significant, $b = –1.49$ [–2.85, –0.13], $t(2452.9) = 2.15$, $p = .031$. No other significant effects emerged, although the three-way interaction involving environment was trending toward significance, $b = 1.27$ [–0.09, 2.63], $t(2453.7) = 1.83$, $p = .067$.

Probing the significant two-way interaction revealed that identity suspicion did not differ by participant sexuality for participants with relatively less positive impressions of Steve (–1*SD*), $t(2452.8) < 1.03$, *ns*. Among participants with relatively more positive impressions (+1*SD*), however, exclusively straight participants reported less identity suspicion than sexually diverse participants, $b = –1.59$ [–3.11, –0.07], $t(2453.3) = 2.05$, $p = .041$. A significant simple effect of impressions of Steve for both exclusively straight and sexually diverse participants also emerged: $b = –7.65$ [–8.96, –6.34], $t(2452.3) = 11.45$, $p < .001$, and $b = –4.67$ [–7.05, –2.28], $t(2452.7) = 3.84$, $p < .001$, respectively.

Visual inspection of the social environment effects on suspicion revealed a descriptively stronger effect of social environment for sexually diverse than exclusively straight participants. Because these analyses are strictly exploratory, I examined whether the social environment could shed any light on my observed results.

Several patterns emerged that clarified the nature of the two-way interaction between impressions of Steve and participant sexuality. First, the negative simple effect of impressions among sexually diverse participants was significant within the homophobic environment, yet

non-significant (though still negative) in the nonhomophobic environment. This pattern could suggest that for sexually diverse participants, the relation between identity suspicion and impressions depends to some extent on Steve's social environment.

Second, the non-significant simple effect of participant sexuality among participants with relatively less positive impressions of Steve (–1*SD*) appeared to vary somewhat across environment. Among participants who viewed Steve less positively, exclusively straight participants reported more identity suspicion than sexually diverse participants in the nonhomophobic environment, but not in the homophobic environment.

Finally, the negative simple effect of participant sexuality among participants with relatively more positive impressions of Steve (+1*SD*) was nonsignificant (though negative) in both environments. These results suggest the original simple effect attained significance due to collapsing across environments. While interesting, these descriptive patterns would require replication before being given too much credence. As such, I suggest future research explore more rigorously the interplay between impressions, participant sexuality, and social environment in shaping identity suspicion.

Table 5

Mega-Analysis Fixed Effects Estimates for the Effect of Nonhomophobic vs. Homophobic Social Environments on Identity Suspicion Accounting for Potential Moderators

	Environment Effect (Controlling for Moderator)		Moderator		Environment Effect × Moderator	
Potential Moderator	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI
Profile Type[a]	**4.98***** (0.55)	[3.90, 6.06]	0.38 (1.58)	[-3.76, 4.53]	**-1.15*** (0.55)	[-2.23, -0.07]
Suspicion Licensing[b]	**4.84***** (0.58)	[3.71, 5.97]	3.10 (1.41)	[-0.25, 6.45]	-0.23 (0.58)	[-1.36, 0.90]
Race[c]	**4.18***** (0.63)	[2.94, 5.43]	-0.46 (0.63)	[-1.70, 0.78]	-1.23 (0.63)	[-2.48, 0.01]
Sexuality[d]	**5.33***** (0.58)	[4.20, 6.47]	0.01 (0.58)	[-1.12, 1.15]	-0.76 (0.58)	[-1.89, 0.38]

	Environment Effect (Controlling for Moderator)		Moderator		Environment Effect × Moderator	
Potential Moderator	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI
Age[e]	**4.93*** ** (0.50)	[3.95, 5.91]	0.01 (0.05)	[-0.09, 0.11]	-0.06 (0.05)	[-0.16, 0.04]
Participant Sex[f]	**5.10*** ** (0.51)	[4.10, 6.10]	**1.77*** ** (0.51)	[0.76, 2.77]	0.65 (0.51)	[-0.36, 1.65]
Education	**4.94*** ** (0.50)	[3.96, 5.92]	0.28 (0.40)	[-0.51, 1.07]	-0.16 (0.40)	[-0.95, 0.63]
Income	**4.94*** ** (0.50)	[3.96, 5.91]	0.24 (0.27)	[-0.29, 0.78]	-0.08 (0.27)	[-0.61, 0.46]
Favorable Impressions	**4.69*** ** (0.49)	[3.74, 5.64]	**-6.92*** ** (0.58)	[-8.07, -5.78]	0.31 (0.59)	[-0.84, 1.46]
Gender Identity Self-Importance	**5.29*** ** (0.57)	[4.18, 6.40]	-1.17 (0.61)	[-2.36, 0.02]	-0.12 (0.61)	[-1.32, 1.07]
Sexuality Self-Importance	**5.32*** ** (0.57)	[4.21, 6.43]	-0.32 (0.53)	[-1.35, 0.72]	0.08 (0.53)	[-0.96, 1.11]
Friends' LGB Allyship	**4.96*** ** (0.50)	[3.99, 5.93]	**-1.02*** ** (0.26)	[-1.54, -0.51]	**1.20*** ** (0.26)	[0.68, 1.71]
Friends' Pro-LGB Attitudes	**4.98*** ** (0.50)	[4.01, 5.95]	**-1.20** ** (0.43)	[-2.05, -0.35]	**1.83*** ** (0.43)	[0.98, 2.68]
Number of LGB Friends	**4.67*** ** (1.07)	[2.57, 6.77]	-0.32 (0.35)	[-1.00, 0.37]	0.46 (0.35)	[-0.23, 1.14]
Believability	**6.13*** ** (0.52)	[5.11, 7.14]	**-2.26*** ** (0.31)	[-2.87, -1.66]	**0.95** ** (0.31)	[0.34, 1.56]
Own High School Similarity	**5.52*** ** (0.58)	[4.38, 6.65]	-0.53 (0.27)	[-1.07, 0.00]	0.38 (0.27)	[-0.15, 0.92]
U.S. High Schools' Similarity	**5.66*** ** (0.56)	[4.56, 6.76]	**-0.83** ** (0.30)	[-1.43, -0.24]	0.15 (0.30)	[-0.44, 0.75]

Note. Results come from separate multi-level models regressing identity suspicion on social environment (−1 = Nonhomophobic, +1 = Homophobic), each potential moderator, and their interaction, nested within studies. Significant results are bolded. LGB = lesbian, gay, bisexual.
[a]Profile type was effects coded (−1 = Fashion, +1 = Emotional Expressivity).
[b]Suspicion licensing was effects coded (−1 = Suspicion *not* licensed, +1 = Suspicion licensed).
[c]Race was effects coded (−1 = White, +1 = other races).
[d]Sexuality was effects coded (−1 = Sexually diverse, +1 = Exclusively straight).
[e]I omitted High School Graduation Year due to its redundant results with Age.
[f]Participant sex was effects coded (−1 = Female, +1 = Male).
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Summary. Overall, my mega-analytic results demonstrated the robustness of the social environmental effect on identity suspicion. As seen in Table 5, the effect of social environment on identity suspicion remained significant controlling for the influence of each potential

moderator. Although the moderation results presented are exploratory and should be interpreted with caution, I draw attention to the results for closest friends' LGB allyship and pro-LGB attitudes. Though it may seem intuitive to expect that identity suspicion toward Steve is a function, at least to some degree, of homophobia, these results are in line with my theorizing that identity suspicion need not arise from personal prejudice. Instead, the suspicion seen in the homophobic environment can arise from rational applications of the discounting principle. Because the homophobic environment incentives concealment of being gay, the attributionally correct response to Steve's claim to be straight is identity suspicion. What is perhaps more interesting, then, is that in the absence of an incentive to conceal being gay in the nonhomophobic environment, participants' closest social networks' degree of LGB allyship and pro-LGB attitudes predict increased identity suspicion.

Chapter 7: Study 5

Replicating the effect of environment on perceptions of Steve's sexuality across seven samples suggests this paradigm is capturing a real effect, consistent with my theorizing about identity suspicion in the domain of men's perceived sexuality. My final study shifts focus to testing identity suspicion in a historical context where identity suspicion had extreme consequences. Recall my proposition that the critical components of identity suspicion are a concealable marked identity, a social environment oppressing this identity (creating the self-protective incentive to deny having it), and the social coding of certain behaviors as markers of the concealable identity. My previous eight studies tested my identity suspicion hypotheses in a current context where participants were likely to hold shared cultural knowledge about the hidden meaning of the identity cues in the actor's profile and their implications for the actor. As such, this shared cultural knowledge may have predisposed participants to respond in a way that supported my identity suspicion hypotheses. To address this potential limitation, in my final study I focused on a historical context far removed from my participants: the persecution of Jews in medieval Spain that led to the Spanish Inquisition.

The Spanish Inquisition is one of the most extreme examples of the tragic consequences that can occur when identity suspicion runs rampant within a community. However, I reasoned that participants were unlikely to share the cultural knowledge of the particular identity suspicions that led to the Inquisition, which provided me an opportunity for a non-confounded test of my identity suspicion hypotheses. Specifically, it allowed me to test whether experimentally varying participants' information about the identity stigmatization that Jews faced in Spain would be sufficient to lead contemporary participants to express the same kinds of suspicions about an actor's identity that led to the Spanish Inquisition.

Without attempting to summarize comprehensively the complexity of the Spanish Inquisition, I note several key components and refer the reader to more authoritative sources for greater detail (e.g., Lea, 2019; Netanyahu, 1995; Pérez, 2005; Plaidy, 1967). In brief, massive pogroms in 14th century Spain forced thousands of Jews to convert to Christianity (Netanyahu, 1995). These *conversos* (i.e., Jewish converts to Christianity) became the target of "old" Christians' hatred and persecution, and in 1478, Pope Sixtus IV institutionalized the Spanish Inquisition with his papal bull, *Exigit sinceras devotionis affectus* ('Sincere Devotion Is Required'"; Ray, n.d.). The Spanish Inquisition was an attempt, in part, to identify conversos who had converted only nominally to Christianity, while secretly continuing to practice Judaism (Netanyahu, 1995, 1999). As the Inquisition waged on, accusations of observing Jewish rites became increasingly subjective, and a host of trivial behaviors came to stand as indication of secretly practicing Judaism (Netanyahu, 1995). By the time Spain's first Grand Inquisitor, Tomás de Torquemada, died, an estimated 2000 people had been accused of heresy and burned at the stake (Ray, n.d.). While it is impossible to know how many of the conversos had secretly retained their Jewish faith, careful scholarly estimates indicate that, in reality, no more than 1% of the converso population continued to practice Judaism (Netanyahu, 1999).

I adopted the conditions that preceded the Spanish Inquisition as the identity-stigmatizing social environment for Study 5 (hereafter called *Jewish persecution environment*). For the identity-affirming environment, I drew on work by Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Américo Castro on *la convivencia* (i.e., the coexistence; Glick, 1992), an earlier time when Muslims ruled medieval Spain and Jews and Christians—despite being second-class citizens—were essentially equals and allowed to live in relative peace (Castro, 1971; Wolf, 2009). This depiction of la convivencia is contested by some (e.g., Sánchez-Albornoz, 1975), but for the purposes of my

study, what mattered most was that this period was posited as one of relative religious tolerance, and specifically one of relatively equal social standing between Christians and Jews (hereafter called *Jewish tolerance environment*).

