

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LOW STATUS GROUPS START MOVING UP?
PREJUDICE AND THREAT TO GROUP POSITION

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Abstract

Does threat operate as a *cause* or a *consequence* of prejudice? Three studies looked at how members of high status groups respond to the advances of low status groups. Two studies tested the hypothesis that perceiving gays to be increasing in status is threatening to heterosexuals' privileged group position and leads to anti-gay prejudice, particularly among those high in social dominance orientation (SDO). In Study 1, perception of gays' status was manipulated and participants were given coins to donate to beneficiaries that support, oppose or were unrelated to gay rights. SDO was correlated with more anti-gay donations *except* when gays were likely to remain low in status. In Studies 2A and 2B, SDO was correlated with the perception that gays are increasing in status. Study 3 tested the hypothesis that prejudice causes heightened perceptions of threat by conditioning negative and positive affect toward immigrant groups and measuring perceptions of threat posed by economic or political gains. Relative to economic gains, political gains were more threatening to native-born Americans' status, and groups advancing in politics were seen as less warm.

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What Happens When Low Status Groups Start Moving Up? Prejudice and Threat to Group Position

Does threat create new prejudices or merely rationalize old ones? In this paper I consider two possible models for conceptualizing the relationship of threat to prejudice—the *antecedent model* (threat causes prejudice) and the *consequent model* (prejudice causes threat). My research focuses on prejudice and threat to group position; in other words, my work considers perceived threat to the political and economic power of high status groups as low status groups make status gains. My conception of threat is similar to realistic threat as defined by realistic group conflict theory (RGCT; Sherif, 1961) and integrated threat theory (ITT; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). RGCT defines threat as competition over scarce resources, such as territory, wealth or natural resources. ITT adopts a broader conception of realistic threat, encompassing any threat to the welfare of the ingroup (e.g., political and economic power, and material or physical well-being). Whereas in RGCT the danger posed to the ingroup is “real” – one group’s gain necessarily implies another group’s loss, my research focuses on the subjective experience of threat in cases where the danger posed to the ingroup may be imagined.

Perceived threat to group position is the driving force of the antecedent model. Threat elicits a defensive response (i.e., prejudice) from the group facing potential harm, directed toward the group posing the threat. While the definition of prejudice is relatively straightforward— negative affect directed toward a social group or its members, there are many different ways in which prejudice may be expressed (e.g.,

negative beliefs, endorsement of stereotypes, interpersonal and institutional discrimination). The underlying assumption of the antecedent model is that threat creates “new” prejudices; stated another way, the model suggests that negative feelings toward Group X would not exist if the group was not perceived to pose a threat to the group position of one’s own group.

By contrast, “pre-existing” prejudice (representing negative feelings toward a group which are formed prior to the experience of threat) is the driving force of the consequent model. When threat is perceived after the establishment of negative affect but not before, threat may serve as a rationalization of prejudice, but cannot be responsible for its creation. While a number of different factors may contribute to the formation of prejudice, including socialization by parents and peers, media exposure, and sociocultural environment (among others), the consequent model suggests that prejudice can develop in the absence of “real” threat.

Because threat is often subjectively (and *not* objectively) experienced, the perception of threat is flexible. Threat can be enhanced or diminished by the perceiver in order to fit the needs of the situation. Perception of threat is thus a *motivated process*, shaped by many different mediating factors. For example, the need to justify negative feelings or stereotyped beliefs about a disliked social group may motivate heightened (or exaggerated) perceptions of threat. According to the justification-suppression model of prejudice (JSM; Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), perceiving a group as threatening serves as justification for pre-existing negative feelings toward

the group. Here threat is conceptualized as a consequent—rather than an antecedent—event in relation to the experience of negative affect.

Social dominance (SDT; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and social identity (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) theories suggest that group-based status hierarchies are maintained by high status group members acting to defend their group position. High status groups reaffirm the legitimacy of their group's privileged position by derogating outgroup members (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999). I predict heterosexuals will similarly respond to threats from gays' advances to their privileged position with anti-gay prejudice. If low status groups' status gains are perceived to pose a threat to the privileged group position of high status groups, prejudice may be seen as a legitimate response. Here threat operates as a cause of prejudice, because prejudiced responses are provoked by the introduction of threat.