I focused on religious identity as my concealable identity. Specifically, I created a profile of a man (Josephus) who identified as a Christian but displayed certain private behaviors more common among Jews than Christians. I included cues seen as stereotypically Jewish (hence, nonconforming for Christians) at the time of the Spanish Inquisition to replicate the identity cue inconsistency from my earlier profiles of Steve.

My hypotheses mirrored those of my earlier studies. When Josephus was described as living during the period of Jewish persecution rather than the period of relative religious tolerance, I predicted that participants would (a) express more identity suspicion (i.e., be less likely to perceive Josephus as the Christian he said he was), (b) expect Josephus's community to be more suspicious of his religious identity (were they to learn about his behaviors associated with Judaism), and (c) perceive him as more motivated to conceal these behaviors. Testing these hypotheses in the current context allowed me to test whether merely providing contemporary participants with information about the extreme stigmatization Jews faced in this particular period—without any explicit reference to the Spanish Inquisition and without providing deeper knowledge of its history—would be sufficient to lead these participants to express the same suspicions of a converso's Christian identity that fueled the Spanish Inquisition.

Method

Participants and procedures. I aimed for a slightly larger sample of MTurk workers to increase power for my only study testing identity suspicion in this domain. Initially, 393

participants started the study; 43 (10.9%) did not finish.[29] After 8 additional exclusions, my final sample comprised 342 participants (see Table 1 for demographics & exclusions).

I followed a similar procedure to Studies 4a and 4b, with updated materials.

Stimulus materials. I revised the study content to address religious identity in medieval Spain.

Social environments. I randomly assigned participants to read one of two social environment descriptions, presented as excerpts from a medieval Spanish history textbook (O'Callaghan, 1975). Participants in the Jewish persecution environment read this description:

> Anti-Jewish prejudice was widespread in Medieval Spanish society during the period of Christian rule. At one point, the Christian rulers forced Jewish citizens to convert to Christianity or be expelled from the Spanish peninsula, while at other times they oppressed Jewish citizens by imposing a number of legal restrictions on them. For example, Jewish people were not allowed to participate fully in the social and economic life of their communities. They were legally prohibited from certain professions and from holding public office. Their communities were periodically targeted by mob violence in organized attacks that saw many Jewish people killed or driven from their homes. Openly identifying as Jewish during this period was very dangerous.

Participants assigned to the Jewish tolerance environment read this description:

> Religious tolerance was widespread in Medieval Spanish society during the period of Muslim rule. Openly identifying as Christian or Jewish during this period was not considered dangerous, because both groups were granted religious freedom through a set of provisions called the *dhimmi*. Under these provisions, neither Christians nor Jewish

[29] Attrition did not differ by condition, $\chi_2(1) = 0.63$, $p = .429$.

people were forced to convert to Islam, but were instead permitted to continue practicing their religious faith. While Christians and Jewish people were equally considered second-class citizens, members from both groups could fully participate in the social and economic life of society. In exchange for these privileges, Christians and Jewish people were required to pay a special tax that Muslims did not have to pay.

I relied to some extent on my participants' lack of familiarity with the specifics of the Spanish Inquisition and la convivencia, enabling me to guide their impressions of these historical periods through carefully balanced descriptions. However, I controlled for their pre-existing knowledge of both periods to ensure my hypothesized effects were not confounded by subject expertise.

Profile. All participants read the following profile of a man named Josephus. Wording in brackets was included in the Jewish persecution versus Jewish tolerance environments, respectively:

> A man named Josephus Alfonsi lived in Medieval Spain during the period of [Christian/Muslim] rule. He worked as a doctor and was a noted poet of his time. Although he came from a long line of Jewish Spaniards, Josephus' parents converted to Christianity several years before he was born. Accordingly, Josephus was baptized and raised as a Christian. When he became an adult, he continued to identify as a Christian. He married a woman from a Jewish background who converted to Christianity shortly before they got married. Josephus and his wife baptized their children in the Christian faith and sent them to Christian schools. He and his family regularly attended a Christian church.

> Josephus set up his professional practice near his home, which was close to the Jewish part of his city. A historian who studied an archive of letters that Josephus wrote during his lifetime noted that he maintained a number of private practices that were customary to the Jewish community and not generally practiced by most Christians. For example, both of Josephus' sons were circumcised, a traditional practice in the Jewish community that was not widely practiced by Christians of the time. Some of his letters to close friends and family included Hebrew, the language of the Jewish community, and he appears to have taught his sons at least some Hebrew because some of their letters to him also included Hebrew. Josephus and his family also followed Jewish dietary traditions. For example, unlike most Christians of the time, they did not eat pork. The historian who studied Josephus's letters noted, however, that in his letters to professional colleagues and other official correspondence, Josephus identified himself as a Christian with the customary practice of signing his name with the symbol of a fish (a common symbol of Christianity).

Several points related to this profile bear mentioning. First, although each behavior I included was used as grounds for criminal investigation during the Spanish Inquisition (Kamen, 2014; Netanyahu, 1995), and is connected with Jewish culture in some way, none is, in and of itself, indicative of religious identity, just as Steve's gender-nonconforming characteristics are closely associated with stereotypes of gay men, but not actually diagnostic of sexuality. Nonetheless, I intended for these religiously coded behaviors to prime participants to associate Josephus with Judaism.

Second, Josephus's explicit claim to be a Christian, together with the behavioral and life history cues I provided, should lead participants to associate him with Christianity. I suspected,

however, that when Josephus was situated in an environment where Jews were persecuted, participants would be suspicious of his religious identity because of the inconsistency of his identity cues. As in Steve's profiles, I included this identity cue inconsistency to foster a state of attributional ambiguity. In doing so, I was able to examine whether—as in prior studies— the social environment participants read about shaped their interpretation of the identity cue inconsistency.

Measures. After reading the environment and profile descriptions, everyone completed measures of impressions ($\alpha = .92$), identity suspicion, certainty, peer identity suspicion, motivation to conceal, as well as measures of various potential confounds, moderators, and covariates noted below (see Table 6 for descriptive statistics).

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Nondemographic Potential Moderators and Covariates in Study 5.

Moderator	Range	*M* (*SD*)
Identity Suspicion	0% to 100%	41.52 (28.81)
Certainty	0 to 4	2.05 (1.19)
Peer Identity Suspicion	0 to 4	2.55 (1.10)
Motivation to Conceal	0 to 4	2.46 (1.20)
Importance of Religion	0 to 6	2.30 (2.23)
Favorable Impressions	–3 to 3	1.57 (0.93)
Knowledge of Medieval Spain	0 to 4	0.77 (0.79)
Knowledge of Spanish Inquisition	0 to 4	1.11 (0.85)
Knowledge of La Convivencia	0 to 4	0.35 (0.73)
Knowledge of Christian Culture	0 to 4	2.33 (1.04)
Knowledge of Jewish Culture	0 to 4	1.37 (0.84)
Friends' Attitudes Toward Jews	–2 to 2	4.11 (0.86)
Friends' Attitudes Toward Christians	–2 to 2	4.14 (0.99)

Identity suspicion. Participants read, "How likely do you think it is:" that (a) "Josephus's personal faith is Christian," and (b) "Josephus's personal faith is Jewish." As before, participants indicated their responses on a sliding scale from 0% (*No chance at all*) to 100%

(*Absolutely guaranteed*), with sliders set at 50% (*Maybe/Maybe not*). As elsewhere, I report only analyses of my main hypothesis. As before, I reverse-scored participants' ratings so that higher scores index more intense identity suspicion.

Peer identity suspicion. Participants rated the likelihood of identity suspicion among Josephus's peers (i.e., "*If other people in Josephus's city learned about the Jewish customs he practiced, how likely do you think it is that they would question that Josephus is a Christian?*") from 0 (*Not at all likely*) to 4 (*Extremely likely*).

Motivation to conceal. Next, participants indicated how motivated they perceived Josephus was to conceal his religious nonconformity from his peers (i.e., "*How much do you think Josephus was motivated to avoid acknowledging to others the Jewish customs he practiced?*") from 0 (*Not at all motivated*) to 4 (*Extremely motivated*).

Potential confounds. In prior studies, I measured perceptions of the social environment as potential confounds. Here, I assessed historical knowledge and familiarity with religious cultures.

Historical knowledge. As stated earlier, I expected most participants would not be intimately familiar with the details of the Spanish Inquisition or la convivencia. To confirm this assumption, I assessed participants' pre-existing knowledge by asking them how much they knew about medieval Spanish history, the Spanish Inquisition, and la convivencia, assessing each on a scale from 0 (*Nothing at all*) to 4 (*A great deal*). As expected, participant knowledge of all three was very low: medieval Spanish history (M = 0.77, SD = 0.79); Spanish Inquisition (M = 1.11, SD = 0.85); and la convivencia (M = 0.35, SD = 0.73).

Religious knowledge. Although all participants read a profile description noting behaviors coded as Jewish at the time of the Spanish Inquisition, I anticipated participants might

evaluate the profile using their current knowledge of Christianity and Judaism. Accordingly, participants rated their knowledge of both Christian and Jewish culture today, on scales from 0 (*Nothing at all*) to 4 (*A great deal*). In this U.S. American sample, participants were more knowledge about Christian (M = 2.33, SD = 1.04) than Jewish (M = 1.37, SD = 0.84) culture today, $t(341) = 17.19$, $p < .001$.

Potential moderators. Because my environment descriptions involve religious identity, I included measures of attitudes toward religious groups.

Attitudes toward religious groups. As in prior studies, I did not ask participants about their own attitudes (for reasons discussed in Study 1a). Instead, participants' reports about their immediate social network's attitudes served as a proxy for their own attitudes. Specifically, I asked participants to rate their closest friends' general attitudes toward Jewish people and toward Christians. They responded on a sliding scale below an emoticon whose facial expression changed from a strong frown (–2 = *Very negative*) to a strong smile (2 = *Very positive*) as the slider was moved from its neutral central starting position.

Demographics. The demographic measures included the following new variables.

Religious identity. Conceivably, participants might view Josephus's religious identity differently as a function of their own religious identity. Participants selected which religious groups they identified with from a list of nine groups (*Buddhist, Christian-Catholic, Christian-Protestant, Christian-Other, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Non-religious*). Participants who did not identify with any of these groups had the option of specifying their own group (5.8% of the sample). The majority of my sample identified as some form of Christian (52.6%) or non-religious (38.0%). Only 0.9% of the sample identified as Jewish.

Importance of religion. Similarly, participants might interpret my experimental materials differently based on the importance of religion to them. Participants indicated the importance of religion in their life from 0 (*Not at all important*) to 6 (*The most important thing in my life*).

Results and Discussion

Data analytic strategy. I followed my established data analytic strategy and effects-coded social environment (–1 = Jewish tolerance; +1 = Jewish persecution).

Primary analyses. Consistent with my first hypothesis, participants were more suspicious of Josephus's Christian identity when he was described as living during a period of Jewish persecution (M = 51.03, SD = 29.79) than tolerance (M = 31.89, SD = 24.32), $F(1, 340) = 42.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .11$ [.06, .16].[30] Correcting for participants' non-additivity across their raw percent likelihood estimates produced converging results (see Table 2).

Having accumulated a large amount of evidence in support of my identity suspicion hypothesis, I aimed to compare the distributions of participants' identity suspicion ratings in key environments across all of my studies. Accordingly, I calculated percentile ranks of identity suspicion ratings by social environment across Studies 1a-5. Aiding a clear comparison of social environment effects on identity suspicion across paradigms, I further calculated percentile rank averages in the nonhomophobic and homophobic social environments in Studies 1a-4b. As seen in Figure 5., identity suspicion ratings split early on in both paradigms, such that by the 10th percentile, the identity-stigmatizing environments produced more identity suspicion than the identity-affirming/-tolerating environments, respectively. Both paradigms retained this environmental split until the 100th percentile, suggesting the effect of social environment on identity suspicion is robust across percentile ranks.

[30] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 340) = 9.74$, $p = .002$, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 328.3) = 42.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .11$ [.07, .17].

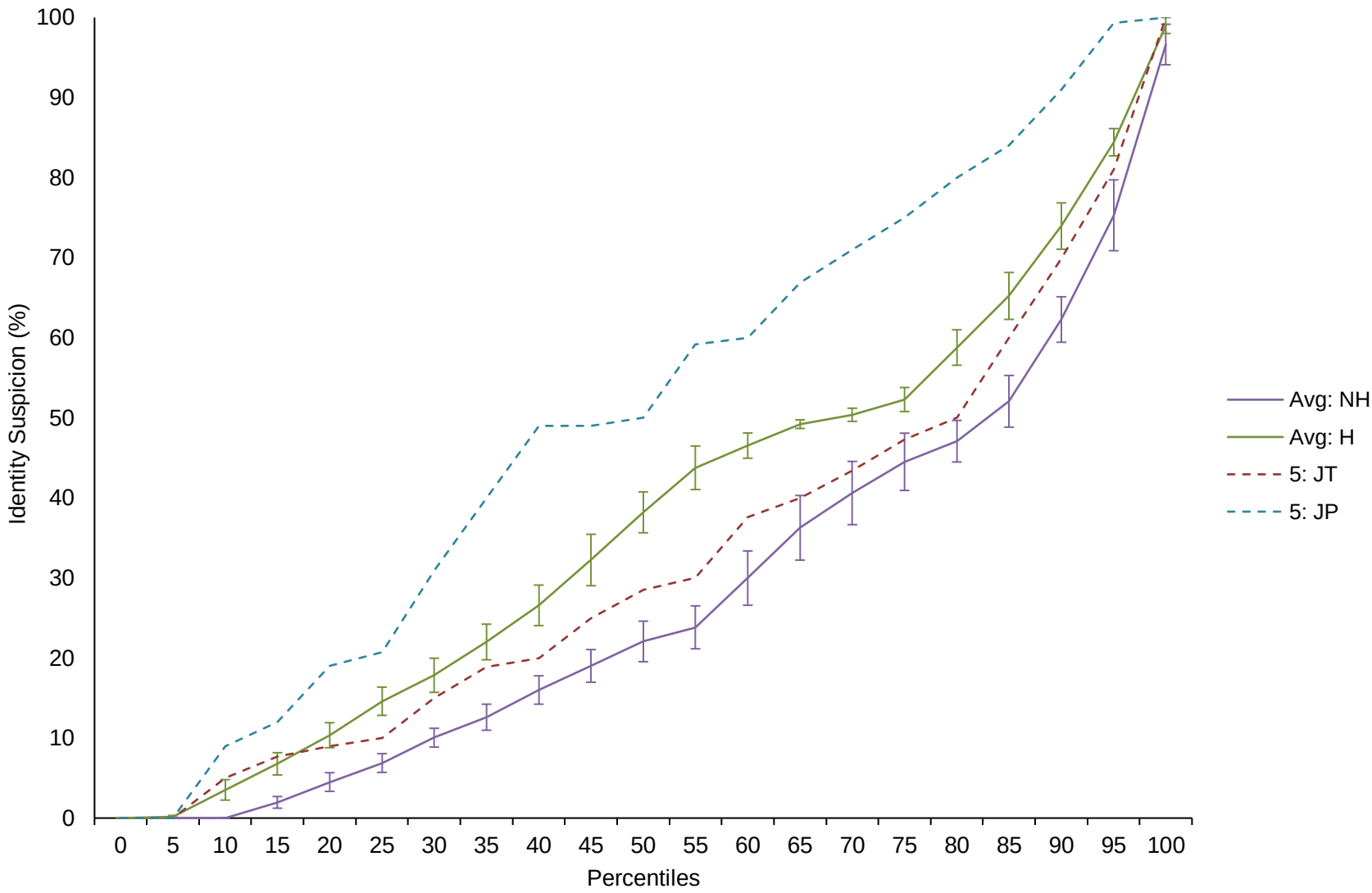


Figure 5. Percentile ranks of identity suspicion by social environment across Studies 1a-5. For Studies 1a-4b, only the average percentile ranks of the (non)homophobic social environments are presented. Error bars represent pooled *SE*s. NH = nonhomophobic environment; H = homophobic environment; Avg = average; JT = Jewish tolerance; JP = Jewish persecution.

Supporting my second hypothesis, participants also believed Josephus's community would be more suspicious of his religious identity—were they to find out about his private, religiously coded behaviors—when he was described as living in the Jewish persecution environment (M = 2.91, SD = 1.05) than the Jewish tolerance environment (M = 2.18, SD = 1.03), $F(1, 340) = 42.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .11$ [.06, .17]. Per my third hypothesis, participants perceived Josephus would have been much more motivated to conceal his behavior in the Jewish persecution environment (M = 3.02, SD = 1.03) than the Jewish tolerance environment (M = 1.90, SD = 1.09), $F(1, 340) = 96.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .22$ [.16, .28].

Mediation. As in Studies 4a and 4b, the data supported my theoretical mediation model (see

Figure *2*). That is, participants' perceived motivation for Josephus to conceal his religiously coded behaviors mediated the social environment effect on identity suspicion. Across three studies and two domains, my data have consistently demonstrated that participants intuitively recognize the implications of identity-stigmatizing environments for secondary closets. This increases my confidence that the theoretical mechanism driving identity suspicion is the incentive in identity-stigmatizing environments to conceal behaviors and attributed socially coded as identity cues.

Further replicating Studies 4a and 4b, both my hypothesized (social environment → peer identity suspicion → motivation to conceal) and alternate (social environment → motivation to conceal → peer identity suspicion) models were plausible (see

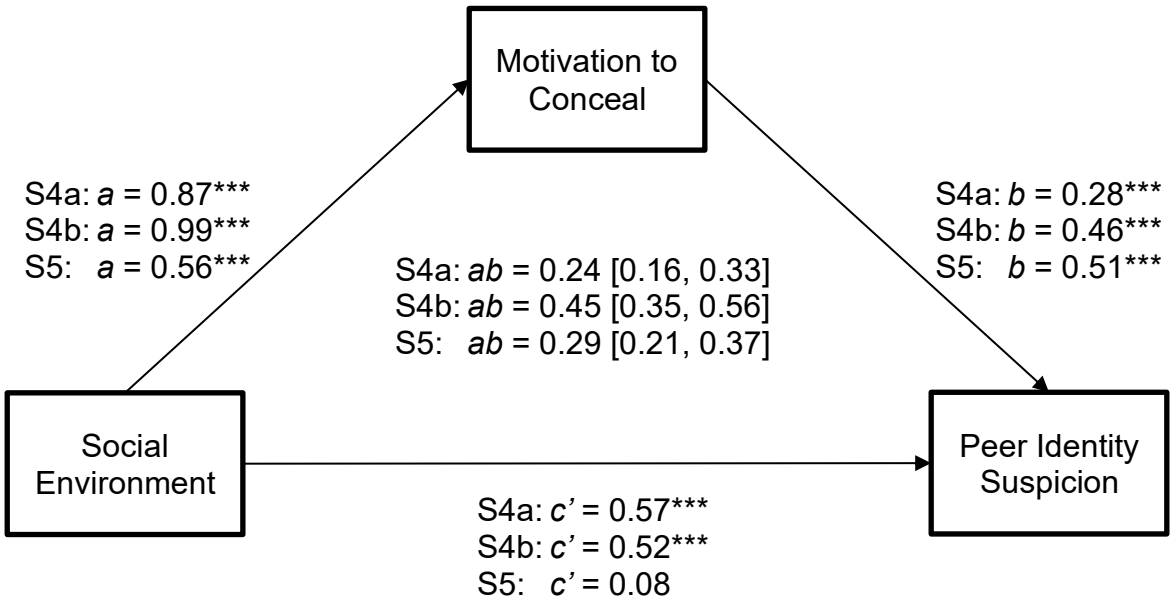


Figure 4.). Contrary to Studies 4a and 4b, however, the indirect effect in the alternate model was descriptively larger than in the hypothesized model and the direct effect was non-significant. In sum, after evaluating these two mediation models across three samples, no clearly superior model emerged. I conclude that further experimental studies are needed to ascertain causal sequence.

Table 7

Regression Estimates—b (SE)—for the Effect of Social Environment on Identity Suspicion Accounting for Potential Moderators in Study 5

	Environment Effect[a] (Controlling for Moderator)		Moderator		Environment Effect × Moderator	
Moderator	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI
Age	**9.42*** ** (1.47)	[6.53, 12.30]	0.29 (0.16)	[−0.04, 0.61]	−0.26 (0.16)	[−0.58, 0.07]
Participant Sex[b]	**9.56*** ** (1.48)	[6.65, 12.46]	0.56 (1.48)	[−2.35, 3.46]	−0.40 (1.48)	[−3.31, 2.50]

Moderator	Environment Effect[a] (Controlling for Moderator)		Moderator		Environment Effect × Moderator	
	b (*SE*)	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	95% CI
Race[c]	**9.38*** ** (1.60)	[6.22, 12.53]	**−3.45*** (1.60)	[−6.60, −0.30]	−0.35 (1.60)	[−3.50, 2.80]
Religion[d]	**9.59*** ** (1.47)	[6.70, 12.48]	2.84 (1.47)	[−0.05, 5.73]	−0.60 (1.47)	[−3.49, 2.29]
Education	**9.55*** ** (1.47)	[6.66, 12.44]	0.21 (1.29)	[−2.33, 2.74]	**−3.17*** (1.29)	[−5.71, −0.64]
Income	**9.59*** ** (1.47)	[6.70, 12.48]	−0.98 (0.82)	[−2.59, 0.63]	−0.95 (0.82)	[−2.56, 0.66]
Importance of Religion	**9.62*** ** (1.46)	[6.74, 12.49]	**−1.67*** (0.66)	[−2.96, −0.38]	0.49 (0.66)	[−0.81, 1.78]
Favorable Impressions	**10.35*** ** (1.61)	[7.18, 13.52]	**−8.57*** ** (1.53)	[−11.59, −5.56]	−0.18 (0.88)	[−1.92, 1.55]
Knowledge of Medieval Spain	**9.58*** ** (1.47)	[6.68, 12.48]	−0.68 (1.89)	[−4.40, 3.04]	−1.52 (1.89)	[−5.23, 2.20]
Knowledge of Spanish Inquisition	**9.59*** ** (1.47)	[6.70, 12.49]	−1.95 (1.74)	[−5.37, 1.47]	−1.69 (1.74)	[−5.11, 1.73]
Knowledge of La Convivencia	**9.54*** ** (1.48)	[6.63, 12.44]	−1.03 (2.04)	[−5.05, 2.98]	−1.48 (2.04)	[−5.50, 2.53]
Knowledge of Christian Culture	**9.93*** ** (1.47)	[7.04, 12.83]	**−3.13*** (1.42)	[−5.93, −0.33]	1.39 (1.42)	[−1.41, 4.19]
Knowledge of Jewish Culture	**9.62*** ** (1.49)	[6.69, 12.55]	−0.46 (1.78)	[−3.96, 3.04]	0.51 (1.78)	[−2.99, 4.01]
Friends' Attitudes Toward Christians	**9.31*** ** (1.44)	[6.48, 12.15]	**−5.74*** ** (1.47)	[−8.62, −2.86]	1.89 (1.47)	[−0.99, 4.77]
Friends' Attitudes Toward Jews	**9.63*** ** (1.46)	[6.76, 12.51]	**−4.31*** (1.70)	[−7.65, −0.97]	−0.28 (1.70)	[−3.62, 3.06]