When low status groups make advances, it often does *not* mean loss of status for high status groups. Although intergroup relations do not always operate in zero-sum terms, some individuals are more likely than others to view low status groups' gains as necessarily implicating high status groups' losses. One of the basic assumptions of SDT (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) is that social dominance orientation (SDO), or the extent to which an individual generally endorses a system of group-based inequality or not, is directly related to status differences between salient groups. Individuals who are high in SDO are more sensitive to status changes, and more likely to perceive any status change as threatening, than individuals who are less concerned about clear status distinctions between groups. Threat may be an important

moderator of the relationship between SDO and prejudice. Individuals who are high in SDO may express prejudice when low status groups start moving up because they are committed to holding a particular rank in the status hierarchy among social groups. Consequently I predict that high-SDO individuals will express more prejudice when perceived threat to group position is high than low-SDO individuals. When perceived threat to group position is low, however, SDO will be unrelated to prejudice.

The antecedent model of threat is consistent with integrated threat theory (ITT; Stephan & Stephan, 2000) in suggesting that threat causes prejudice. Many experimental studies have manipulated threat and found support for the basic causal assumption of ITT—threat causes prejudice (e.g., Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Esses, Jackson & Armstrong, 1998; Sherif, 1961; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan & Martin, 2001). The evidence does not, however, rule out the possibility that the opposite causal pathway—prejudice causes perceptions of threat (the consequent model)—also exists. Stephan and Renfro (2002) suggest that the model may be circular rather than unidirectional. A circular model predicts that threat causes prejudice, and prejudice then affects the antecedents of threat (e.g., the nature of intergroup contact), and the cycle repeats itself. For the purposes of this paper, the circular model is not considered to be distinct from the antecedent model; both share the primary assumption that threat initially precedes prejudice.

Previous research on threat to group position and perceptions of group status (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999; Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Branscombe et al., 1999;

Eibach & Keegan, 2006; Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Jackson & Esses, 2000; Levin, 2004; Levin, Federico, Sidanius, & Rabinowitz, 2002; Nierman, Thompson, Bryan, & Mahaffey, 2006; Pratto & Shih, 2000; Scheepers & Ellemers, 2005; Sniderman & Brady, 1999) demonstrates that members of high status groups are motivated to defend their group position, particularly among those high in SDO and in situations where the legitimacy of their group's status is called into question. This defensive response may take the form of prejudiced beliefs and legitimizing ideologies, interpersonal and institutional discrimination, and the disproportionate allocation of resources, all serving to maintain and re-create group-based status hierarchies.

Three studies investigated the relationship of threat to prejudice by measuring how members of high status groups respond to the advances of low status groups. Two studies tested the antecedent model by evaluating the hypothesis that perceiving gays to be increasing in status is threatening to heterosexuals' privileged group position and leads to anti-gay prejudice and discrimination, particularly among those high in SDO. A third study tested the consequent model by evaluating the hypothesis that pre-existing prejudice toward immigrant groups creates heightened perceptions of threat posed by disliked groups' status gains.

Study 1

In Study 1, I manipulated threat by presenting information about gays' status and measured donations to anti-gay, pro-gay, and neutral causes. To the extent that status relations are viewed in zero-sum terms (i.e., gains in rights and influence for

gays necessarily imply a loss of privilege for heterosexuals), heterosexual identity is threatened by advances in gay rights. This threat can be classified as threat to group position (Blumer, 1958). According to Branscombe et al. (1999), highly identified heterosexuals are likely to respond to this type of social identity threat with outgroup derogation. Previous studies have shown that perception of group threat leads to reduced support for the empowerment of low status groups, particularly for individuals who are high in social dominance orientation (SDO) and when resources are believed to be zero-sum (Eibach & Keegan, 2006; Jackson & Esses, 2000; Pratto et al., 2006).

In Study 1, I conceptualized anti-gay discrimination as resources allocated to institutions that enhance rather than attenuate status inequalities between heterosexuals and gays. “Pro-gay” organizations like the Human Rights Coalition¹ are more hierarchy attenuating in that they allocate resources for the benefit of low status groups. On the other hand, “anti-gay” organizations like the Traditional Values Association and Family First are more hierarchy enhancing because they allocate resources in ways that create and maintain heterosexuals’ privileged group position (Sidanius et al., 2004).

In order to test the main hypothesis that threat causes prejudice, participants were given coins and invited to distribute the coins among six donation jars for beneficiaries that support, oppose, or were unrelated to gay rights. I predicted that donations would be more anti-gay when gays are perceived to be moving up in status

than when gays are perceived to remain low in status, because gays' status gains constitute a threat to heterosexuals' group position.

Effects of the status manipulation were predicted to be especially pronounced among high-SDO and high-traditional values heterosexuals. Individuals who are high in SDO tend to endorse a system of social hierarchy in which there is clear ordering of groups based on social status. High-SDO individuals derive positive group identity from being able to see their group as superior to other groups. When low status groups start moving up, the distinction between high and low status groups is blurred. Consequently, I predicted that high-SDO heterosexuals would donate *more* money to anti-gay causes when gays are gaining status as a way to "push them back down." When gays are remaining low in status, I predicted that high-SDO heterosexuals would donate *less* money to anti-gay causes because gays pose little threat to group position.

Individuals who hold traditional values are opposed to the advancement of gay rights because of deeply held personal beliefs. When gays are making status gains, people with highly traditional values are reminded of the fact that not everyone agrees with their anti-gay beliefs. Hearing about the success of the gay rights movement may suggest that people with highly traditional values are in the minority. On the other hand, hearing that gays are widely discriminated against may suggest that those who hold anti-gay beliefs are in the majority. Thus, I predicted that heterosexuals with highly traditional values would donate more money to anti-gay

causes when gays are gaining status in order to re-assert the legitimacy of their anti-gay beliefs.

Method

Participants

Participants were 76 undergraduate (51 women and 25 men) General Psychology students at the University of Kansas ranging in age from 18-37 years (median = 19), who received credit for participation. An adapted version of the Kinsey scale (Kinsey, 1948) measured sexual orientation, with zero indicating no attraction to members of the same sex and six indicating no attraction to members of the opposite sex. The majority of participants (96%) indicated that they were primarily heterosexual (a response of zero, one or two).

Materials

Status of Gays. Perceived status of gay people was manipulated in three ways (see Appendix A). In the Gain status condition, participants read, “Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals are making huge advances in gaining political leverage and are quickly becoming successful and respected members of American society.” In the Low status condition, participants read, “Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals have very limited political leverage and are experiencing considerable difficulty in becoming successful and respected members of American society.” In the Control condition, participants read information about the Human Rights Coalition’s mission of “establishing a network of communication

which allows GLBT individuals to stay connected to one another and provides a forum for discussing community affairs,” that was unrelated to group status.

Attitude measures. Social dominance orientation (SDO) was measured using the 14-item version of Pratto et al.'s (1994) SDO scale ($\alpha = .86$). All items were measured on a 1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive) scale (see Appendix B). Higher scores indicate higher levels of SDO. Traditional values were measured using a 7-item scale adapted from Fischer's (1982) traditionalism scale designed to measure opinions of social issues ($\alpha = .77$). All items were measured on a 1 to 7 scale, with higher numbers indicating more traditional values (see Appendix C).

Donations. Each participant was given a container of fifteen dimes and fifteen pennies. Participants distributed the coins among six donation jars, each labeled to indicate the beneficiary. Two of the jars were for “anti-gay” organizations, the Traditional Values Association (TVA) and Family First (FF). One jar was for the Human Rights Coalition (HRC), a “pro-gay” organization. Three jars were for “neutral” organizations, including the Cancer Awareness Society, the Universal Children's Fund, and the Emergency Relief Association. The dependent variable, “anti-gay money,” compares “anti-gay” donations to “pro-gay” donations. “Anti-gay money” was calculated as the weighted mean proportion of “anti-gay” donations (TVA + FF) and all donations that were *not* “pro-gay” (1-HRC). To correct for the imposed limits of proportional data, all proportions were arcsine transformed prior to analysis.

Procedure

Participants were told, “The purpose of this experiment is to study altruistic behavior. You will be given the opportunity to make a real donation to a variety of different nonprofit organizations with coins that we will provide you. You will first have a chance to learn about each of these organizations in order to decide to which organizations you wish to donate. Here’s a list of the six organizations in the study along with a brief mission statement for each” (see Table 1). Participants were then told, “Now you will have a chance to read some materials published by these organizations. Please take a slip of paper to see which packet of materials you will read.” The slip of paper was marked either “Packet A,” “Packet B,” or “Packet C.” In this way, participants were randomly assigned to status condition (A=Control, B=Gain, C=Low). All participants first read a one page report ostensibly published by the Cancer Awareness Society, followed by a one page report from the Human Rights Coalition that varied by status condition.