Note. Significant results are in bold.
[a]Social environment is effects coded (–1 = identity-tolerating; +1 = identity-stigmatizing).
[b]Participant sex is effects coded (–1 = Female, +1 = Male).
[c]Race is effects coded (–1 = White, +1 = Other races).
[d]Religion is effects coded (–1 = Christian, +1 = Other religions).
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Exploratory analyses: Moderation. As seen in Table 7, only participant education moderated the effect of social environment on identity suspicion. Among participants with relatively less education, identity suspicion was higher in the Jewish persecution (vs. tolerance) environment: b = 11.42 [7.61, 15.23], $t(338) = 5.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .09$ [.05, .14]. This difference persisted less strongly but still significantly among participants with relatively more education,

despite being much weaker: b = 5.75 [1.86, 9.63], $t(338) = 2.91$, $p = .004$, $\eta_{p2} = .02$ [.005, .06]. Given the exploratory nature of the moderation analyses analyses and the lack of consistent moderation by education level in Studies 1a-4b, Iinterpret them cautiously. I do highlight, however, that the effect of social environment on identity suspicion remained significant when controlling for each potential moderator (see Table 7), demonstrating its robustness to these confounds.

Chapter 8: General Discussion

Fundamentally, this work explores people's intuitive theories of the closet. Originally a metaphor to describe concealment of gay or lesbian identity in a homophobic environment, the closet has since been broadly generalized to encompass concealment of any stigmatized identity. Given this broad generalization, I hypothesized that people intuitively recognize that identity-stigmatizing environments incentivize the concealment of these identities in the proverbial closet (provided the identities are of a concealable nature). I further reasoned that this recognition should lead people to become suspicious of others' public claims to hold a contrasting, non-stigmatized identity (i.e., demonstrate identity suspicion). Across nine experimental studies, I hypothesized and found consistent evidence that when an actor claimed to have a non-stigmatized identity (e.g., straight), observers were more suspicious of his identity claim if he was situated in an environment where the contrasting identity (e.g., gay) was stigmatized. By contrast, when the environment did not stigmatize the contrasting identity, observers were significantly less suspicious of the actor's identity claim. In most of my studies, I described the actor having certain attributes stereotypically associated with the stigmatized identity, which predictably augmented observers' identity suspicion in the stigmatizing environment. However, even when the actor's attributes were stereotypically associated with the contrasting *non-stigmatized* identity, observers still expressed suspicion of his identity claim when he was situated in the identity-stigmatizing (vs. -affirming) environment (Study 3). These results indicate that an identity-stigmatizing environment oppresses not only people with the stigmatized identity, but potentially everyone in the environment because it casts a shadow of suspicion over anyone's claim to the contrasting, non-stigmatized identity.

I theorized the mechanism driving the environmental effect on identity suspicion was participants' recognition of the incentive to conceal same-sex attraction (Studies 1a-4b) and Jewish faith (Study 5) in the identity-stigmatizing environment (i.e., homophobic schools and Jewish persecution pre-Spanish Inquisition, respectively). In Studies 4a-5, I found that observers' perception of the actor's motivation to conceal behaviors or attributes stereotyped as cues of the stigmatized identity mediated the social environmental effect on participants' identity suspicion. These results support my theorizing and suggest observers recognize the constraints of identity-stigmatizing environments for everyone situated within those environments. Not only are people with the stigmatized identity incentivized to conceal it (i.e., primary closet), everyone is incentivized to conceal behaviors and attributes stereotyped as cues of the stigmatized identity (i.e., secondary closet) to avoid suspicion they possess the stigmatized identity.

In Studies 4a-5, I also explored further consequences of identity suspicion. Specifically, I found that when the environment was identity-stigmatizing (vs. -affirming/-tolerating), observers attributed greater motivation for the actor to conceal from his peers any behaviors or attributes that might be stereotypically coded as cues of the stigmatized concealable identity. In all three studies, this finding was mediated by observers' belief that the actor's peers would suspect he possessed the stigmatized identity, were they to learn of his behavior or attributes. Unfortunately, switching the mediating and outcome variables of this model produced a second, equally viable model. In this second model, observers' perception of the actor's motivation to conceal mediated their perception of the likelihood his peers would suspect he possessed the stigmatized identity if they learned of his stereotyped behaviors or attributes. Although both models are compatible with the suggestion that observers may have inferred identity-stigmatizing environments create both primary and secondary closets, my results preclude drawing firm conclusions about whether

perceived motivation to conceal drives perceived peer identity suspicion, or vice versa. Future studies are needed to experimentally test the directionality of this process.

Contributions to Attribution Theory

My findings make a significant contribution to the literature on person perception by extending classic attribution theory principles to the context of identity attribution. Previous work on attribution theory has focused on attributions about relatively limited aspects of a person, such as particular attitudes, abilities, beliefs, motivations, or emotions. In everyday life, however, people make attributions about not only these limited aspects of others, but also much broader characteristics, such as inferring their religious, sexual, or political identities from observations of their behavior. It is thus valuable to investigate whether classic attribution principles, such as the discounting principle, apply when observers make attributions about these sorts of broader characteristics. My research was centered on the discounting principle's logic-based premise that causes of behavior are discounted to the extent that alternative causes exist (Kelley, 1971). My robust finding that observers expressed identity suspicion consistent with the logical inferences mandated by the discounting principle indicates the predictions of attribution theory can indeed be extended to identity attributions.

Although rational thought and logical decision-making make up the foundation of the discounting principle, one of the most robust findings in attribution theory is people's failure to invoke this principle (i.e., the fundamental attribution error [FAE; Ross, 1977] or correspondence bias [Gilbert & Malone, 1995]). That is, people tend to disregard situational determinants of behavior, even when they are made exceedingly obvious, and incorrectly draw dispositional inferences about an actor based only on their behavior (Gilbert, 1998; Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Ross, 1977). Moreover, the FAE seems to function automatically and to be very difficult to

overcome (see Gilbert, 1998). There are, however, specific contexts in which observers tend to overcome the FAE.

Through careful observation of studies demonstrating the FAE, Fein and colleagues (1990) discovered that "when contextual information suggests that more than one motive may underlie an actor's behavior, the suspicion that is aroused may inhibit [observers] from making a correspondent inference" (p. 754). Indeed, suspicion appears to interrupt the automatic process behind the FAE and trigger more careful deliberation on the part of observers (Fein, 1996). Intriguingly, then, suspicion appears to promote rational thinking among observers. Insofar as rational thought is lauded as a superior way of thinking, this effect of suspicion seems positive. However, by directing my focus on identity attributions, in contrast to the bulk of attribution theory's focus on dispositional attributions, I highlight the potentially troubling implications of rational thought in the domain of identity. That is, insofar as the discounting principle is rational, and insofar as suspicion reflects observers' use of the discounting principle, the logical conclusion is that the identity suspicion demonstrated in my studies is rational. In other words, the discounting principle implies it is rational to be suspicious of an actor's claim to an unmarked concealable identity when the actor's social environment stigmatizes the contrasting marked and concealable identity. Further, this suspicion is all the more rational if some of the actor's behaviors and attributes are socially coded as markers of the stigmatized identity.

Rational suspicion, however, comes with a price, as seen in the following examples. Boys who are perceived as gender-nonconforming are frequent targets of homophobic bullying, even when these boys profess to be straight, in part because these gender non-conforming behaviors augment others' suspicions that the boys might secretly be gay (Friedman, Koeske, Silvestre, Korr, & Sites, 2006; Mahan et al., 2006; Norman & Galvin, 2006; Phoenix, Frosh, & Pattman,

2003; D. C. Plummer, 2001; Taylor et al., 2011). This victimization has both short- and long-term negative effects on victims' mental and physical health (Friedman et al., 2006; Phoenix et al., 2003; Poteat & Espelage, 2007; Poteat, Scheer, Digiovanni, & Mereish, 2014; A. L. Roberts, Rosario, Slopen, Calzo, & Austin, 2013; Swearer, Turner, Givens, & Pollack, 2008; Taylor et al., 2011). A great deal of masculinities research has focused on men's fear of other's suspicions that they might be gay and how this fear of suspicion leads them to defensively adopt negative ideologies (e.g., antifemininity, femmephobia, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny) and engage in aggression and violence toward men who identify as or are perceived as gay or transgender (Hoskin, 2019; Hunt et al., 2016; McCormack & Anderson, 2010b, 2014a; McCreary, 1994; C. T. Nagoshi, Cloud, Lindley, Nagoshi, & Lothamer, 2019; J. L. Nagoshi et al., 2008; Pascoe & Diefendorf, 2019; D. Plummer, 2014; Rivera, Dasgupta, & Rivera, 2016; S. Roberts, Anderson, & Magrath, 2017; Smith et al., 2015; Warriner et al., 2013; Worthen, 2014; though see McCormack & Anderson, 2014b for an account of the declining influence of homophobia on men's gender in the US). In another context, Muslims flying in the Western world must contend with how they are often misrecognized by airport security personnel and other travelers as threats to safety based on the suspicion they might secretly be terrorists (Blackwood, Hopkins, & Reicher, 2015; Hopkins & Blackwood, 2011; McNamara & Reicher, 2019; Meer, Martineau, & Thompson, 2012).

In each of these examples, identity-stigmatizing environments create incentives to closet a stigmatized concealable identity. This incentive triggers observers' rational suspicion of others' "true" identity, particularly of those exhibiting behaviors or attributes socially coded as markers of the stigmatized concealable identity. While rational, the identity suspicion elicited by these environments can have multiple negative consequences, ranging in severity and temporality.

Identity Suspicion and Identity Cue Inconsistency

It is important to note that all but one of the actor profiles in my studies featured identity cue inconsistencies. Two alternate process models could account for the relations between these inconsistencies, observers' awareness of identity stigmatization, and their suspicion of an actor's claim to possess the non-stigmatized identity. The first model suggests that when observers focus on how a concealable identity is stigmatized in an environment, it leads them to be suspicious of an actor's claims to possess the contrasting, non-stigmatized identity. This suspicion motivates observers to scrutinize actors' behavior for cues that conflict with their identity claim. If such cues are detected, they will tend to augment the observer's suspicions about the actor's claim to possess the non-stigmatized identity.

The second model suggests that when an observer detects inconsistencies in an actor's identity cues, the observers subsequently focuses on contextual factors to resolve the actor's identity cue inconsistency, such as the social environment's stigmatization of a concealable identity. Indeed previous work on person perception indicates that when observers perceive inconsistent identity cues in an actor's behavior, they engage in more effortful attributional processing and looks for other information—such as relevant environmental contexts—that can resolve the identity cue inconsistency (Marchand & Vonk, 2005; Vonk, 1998).

The difference between these models is subtle but important. In the first model, identity suspicion is triggered by awareness of identity stigmatization. This suspicion can then be augmented by identity cue inconsistencies. In the second model, identity suspicion is triggered by the identity cue inconsistency, which then leads the observer to engage in more effortful attributional analysis in an attempt to resolve the identity cue inconsistency.

Both process models are consistent with most of my findings. I included identity cue inconsistencies in all but one of my actor profiles, suggesting the second model might well account for my findings. In contrast, however, participants in every study always read the social environment description before the actor's profile, suggesting their interpretation of the actor's profile was influenced by the presence/absence of identity-stigmatization in the environment, which supports the first model. A more definitive test of the two models comes from my data in Study 3, where I contrasted gender-(non)conforming profiles. Importantly, the gender-conforming profile did not contain any identity cue inconsistency. Instead, the actor's stereotyped behavior was consistent with his claim to be straight. If the first model best accounts for the identity suspicion process, then even the gender-conforming (i.e., suspicion-free) profile should trigger identity suspicion in the homophobic environment. By contrast, if the second model best accounts for identity suspicion's process, then the gender-conforming profile should not generate suspicion, even if it is situated in the homophobic environment, because the model indicates that observers should only use environmental cues to discount an actor's identity claims when they detect inconsistent identity cues.

The results from Study 3 supported the first model over the second one. Despite the identity cue consistency of the gender-conforming profile, participants who read that the actor attended a homophobic school were still more suspicious of his identity than participants who read he attended a nonhomophobic school. In line with the first model, I conclude that people's awareness of an environment's stigmatization of a concealable identity triggers their suspicion of an actor's claims to the contrasting non-stigmatized identity, and that this suspicion can then be augmented by inconsistencies in the actor's identity cues. That is, in environments that stigmatize a concealable identity, even people whose behaviors and attributes signal the

contrasting, non-stigmatized identity fall prey to observers' identity suspicion. While it is exciting to think of the implications of this finding for applied settings, I must first consider a potential alternative explanation.

The cognitive asymmetry attending the binary classification of marked and unmarked categories renders the unmarked category ignored and assumed as default (Brekhus, 1996, 1998, 2003; Heller, 2011). In other words, people tend to subconsciously attribute unmarked identities to others unless a certain cue or set of cues signal a marked identity (see Brekhus, 1996). It is possible, then, that the actor's explicit claim to be straight in the gender-conforming profile triggered participants' suspicion because it drew attention to an identity that, theoretically, was already assumed. Drawing attention to one's unmarked identity flips the cognitive script of paying disproportionate attention to marked identities and ignoring unmarked ones, and thus seems strange. Perhaps the actor's claim to be straight when no questions of his straightness existed made participants suspicious of whether he "truly" is straight. If this explanation bears out, then the suspicion that I observed may have been initially triggered by the unusualness of the actor's claim to an unmarked identity, and this suspicion may then have led observers to engage in more effortful attributional reasoning that took into account the homophobic environment's incentive to conceal non-straight identities.

While certainly plausible, I view this explanation as unlikely to account for my results because I designed the actor's profile to ensure that his explicit claim to be straight did not arise in an unusual way. I did this by prefacing his identity claim with the following statement from the interviewer, "When I got to the part [of the interview] where I asked students about their sexuality …." After reading this introduction, participants should logically attribute the reason for the actor's identity claim to the interviewer's question. If the interviewer asked all students

about their sexuality as a standard part of the interview, then there is no ground for suspicion of the actor's sexuality on the basis of his claim to be straight. As per the discounting principle, this attribution should quell any suspicion the actor's identity claim might otherwise have raised about his "true" sexuality. Assuming, then, that this result attests to the power of identity-stigmatizing social environments and not the unusualness of the actor's identity claim, I next consider its implications for real-world contexts.

A wealth of research suggests that gender-nonconformity—especially among boys and men—is frequently cause for negative evaluations and victimization (Coyle, Fulcher, & Trübutschek, 2016; Friedman et al., 2006; Norman & Galvin, 2006; A. L. Roberts et al., 2013; Swearer et al., 2008). What my research implies is that a homophobic social environment drives these negative evaluations and victimization. Furthermore, this work suggests homophobic environments have negative implications for not only gender-nonconforming individuals, but also for those who conform to conventional gender roles and stereotypes. That is, in homophobic schools, even boys who identify as and "act" straight (i.e., embody socially coded cues of a straight identity) can be targets of identity suspicion. Supporting this implication is past work demonstrating that male peer groups in high school use homophobic language and questioning of each other's sexuality to police gendered behavior (Pascoe, 2005, 2007; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016) and that straight youth are also victimized by homophobic bullying (Phoenix et al., 2003; Poteat & Espelage, 2007; Poteat et al., 2014; Swearer et al., 2008). Taken together, these findings suggest homophobic environments have deleterious implications not only for men who identify or are perceived as non-straight, but also for men who identify as straight.

Identity-Affirming Social Environments

Another intriguing result in my work is the lack of difference in identity suspicion ratings between the gender-nonconforming and gender-conforming profiles in the nonhomophobic environment in Study 3. In line with my theorizing, this result implies that the social coding of certain behaviors and attributes as cues of sexuality is a byproduct of homophobic social environments. When the school environment was described as nonhomophobic, it did not matter whether the actor's passion was fashion design or playing rugby, because neither contained informative value in terms of bolstering suspicion of his claim to be straight. As articulated in identity suspicion theory, where no incentive to closet a marked concealable identity exists, behavior no longer holds diagnostic value for attributing the marked identity, because actors who hold the marked identity have no reason to hide it from others.

The theoretical implications of nonhomophobic social environments extend beyond my work. For example, the bulk of masculinity studies documents and theorizes masculinities within an arguably homophobic—though increasingly less so (McCormack & Anderson, 2014b)—social context. This contextualization raises the possibility that theories like precarious manhood theory (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Arzu Wasti, 2009) or the majority of masculinity measures (for a critical review, see Thompson & Bennett, 2015) are bound by the homophobic contexts in which they are demonstrated. As such, precarious manhood theory may be less a demonstration of men's inherent aversion to being seen as feminine because of the negative implications for their perceived masculinity and sexuality, and more a symptom of homophobic environments that, by incentivizing concealment of non-straight identities, raise suspicion that anyone claiming to be straight might actually be gay.

More recent masculinity theories are shifting focus away from "traditional" or "toxic" masculinities and highlighting ways in which younger generations of men are redefining what is

means to be masculine (e.g., Anderson, 2009; Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Elliott, 2016). While each of these new theories highlights ways in which the nature of masculinity is changing, inclusive masculinity (Anderson, 2009) attributes this change most explicitly to decreasing rates of homophobia in the western world (McCormack, 2011b; McCormack & Anderson, 2014b). Across a slew of studies, both qualitative and quantitative, Anderson and colleagues demonstrate that young men are not only rejecting the homophobic masculinity of their predecessors, but also actively including young gay men in their social circles. Moreover, these researchers have found that young men increasingly report engaging in intimate physical—and occasionally sexual—contact with other young men (e.g., cuddling, spooning, sharing a bed, kissing) without perceiving a threat to their masculinity or even straightness (Anderson, 2009; Anderson & McCormack, 2015, 2016; McCormack, 2011a, 2014; McCormack & Anderson, 2010a; Robinson, Anderson, & White, 2018). This body of work aligns with my theorizing: nonhomophobic environments nullify the diagnosticity of—and remove any "need" for—socially coded behaviors and attributes as markers of sexuality.

Identity Suspicion and Observers' Prejudice

Given that I theorize identity suspicion as an outcome of environments that stigmatize certain concealable identities, it may seem intuitive to think it also functions because of observers' stigmatizing attitudes. Neither my theoretical analysis nor my findings support this intuition, however. In a mega-analytic test of potential moderators of identity suspicion, I found very consistent patterns between participants' ratings of their closest social network's LGB allyship (i.e., active acceptance of LGB folks) and pro-LGB attitudes. While higher ratings on both measures were generally associated with less identity suspicion, an interaction between these measures and the social environment qualified this main effect. Specifically, in the

homophobic environment, these measures had no effect on participants' identity suspicion ratings, which suggests identity suspicion in the homophobic environment does not depend on individual bias.

Of interest, identity suspicion ratings in the nonhomophobic condition diverged as a function of participants' ratings of their closest social network. Here, the higher participants rated their closest social network's LGB allyship and pro-LGB attitudes, the less identity suspicion they reported. One potential explanation for the interaction's pattern is that personal prejudicial attitudes do not determine responses in the homophobic environment because the rational response—due to the environmental incentive to conceal—is identity suspicion, whereas the nonhomophobic environment contains no grounds for suspicion, allowing personal prejudicial attitudes to exert more influence. I point out that identity suspicion was always lower in the nonhomophobic than homophobic environment, even among participants who rated their closest social network relatively lower on LGB allyship and pro-LGB attitudes. In sum, the environmental effect on identity suspicion was robust to participants' individual bias, though bias did affect identity suspicion ratings in the nonhomophobic environment.

Suspicious Mindsets

It is important to note than in none of my studies were participants entirely certain of the actor's identity. Mean identity suspicion ratings in the identity-afforming environments always differed from 0%, and in the identity-stigmatizing environments they always differed from 100%. This uncertainty in identity attribution is in line with work by Fein and colleagues showing that when people recognize the possibility of an ulterior motive accounting for an actor's behavior, they tend to avoid firm decisions and report greater uncertainty in those decisions as a result of their suspicion (Fein, 1996; Fein & Hilton, 1994; Fein et al., 1990).

Replicating these findings, participants in my studies also reported less certainty in their identity suspicion ratings in the identity-stigmatizing environments, relative to the identity-affirming environments. The identity-stigmatizing environments also attested to participants' greater uncertainty through their greater variability in identity suspicion ratings, as evidenced by my data's continual violation of Levene's assumption of homogeneity of variance. Taken together, these results suggest that participants in the identity-stigmatizing conditions recognized the environment's incentive to self-present as straight (Studies 1a-4b) or as Christian (Study 5), which made them more suspicious of the actor's claimed identity and less certain of their own identity suspicion rating.

While my results largely align with Fein and colleagues' work on suspicious mindsets (Fein, 1996; Fein & Hilton, 1994; Fein et al., 1990), they depart from Fein and Hilton (1994) regarding participants' liking of an actor with potential ulterior motives. Fein and Hilton reported that their participants liked the actor in their studies less as a function of the participants' suspicion toward the actor's "true" motives. In my studies, however, participants reported strongly liking the actors, and these ratings never differed by condition. I highlight two important distinctions between my work and that of Fein and Hilton's that I believe account for this difference. First, participants in my studies were "removed, impassionate observers of an obviously [personally irrelevant] actor" (p. 173), whereas participants in Fein and Hilton's studies were directly affected by the actor's potential deception. Thinking of real-world examples of identity suspicion (e.g., Salem witch hunt, McCarthyism in the US), though, it is highly likely that people felt directly affected by an actor's suspected deception. In such cases, I would also expect participants' liking of an actor to decrease. Second, in Fein and Hilton's research, the suspected incentive for the actor to behave inauthentically involved self-promotion.