In the Gain status condition, participants read an article that emphasized the progress toward equality that is being made in the areas of religion, politics, job benefits, marriage rights, media representation, and education. The Gain article concluded,

“Our society is making considerable progress toward fairness and inclusion in many respects, and achieving equality for GLBT Americans is well within reach. The HRC will continue to work for the advancement of GLBT individuals so that they may become *even more* successful and gain *even more* influence in American society.”

In the Low status condition, participants read an article that emphasized the current low status of GLBT individuals and the difficulty they are experiencing in achieving equality in the areas of religion, politics, job benefits, marriage rights, media representation, and education. The Low article concluded,

“Our society is making progress toward fairness and inclusion in many respects, but achieving equality for GLBT Americans remains a formidable struggle. The HRC is committed to working for the advancement of GLBT individuals so that they may become successful and equal members of American society.”

In the Control condition, participants read information about the Human Rights Coalition’s mission of “establishing a network of communication which allows GLBT individuals to stay connected to one another and provides a forum for discussing community affairs,” that was unrelated to group status. The article contained information about public services offered and community events sponsored by the HRC.

A multiple-choice item at the end of each article served as a manipulation check. The first item read, “According to the report, the Cancer Awareness Society funds research related to the prevention and treatment of cancer: (a) true, (b) false.” The correct answer is “true.” For the Control condition, the second item read, “According to the report, the HRC distributes information about public services and community events related to GLBT issues: (a) true, (b) false.” The correct answer is “true.” For the Gain and Low status conditions, the second item read, “I would say from reading the report that gay people in our society are: (a) widely discriminated against with little legal protection, (b) interested in health care and social security, (c)

making huge advances in gaining rights and influence.” The correct answer is “c” for the Gain condition and “a” for the Low status condition.

In the donation phase of the experiment, participants were given a plastic container with coins and told, “Now you will be given a chance to make a real donation to each of the six organizations you read about. While the amount of money you are donating individually is small, we will be running many participants in this study, so the joint impact will be large. Keep in mind that you will be making your donations anonymously and in private. You can choose to donate all the coins to one organization, or divide them up as you see fit. Make sure that you donate ALL of the money.” Participants made their donations individually and not while under scrutiny, except for a few students who gave written permission to be filmed during this stage of the experiment. The video footage was used for presentation purposes only. Each participant’s batch of coins included fifteen dimes and fifteen pennies in a small container. The coins given to the participant all shared the same date, which allowed us to surreptitiously track the amount they chose to donate to each organization without removing coins. After making their donations, participants were debriefed.

Results

Manipulation checks

Table 2 reports the number of participants that failed each manipulation check by condition. The first manipulation check indicates that participants read and understood the first article. The second manipulation check indicates that the manipulation of gays’ status was successful; participants in the Gain condition

understood gays to be gaining rights, participants in the Low condition understood gays to be low in status, and participants in the Control condition were not provided any information explicitly pertaining to the status of gays.

Analysis of Donations

Table 3 reports mean donations made to each organization by condition. Across all conditions, participants donated 74% of their money to neutral organizations, 13% to anti-gay groups, and 13% to “pro-gay” groups. Two cases were deemed extreme outliers due to large studentized deleted residual values and removed from subsequent analyses. Data for the six participants who failed to answer the status manipulation check correctly were also excluded. SDO values were square-root-transformed to make this variable conform to the normal distribution.

Donations were analyzed using a general linear model (GLM) analysis with status condition (Gain, Low, and Control), SDO and traditional values as between-subjects variables. Anti-gay donations (weighted proportion of “anti-gay” money and “all but pro-gay” money) was the dependent variable. There was a main effect of status condition, $F(2, 60) = 4.64, p < .05$. A simple planned contrast indicated that donations in the Low status condition were *less* anti-gay than in the Control condition, and donations in the Gain status condition were *more* anti-gay than in Control condition (see Table 4).

There were also main effects of SDO and traditional values, $F(1, 60) = 4.56, p < .05$, and $F(1, 60) = 3.90, p = .05$, respectively. Across all conditions, people high in SDO donated a higher proportion of money to anti-gay causes than people low in

SDO. Similarly, across all conditions, people high in traditional values donated a higher proportion of money to anti-gay causes than people low in traditional values.