By contrast, in my research the suspected incentive for the actor to behave inauthentically involved self-protection. Observers may feel some sympathy towards actors who behave inauthentically to protect themselves from stigmatization, whereas they may primarily have contempt for actors who behave inauthentically to seek advantages.

Implications for Identity Panics

There have been many notorious episodes of identity panics in history where people's suspicions of one another's identity claims ran rampant in communities (e.g., the Spanish Inquisition, Salem witch-hunts, McCarthyism). My results raise the provocative notion that the rampant identity suspicion defining these historical episodes may have been the result of people's application of logical attribution principles in a context where a concealable identity was highly stigmatized. Indeed, my results indicate that merely knowing a concealable identity is highly stigmatized is sufficient to trigger rational suspicion of the authenticity of people's claims to possess the contrasting, non-stigmatized identity. Further, my results suggest that observers need not share the identity stigmatizing attitudes to experience identity suspicion. In a community where witches are heavily persecuted, the discounting principle suggests it is logical to suspiciously wonder whether one's friends and neighbors might be professing to be devout Christians to protect themselves from persecution. Similarly, in a context where communists are vulnerable to being fired from positions in the civil service and education, the discounting principle suggests it is logical to suspiciously wonder whether one's coworkers or teachers might be presenting themselves as patriots to protect themselves from being fired.

When identity suspicion runs rampant in a community and leads to destructive consequences, it is tempting to assume these suspicions are fueled by irrational psychological forces, such as paranoid delusions or extreme prejudices on the part of the individuals expressing

the suspicion. However, my results suggest that identity suspicion may be fueled by nothing more than logical application of attribution theory's discounting principle in a context where some concealable identity is highly stigmatized. The stigmatization of any identity may often be rooted in irrational prejudices, but the suspicion of people's claims to possess the contrasting, non-stigmatized identity may be entirely rational, even when these suspicions extend the oppressive consequences of identity stigmatization.

The results from Study 5 are particularly relevant to this point. I provided participants with information modeled on the social context that led to the Spanish Inquisition. The Inquisition arose out of people's suspicions that *conversos*, Spaniards of Jewish background who had converted to Catholicism (Netanyahu, 1995), were secretly practicing the Jewish faith, which was considered heresy. The authenticity of the conversos' claims to the Catholic faith was questioned because practitioners of Judaism were severely oppressed at the time and many of the conversos' ancestors had been forced to convert to Catholicism to avoid being exiled or killed. A converso who retained stereotypically Jewish cultural practices, such as following Jewish dietary customs or maintaining social ties to the Jewish community, was particularly likely to be accused of being a secret heretic by the Inquisition (Netanyahu, 1995). In Study 5, my participants demonstrated the same patterns of suspicion that led to the Spanish Inquisition, even though my participants did not share the eliminationist anti-Semitism that was prevalent in that notorious period. My results show that merely knowing that Jews were heavily oppressed in early modern Spain and that a particular converso had habits and practices that were stereotypically associated with Jews was sufficient to lead contemporary participants to be suspicious of the claim that he was a devout Christian. The chilling implication of this result is that the suspicion of conversos that played a key role in driving the Inquisition may have represented a logical application of

attribution theory's discounting principle. In other words, while irrational anti-Semitic prejudices and hatred were the source of the oppressive conditions that incentivized Jews to convert to Catholicism in early Modern Spain, the suspicion of the authenticity of these conversos that fueled the Inquisition could potentially have been due to rational application of attributional logic.

While it is provocative to discover that contemporary observers may replicate some of the identity suspicion that featured in historical episodes of identity panic, it is important to note that the pattern and dynamics of identity suspicion may often require specific cultural knowledge. My theory suggests that within identity-stigmatizing social environments, people come to code certain behaviors and attributes as markers of the stigmatized identity. Before identity suspicion can result in such social codes, however, observers must share certain cultural knowledge. If people do not share an understanding of the hidden meaning of certain behaviors and attributes as cues of stigmatized identities, identity suspicion cannot take flight because consensus will not be reached over which identities are (un)marked (Brekhus, 1996). Further, this cultural knowledge is context specific. Behaviors and attributes socially coded as identity markers in one context do not necessarily translate to other contexts. For example, Young (2007) details how, as an academic Black man, he is perceived as gay when he returns to the "ghetto" where he grew up because of his education. When he returns to his home, however, his education holds no diagnostic value regarding his sexuality. For Young, cultural knowledge does not translate between the two spaces he inhabits. As a result, the same attribute carries different meanings in both spaces and is irrelevant to identity attributions in one but not the other.

Critical Reflections

Due to this dissertation's post-positivist location, my research on identity suspicion within the domain of men's perceived sexuality and its intersections with masculinity and homophobia is necessarily limited. While sexuality and gender are, in reality, neither binary nor essentially fixed (e.g., Diamond, 2008; Gamson, 2000; Mizzi & Walton, 2014; Savin-Williams, 2017), my research portrays them as both. In aligning my work with Brekhus's (1996) theory of social markedness, I have taken up an approach that reinforces the incorrect perception of sexuality as a binary. In response, I re-emphasize that my research does not endeavor to capture the reality of people's sexualities. Rather, my research examines social discourses and ways of thinking about others' sexuality. In doing so, I have engaged certain notions of sexuality that do not reflect reality, such as the common social perception of straight and gay as contrasting and essential sides of a binary (Elizabeth, 2013; Leck, 2000; Morgan & Davis-Delano, 2016; Waites, 2005). While my decision to do so was motivated by studying real-world perceptions and processes described in various literatures and experienced throughout my life as a gay man, I wrestle with the tension of perpetuating inaccurate, potentially harmful portrayals of sexual and gender diversity as binaristic and the need to understand and speak to identity suspicion in a language understood and appreciated by both my academic community and society at large. Ultimately, I have decided the benefits of amassing this knowledge outweigh the potential harms of how sexuality and gender are portrayed in my studies. Nonetheless, I draw attention to this issue here—and also did so extensively in each of my studies' debriefing—with the hope of clarifying that sexuality and gender are neither fixed identities nor reducible to binaries in service of establishing the superiority of heterosexuality or heteronormativity.

Limitations and Future Directions

Hypothetical materials. Although I believe this work is exciting and opens avenues into future research on and applications of identity suspicion, it also has several limitations. First, each of my studies rely—in large part—on hypothetical materials. While this is not out of the ordinary for social psychological experiments nor person-perception research, it does beg the question of how identity suspicion develops in the real world. In response, I point out several factors that attenuate some of the limitations associated with my hypothetical materials. First, Fein and colleagues' work on suspicious mindsets was conducted in the lab with groups of participants led to believe they were interacting with each other (Fein, 1996; Fein & Hilton, 1994; Fein et al., 1990; Marchand & Vonk, 2005; Vonk, 1998). As such, I have good reason to believe that the suspicion elicited in my studies translates beyond the hypothetical nature of some of my research materials.

Second, of the four key environmental descriptions in my studies (nonhomophobic/ homophobic; Spanish Inquisition/la convivencia), only the homophobic environment was not directly based on existing documentation of real environments. As already described, I based my description of the nonhomophobic environment almost verbatim on McCormack's (2011a) description of Standard High, a private school in England where he conducted over 500 hours of participant observation in a 5-month ethnographic study. This point is worth re-emphasizing because the nonhomophobic environment was judged less believable than the homophobic environment by participants in each study, even though the latter was based on the former to maximize internal validity. Despite participants' skepticism of the nonhomophobic environment, it is not a hypothetical environment created for the purposes of this study. This fact increases my confidence that these findings relate to real-world contexts. Nonetheless, future studies would benefit from directly demonstrating social environmental effects on identity suspicion in the lab

where I can examine how identity suspicion arises in live social interactions between observers and targets.

Demand characteristics. My experimental materials foregrounded information relevant to identity suspicion. The social environment descriptions—with the exception of the extracurricular environment in Study 1b—focused on one feature of the environment that was directly related to the identity in question; the actor always explicitly claimed to be straight; and my measures of identity suspicion were overt (i.e., not couched among a host of filler questions to make them less conspicuous). It may be argued that these aspects of my experimental materials gave rise to demand characteristics that augmented identity suspicion in my studies. To this point, it is worth considering whether people would spontaneously suspect the actor's sexuality if not overtly asked about it, and how more subtle cues of him being straight would affect identity suspicion ratings.

To the first question of whether people would spontaneousy suspect someone's sexuality if not overtly asked about it, a lifetime of experience as a gay man in a homophobic society leads me to say "yes." Beyond personal experience, I can anecdotally report that participants who mentioned the actor's sexuality in their open-ended response of their impression of him (which, importantly, came before my identity suspicion measure) tended to acknowledge some uncertainty about him being straight, even when it was couched in full acceptance of whatever his sexuality might be. Further, a host of research across multiple decades affirms the suspicion of men's sexuality when demonstrating any form of gender-nonconformity (e.g., Bem, 1998; Berke et al., 2017; Connell, 1992; Grisard, 2017; Hunt et al., 2016; Lamb et al., 1980; Martin, 1990; Owen Blakemore, 2003). Indeed, men's gender expression is so strictly policed that real or perceived threats to their masculinity tend to produce a host of negative responses, from physical

aggression (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Bosson et al., 2009; Brown, Baughman, & Carvallo, 2018; Netchaeva, Kouchaki, & Sheppard, 2015; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008; Vandello & Bosson, 2013) to less support for social equality (Cassino, 2016; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2015; Phoenix et al., 2003; Weaver & Vescio, 2015) to increased prejudice against and social distancing from gay men (Hunt et al., 2016; Rivera & Dasgupta, 2016; Talley & Bettencourt, 2008). Accordingly, I maintain that the identity suspicion in my studies arises spontaneously, regardless of how it is inquired about.

Regarding the influence of more subtle identity cues on identity suspicion, I would expect somewhat of a drop in identity suspicion, though I cannot know how much. When comparing identity suspicion ratings in response to the actor's love of fashion, I found that Sample 3 produced noticeably less identity suspicion than Samples 1a, 2a, and 4a. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, I cannot empirically conclude the cause of this drop is the elimination of several gender-nonconforming components of the actor's profile, but such an interpretation is certainly plausible. I can imagine that cuing the actor's straight identity through mention of a girlfriend instead of a verbal claim, for example, might similarly produce a drop in identity suspicion because of the perceived diagnosticity of such a behavioral cue. On the other hand, I can also imagine that when identity is cued only through behavior, the cues associated with the marked identity would receive greater consideration because of the disproportionate attention paid to marked (vs. unmarked) identities. Further, if we consider how suspicious mindsets facilitate more effortful cognitive processing (Fein, 1996; Marchand & Vonk, 2005), then I would suspect that the identity-cue inconsistency, despite being less overt, would still trigger more careful consideration of context, resulting in higher ratings of identity suspicion in the homophobic environment. Future research could address this question by contrasting a profile with an explicit

claim to be straight with a profile where Steve's straight identity is cued through behavior to see whether identity suspicion varies as a function of these identity cues.

Non-0% identity suspicion in identity-affirming environments. In all of my samples, the median level of identity suspicion differed from 0% (i.e., a total lack of suspicion). Why, despite the lack of environmental incentive to hide the identity in question, did participants still suspect the actor's identity? Concerning Samples 1a-4b, it may be tempting to read into the social environment and conclude it is really better described as "anti-homophobic" than nonhomophobic. With the boys in the social environment (i.e., Standard High) taking such an active stance against homophobia, perhaps the profile reinforced the idea that homophobia exists in contexts beyond the school, and that perhaps concealment in those environments might carry over to the school setting. Such an idea is certainly plausible. It does not, however, explain non-0% identity suspicion in Sample 5.

In Samples 1a-4b, participants's closest friends' allyship behaviors and attitudes toward LGB folks negatively predicted identity suspicion in the nonhomophobic environment. Accordingly, participants with social networks that were rated as less positive toward LGB folks also rated their suspicion of the actor's claim to be straight as higher. Hence, some of the non-0% ratings in the nonhomophobic environment must be attributed to attitudes toward LGB folks. Again, however, this finding does not explain the non-0% ratings in the identity-affirming environment in Sample 5.

Anecdotally, after examining participants' explanation for their identity suspicion rating with their actual rating, it quickly became apparent that the two often misaligned. For example, one participant in the nonhomophobic condition wrote, "Well, Steve is still young and I don't know anything about him, but he says he is straight, so he proabaly (*sic*) is," and rated their

suspicion at 41%. Another participant in the homophobic condition wrote, “Well his talk about fashion and wanting to help the interviewer with his wardrobe makes it sound like a possible gay guy. The interview had a leaning toward gay,” but rated their suspicion at only 10%. Taken together, these various considerations make it clear that several things could be going on in the nonhomophobic environment to cause identity suspicion ratings to differ from 0%. Future work on this topic should look to measure identity suspicion in a way that produces less “noise” in the data, such as a 9-point scale anchored by “straight” and “not straight.” It would be interesting to see if changing the response scale would prevent some of the discordant responses seen in my data.

Shared cultural knowledge. Given my theorized effect of social environments on identity suspicion and the interpretation of socially coded identity cues, I must mention that the first eight studies are somewhat confounded by the homophobic tenor of society in general. Because my participants were immersed in a society that is homophobic, they should be particularly sensitive to behaviors and attributes socially coded as markers for men of being gay. If anything, though, this fact lends greater credibility to the effect of nonhomophobic environments on identity suspicion, because participants randomly assigned this environment would bring with them a propensity to interpret Steve’s gender-nonconformity as a sign of him being gay, regardless of the social environment. When considered from this perspective, the nonhomophobic environment’s impact on participants’ identity suspicion ratings is all the more remarkable because it overcomes identity cues that have strong diagnostic value in participants’ daily identity attributions.

I addressed the potential limitation of real-world cultural knowledge on my experimental materials through my study on the Spanish Inquisition. By selecting a historical event that is far-

removed, both geographically and temporally, from my participants, I was confident participants would not enter my experiment with shared cultural knowledge of the hidden meanings behind certain behaviors and attributes during the historical event. Nonetheless, I controlled for participants' pre-existing knowledge of the Spanish Inquisition, la convivencia, medieval Spain, Judaism, and Christianity. None of these potential confounds accounted for my results, and I found an even stronger effect of identity suspicion than in the previous studies.

Cuing identity suspicion. In Studies 1a-4b I used gender-nonconforming behaviors and interests to cue participants' suspicion of the actor's claim to be straight. An interesting future extension of this approach would be to examine the influence of over-the-top displays of gender conformity on participants' identity suspicion. Might men's overcompensation in the form of exaggerated masculine displays similarly trigger suspicion as gender-nonconforming behaviors and attributes do in my studies? Past research suggests it might.

In their seminal paper on the masculine overcompensation theory, (Willer, Rogalin, Conlon, & Wojnowicz, 2013) argued that when men's masculinity is threatened, they often attempt to reinstate it through exaggerated or extreme displays of masculinity. They cite Adams, Wright, and Lohr's (1996) infamous finding that men who scored relatively higher (vs. lower) on a measure of homophobia also tended to experience more sexual arousal when watching two men having sex, suggesting that homophobia may serve as a form of overcompensation among same-sex attracted men who worry about the implications of their desire for their perceived social status. Similarly, Lewis, Hesse, Cook, and Pedersen (2020) highlight several familiar stereotypes around masculine overcompensation (e.g., "men with large trucks and small penises, mid-life crisis affairs, purchases of convertibles sports cars, endorsement of female-hostile pornography, and exaggerated stories of conquests or manly pursuits" p. 59), suggesting a certain

degree of skepticism toward some of men's masculine behaviors. Accordingly, it may be the case that in homophobic environments displaying too much—as with too little—masculinity may trigger observers' identity suspicion.

Gender. The bulk of my studies focus on men and the socially coded behaviors and attributes that cue attributions of them being gay. This focus was intentional, given the extensive and multidisciplinary scholarship demonstrating disproportionate policing of boys' and men's gender (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; McCreary, 1994; Pascoe, 2005; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016). Further, past scholarship has found that gender-nonconforming girls and women tend to be viewed less negatively and higher in social status than their male counterparts (Coyle, Fulcher, & Trübutschek, 2016; McCreary, 1994; Sirin, McCreary, & Mahalik, 2004; but see Berdahl, 2007 for evidence that masculine women experience more sexual harassment in the workplace). Because society tends to obsess over men's gender-nonconformity more so than over women's gender-nonconformity, it seems unlikely that identity suspicion would emerge in response to women's masculine behaviors or attributes, but this remains an empirical question. Perhaps, given society's higher respect for masculinity than femininity (e.g., Bem, 1993), women's sexuality may not be questioned on account of their demonstrating masculine behaviors, but for failing to demonstrate feminine behaviors. Research on the actual gendered traits that distinguish same-sex attracted men and women from their heterosexual counterparts may have some implications for what gendered cues observers could potentially use as indications of sexual identity. This research shows that both the presence of feminine interests and the absence of masculine interests tends to distinguish same-sex attracted men from heterosexual men (Bem, 1998). However, the absence of feminine interests tends to distinguish same-sex attracted women from heterosexual women, while the majority of both groups of

women report the presence of masculine interests (Bem, 1998). If people are intuitively aware of these differences in the relative diagnosticity of feminine and masculine cues, then I might find that they would use disinterest in stereotypically feminine activities and not interest in stereotypically masculine activities as a cue of same-sex identity for female actors. Again, this possibility presents an empirical question for future studies to answer.

Communication of suspicion. The current studies demonstrate how social environments influence identity suspicion, but they do not address how identity suspicion spreads throughout a community. A key aspect in my theory of identity suspicion is the way in which identity-stigmatizing social environments not only promote identity suspicion, but also exacerbate the perceived diagnosticity of socially coded behaviors and attributes. To test this component of my theory, I am in the process of designing a serial reproduction study in which participants communicate profile descriptions of actors to subsequent participants in the study, similar to the transmission of information in the childhood game of Telephone. The aim of this study is to examine how the social environment influences the transmission of information, and in particular, the resolution of attributional ambiguity regarding the actor's identity.

Schemas and inconsistency resolution. Vonk (1998) argued and demonstrated that when participants perceive inconsistencies in an actor's behavior, they engage in more elaborate processing to resolve the inconsistencies. Because of this effortful processing, "free recall of the behaviors is better than when only consistent behaviors are presented (e.g., Srull, 1981)" (p. 850). Vonk hypothesized and found that when observers activated a relevant schema to explain an actor's behavioral inconsistency, they did not engage in effortful processing and subsequently performed worse on a free recall task. These findings raise an interesting question where identity suspicion is concerned. Specifically, I have argued that identity suspicion incentives people to

closet both stigmatized concealable identities and the behaviors and attributes socially coded as markers of those identities. Given the shared cultural understanding in Western society of "the closet," it is possible that the closet represents a highly accessible schema that allows participants to quickly resolve the inconsistency of the actors' identity cues in my studies. Considering this possibility lends an alternate explanation to the pattern of results for LGB allyship and pro-LGB attitudes' moderation of environmental effects on identity suspicion. Specifically, if the homophobic environment activates the schema of the closet, this might circumvent effortful processing and the activation of bias. In the nonhomophobic environment, however, the schema of the closet is irrelevant, which might result in more effortful processing on the part of participants, thus resulting in the activation of personal bias in ratings of identity suspicion. This remains an intriguing avenue for future work on identity suspicion.

Identity Suspicion when Marked Identities Experience Positive Distinctiveness

Future work could explore an intriguing twist on my current approach to studying identity suspicion. Whereas in this work I study observers' perceptions of an actor's claim to possess an unmarked identity, future work could examine observers' perceptions of an actor's claim to a marked identity, as a function of environment. Attribution theory leads me to predict that observers would express little to no suspicion of such an identity claim in an environment that stigmatized the identity. In such an environment, the actor would not appear to have ulterior motives for claiming the stigmatized identity. However, if the actor were situated in a setting where the marked identity is not only tolerated, but potentially even celebrated for its difference from the unmarked identity, then observers might suspect the actor adopted the marked identity to enjoy the benefits of positive distinctiveness. The "lesbian-until-graduation" (LUG) and "4-year queer" stereotypes (Lewin, 2011; Marler, 2014) may be examples of such a scenario, at

least in the minds of general society, because these stereotypes express skepticism about the authenticity of young women's claims to have a lesbian or queer identity when the expression of that identity is situated in the context of a liberal-minded college or university setting where expressing a less mainstream identity may be positively valued.

Conclusion

Closets breed suspicion. In social environments that stigmatize a concealable identity, people with the identity are incentivized to closet it. This incentive, however, casts a suspicious shadow over everyone in the environment. No one's claim to the contrasting, non-stigmatized concealable identity can be fully trusted because the desire to escape stigmatization may motivate such claims. In such environments, social codes emerge in which inconspicuous behaviors and attributes take on cultural-specific hidden meaning as cues of the stigmatized identity. In such cases, not only are people with the stigmatized identity motivated to closet it, everyone is driven to closet those behaviors and/or attributes that may cause observers to become suspicious of their identity.

Across nine studies, I demonstrated that people look to the social environment to resolve inconsistencies in an actor's identity cues. When the social environment stigmatized a concealable identity, participants reported greater identity suspicion, both when an actor exhibited a behavior or attribute that cued the stigmatized identity and when he did not. This latter point is of particular importance, because even an actor with consistent identity cues was regarded with greater suspicion as to his 'true' identity when he was situated in an identity-stigmatizing environment. This finding speaks to the power of social environments in driving identity suspicion. More generally, this work highlights the costs of stigmatizing concealable

identities for not only the immediate targets of such stigma, but also for all those who exist in the social environment.

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Appendix A

Table 8

Measures in Viewing Order by Study

Studies								
1a	1b	1c	2a	2b	3	4a	4b	5
						O-E: SH	O-E: SH	
						PIS	PIS	
						MC	MC	
							O-E: PIS	
						DC		
O-E: Actor	O-E: Actor	O-E: Actor	O-E: Actor	O-E: Actor	O-E: Actor	O-E: Actor	O-E: Actor	O-E: Actor
Imp: Actor	Imp: Actor	Imp: Actor	Imp: Actor	Imp: Actor	Imp: Actor	Imp: Actor	Imp: Actor	Imp: Actor
IS	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS	IS
			Certainty	Certainty	Certainty	Certainty	Certainty	Certainty
			Agree: Actor	Agree: Actor			Agree: Actor	
			O-E: IS	O-E: IS	O-E: IS	O-E: IS	O-E: IS	O-E: IS
								PIS
								MC
								O-E: PIS
IS: In 5 Years	IS: In 5 Years	IS: In 5 Years	IS: In 5 Years	IS: In 5 Years	IS: In 5 Years	IS: In 5 Years		
		O-E: IS 5 Yrs						
Self-Image	Self-Image	Self-Image	Self-Image	Self-Image	Self-Image	Self-Image		
O-E: SH	O-E: SH	O-E: SH	O-E: SH	O-E: SH	O-E: SH			O-E: MS
SE: PC	SE: PC	SE: PC	SE: PC	SE: PC	SE: PC	SE: PC	SE: PC	K: PC
SN	SN	SN						
Friends' Atts	Friends' Atts	Friends' Atts	Friends' Atts	Friends' Atts	Friends' Atts	Friends' Atts	Friends' Atts	Friends' Atts
AttnCheck	AttnCheck	AttnCheck	AttnCheck	AttnCheck	AttnCheck	AttnCheck	AttnCheck	AttnCheck
Engagement	Engagement							

O-E: Purpose	O-E: Purpose	O-E: Purpose	O-E: Purpose	O-E: Purpose				
Suspicious	Suspicious	Suspicious	Suspicious	Suspicious	Suspicious	Suspicious	Suspicious	Suspicious
O-E: WS	O-E: WS	O-E: WS	O-E: WS	O-E: WS	O-E: WS	O-E: WS	O-E: WS	O-E: WS
		Use Data						
		O-E: WN						
AnonFeed	AnonFeed	AnonFeed	AnonFeed	AnonFeed	AnonFeed	AnonFeed	AnonFeed	AnonFeed
Demographics	Demographics	Demographics	Demographics	Demographics	Demographics	Demographics	Demographics	Demographics
Re-Consent	Re-Consent	Re-Consent	Re-Consent	Re-Consent	Re-Consent	Re-Consent	Re-Consent	Re-Consent

Note. O-E: SH = open-ended: thoughts on Standard High after reading the social environment description; PIS = peer identity suspicion; MC = motivation to conceal; O-E: PIS = open-ended: explain peer identity suspicion ratings; DC = downstream costs; O-E: Actor = thoughts on the actor after reading his profile; Imp: Actor = 6-item composite: impressions of actor; IS = identity suspicion; Agree: Actor = agreement with Steve; O-E: IS = open-ended: explain identity suspicion rating; IS: In 5 Years = identity suspicion rating if Steve were re-interviewed in 5 years' time; O-E: IS 5 Yrs = open-ended: explain IS: In 5 Years rating; SE: PC = social environment: potential confounds (believability, own high school similarity; U.S. high school similarity; friends' LGB allyship); K: PC = knowledge: potential confounds (medieval Spain, Spanish Inquisition; la convivencia; Jewish culture; Christian culture); SN = social networks; Friends' Atts = closest friends' attitudes toward LGB folks (Studies 1a-4b), Jewish people (Study 5), and Christians (Study 5); AttnCheck = attention check questions; Engagement = engagement check; O-E: Purpose = open-ended: perceived study purpose; Suspicious = was the participant suspicious of any aspect of the study; O-E: WS = open-ended: why suspicious (if "Yes" to Suspicious); Use Data = yes/no response to question if Ishould use the participant's data; O-E: WN = open-ended: explanation of why Ishould not use the participant's data (if "No" to Use Data); AnonFeed = anonymous feedback; Re-Consent = participants provided consent for me to use their data after being debriefed about my use of deception in these studies.

Appendix B

Because my data were non-normally distributed, and though ANOVA is robust to violations of non-normality (Howell, 2013), I followed up my parametric analyses with non-parametric analyses using the independent samples median test to increase my confidence in the parametric results. As seen in Table 9, the nonparametric results supported the parametric ones. In addition to the environment results, identity suspicion in Sample 3 did not differ as a function of gender cue in Steve's profile, $\chi^2(1) = 3.53$, $p = .060$.

Table 9

Non-Parametric Independent Samples Median Test Results Examining Effect of Social Environments on Identity Suspicion

				Identity-Nonstigmatizing[a]		Identity-Stigmatizing[b]		Control	
Sample	χ^2	*df*	*p*	*Mdn*	$Q_1 - Q_3$	*Mdn*	$Q_1 - Q_3$	*Mdn*	$Q_1 - Q_3$
1a	10.08	1	.002	29.00	4.00 – 50.00	50.00	23.00 – 60.00		
1b	1.74	1	.187	29.00	10.00 – 50.00	38.00	16.25 – 58.25		
1c	10.59	2	.005	23.50	10.00 – 50.00	40.00	15.25 – 50.00	25.00	8.00 – 50.00
2a	7.79	2	.020	17.00	5.00 – 48.00	33.50	9.25 – 50.00	20.00	8.00 – 50.00
2b	6.18	2	.045	17.00	8.00 – 37.00	29.00	9.00 – 50.00	20.00	9.00 – 49.75
3	35.11	1	<.001	10.00	1.00 – 22.00	30.00	10.00 – 50.00		
4a	14.01	1	<.001	21.00	7.00 – 49.00	40.00	15.00 – 50.00		
4b	12.41	1	<.001	30.00	10.00 – 50.00	45.00	19.00 – 50.00		
5	39.50	1	<.001	28.50	10.00 – 47.25	50.00	20.75 – 75.00		

Note. Study 3 tests only the main effect of social environment. $Q_1 - Q_3$ = interquartile range.
[a]Samples 1a-4b = nonhomophobic environment; Sample 5 = Jewish tolerance.
[b]Samples 1a-4b = homophobic environment; Sample 5 = Jewish persecution.

Appendix C

As reported in the main text, I measured several alternate identities in addition to being straight (Studies 1a-4b) or Christian (Study 5). Below, I present the results of these for these variables by study (see Table 10). It it important to note I made no a priori hypotheses about these results. On an exploratory basis, however, I note that the results for the perceived likelihood of Steve being gay (Studies 1a-1c) and bi or gay (Studies 3-4b), and for Josephus being Jewish (Study 5) closely match my identity suspicion results. Indeed, identity suspicion correlated strongly with ratings of the likelihood Steve was gay ($.72 < r < .84$), bi or gay ($.78 < r < .84$), and with Josephus being Jewish ($r = .76$). Taken together with the lack of environment effects on ratings of the likelihood Steve was bisexual (see Table 10) and the descriptively weaker correlations between bisexual ratings and identity suspicion ($.36 < r < .65$), the results support my application of Brekhus' (1996) notion of social marking. As described in my introduction, marking an identity automatically and passively creates a contrasting unmarked identity. In this way, social marking binarizes identity such that, for example, people tend to think of sexuality in terms of being gay or straight, while disregarding the various alternate sexualities that exist. These results imply that, while identity suspicion is still best measured using an actor's claimed and unmarked identity (straight and Christian in my studies), it can also be measured using the contrasting marked identity.

Table 10

Identity Suspicion Ratings for Alternate Identities in Studies 1a-5.

				Omnibus Results				NH vs. H			NH vs. CTRL		
						90% CI			95% CI			95% CI	
#S	Identity	Cond	*M* (*SD*)	*F*	η_{p2}	LL	UL	*d*	LL	UL	*d*	LL	UL
1a	Bisexual	NH	41.20 (27.51)	< 1									
		H	41.28 (24.56)										
1b	Bisexual	NH	50.17 (33.36)	1.30	.01	.00	.04						
		H	55.13 (29.51)										

1c	Bisexual	NH	36.60 (26.29)	1.30	.01	.00	.03	0.18	–0.09	0.46	0.01	–0.26	0.29
		H	41.47 (25.74)										
		CTRL	36.95 (25.24)										
1a	Gay	NH	36.99 (29.27)	6.16*	.03	.003	.08						
		H	47.49 (30.66)										
1b	Gay	NH	28.12 (24.97)	10.42**	.05	.01	.10						
		H	40.34 (29.51)										
1c	Gay	NH	34.77 (28.08)	3.05*	.02	.0001	.05	0.27	–0.01	0.54	0.07	–0.20	0.35
		H	42.15 (27.15)										
		CTRL	32.80 (26.80)										
2a	Bi|Gay	NH	34.84 (30.58)	2.45	.01	.00	.03	0.27*	0.03	0.51	0.08	–0.16	0.32
		H	42.82 (28.74)										
		CTRL	37.27 (31.52)										
2b	Bi|Gay	NH	35.25 (27.61)	< 1				0.18	–0.11	0.47	0.07	–0.21	0.35
		H	40.52 (29.91)										
		CTRL	37.31 (29.65)										
3	Bi|Gay	NH	23.26 (25.58)	35.70***	.08	.04	.13						
		H	38.07 (26.06)										
		GC	25.85 (24.48)	15.20***	.04	.01	.07						
		GNC	35.35 (28.24)										
		INT	—	3.89*	.01	.00001	.03						
4a[31]	Bi|Gay	NH	34.82 (27.39)	23.96***	.05	.02	.08						
		H	47.06 (26.44)										
4b	Bi|Gay	NH	38.86 (27.87)	11.65***	.02	.01	.05						
		H	46.99 (26.92)										
5	Jewish	JT	45.38 (26.55)	34.18***	.09	.05	.14						
		JP	62.80 (28.53)										

Note. NH = nonhomophobic social environment; H = homophobic social environment; CTRL = control social environment; #S = Study number; Cond = condition; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; GC = gender-conforming profile; GNC = gender-nonconforming profile; INT = Social Environment × Men's Gender Cue interaction; JT = Jewish tolerance environment; JP = Jewish persecution environment.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

[31] Correcting for a Levene's violation, $F(1, 463) = 4.61$, $p = .032$, produced converging results, Welch's $F(1, 407.7) = 33.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta_{p2} = .08$ [.04, .12].

Appendix D

Following Curran and Hussong (2009), I created two variables to account for random between-study heterogeneity due to differences in study design. I conducted separate multi-level models regressing identity suspicion on social environment, each potential moderator, and their interaction, nested within studies so as to allow for study-level error variance (consistent with Costafreda, 2009).

Though most studies in my dissertation are presented in the order they were run, Study 3 was conducted after Study 4b, and Study 4a after Study 4b. Curran and Hussong (2009) recommend testing for history effects, so I created a variable in which I coded my nine studies in the order they were conducted. Neither this variable's main effect, $b = –1.15$ [–2.68, 0.38], $t(6.3) = 1.82$, $p = .116$, nor its interaction with social environment were significant, $b = 0.25$ [–0.18, 0.69], $t(2458.0) = 1.14$, $p = .255$.

Across Studies 1a-3 and 4b, my description of Standard High as a nonhomophobic or homophobic environment included a statement about the ease or difficulty, respectively, of coming out as gay. In Study 4a, I removed this statement to test whether my identity suspicion results depended on its inclusion. Accordingly, I created a dichotomous variable contrasting studies with these coming out statements (–1) against Study 4a without them (+1). Neither this variable's main effect, $t(5.7) < 1$, *ns*, nor its interaction with social environment were significant, $t(2457.2) < 1$, *ns*.

Given these results, I conducted my mega-analytic tests of moderation without any controls for random between-study variance.