Finally, there was a significant interaction of status condition and SDO, $F(2, 60) = 4.43, p < .05$ (see Figure 1). Correlations are reported in Table 5. Tests of the simple slopes showed that for the Control and Gain status conditions, people high in SDO donated more to anti-gay causes than people low in SDO, $t(62) = 3.64, p < .001$ and $t(62) = 1.67, p < .10$, respectively. For the Low status condition, however, the difference in anti-gay donations between people high in SDO and people low in SDO was not significant, $t(62) = -0.03, p = .98$. There were no other significant interactions.

Discussion

More donations were made to anti-gay causes when gays were perceived to be moving up in status than when they were perceived to be remaining low in status. This is consistent with the SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) prediction that heterosexuals are motivated to defend their privileged group position when it is threatened. High-SDO heterosexuals were especially sensitive to group position manipulations. Overall, SDO was correlated with more donations to anti-gay causes. In the Low status condition, however, SDO was unrelated to anti-gay donations. Because the Low status condition article emphasized that gays are widely discriminated against, threat to group position was low. By reducing threat, the Low status manipulation also reduced the motivation for high-SDO heterosexuals to discriminate against gays.

An alternative interpretation is that SDO is more about being sensitive to need than about defending privileged group position. Perhaps high-SDO individuals donated more money to anti-gay groups than low-SDO individuals in the Gain status condition because they believed the gay rights group did not need the money; gays were already doing well. If this were the case, we would also expect high-SDO individuals to donate less money to anti-gay groups than low-SDO individuals in the Low status condition when gay rights causes were *not* doing well. The data do not support this explanation, however, because SDO was unrelated to anti-gay donations in the Low status condition. When gays were perceived to be highly discriminated against and gay rights causes were in great need, people high in SDO were no more likely than people low in SDO to decrease donations to anti-gay groups.

The data suggest that the relationship between SDO and anti-gay donations varies according to the perceived status of gays. SDO does *not* appear to be a characteristic that motivates certain individuals to be anti-gay in all situations. Instead, SDO is best considered as an ideological component that causes some individuals to be especially sensitive to changes in status relations among social groups. In other words, individuals who are high in SDO derogate outgroups and endorse a hierarchy enhancing ideology more than those who are low in SDO when perceived threat to group position is high. The relationship between SDO and prejudice is reduced, however, when perceived threat to group position is low. This interpretation is consistent with previous findings that SDO is negatively related to

support for the empowerment of immigrants, a relationship that is mediated by zero-sum beliefs (Esses et al., 1998; Jackson & Esses, 2000).

SDO interacted with status condition, but traditional values did not. This suggests that SDO is related to prejudice because gains in status for gays are threatening to heterosexuals' group position. By contrast, individuals who hold traditional values were equally likely donate to anti-gay causes regardless of status condition. These individuals were opposed to gay rights whether gays were making progress or not. Individuals who scored high in SDO, however, were sensitive to the status manipulation. These individuals were anti-gay when gays posed a threat to their group position (i.e., when gays were making progress), but less so when gays posed little threat (i.e., when gays were remaining low in status).

Interestingly, high-SDO participants were just as anti-gay in the Control condition as in the Gain status condition. It seems that high-SDO heterosexuals were perceiving threat posed by gays even in the absence of status information. Do high-SDO members of high status groups constantly perceive threat to their privileged group position? For these individuals, are low status groups assumed to pose a threat, unless there is information available to suggest they do not? Studies 2A and 2B addressed these questions by investigating the relationship between SDO and perception of gays' status when no objective status information is available. Study 2A tested the hypothesis that SDO is correlated with perceiving gays to be increasing in status. Study 2B tested the hypothesis that anti-gay prejudice is correlated with perceiving a larger status gap between heterosexuals and gay men and lesbians.

Study 2A

Is SDO related to chronically perceiving that gays pose a threat to heterosexuals' group position? Previous research suggests that high status groups perceive more progress toward equality than low status groups, particularly for high-SDO individuals and when progress is framed as high status group loss rather than as low status group gain (Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2006; Eibach & Keegan, 2006; Sniderman & Brady, 1999). The main prediction of Study 2A was that high-SDO heterosexuals would perceive gays to be gaining status relative to low-SDO heterosexuals in the absence of explicit information regarding gays' status.

Method

Participants

Participants were 46 undergraduates (23 men, 23 women) at the University of Kansas who were members of the General Psychology Subject Pool. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 22 years.

Materials

Status of Gays. Perception of the status of gay men and lesbians was measured using a 7-item scale² ($\alpha = .85$) adapted from the original right-wing authoritarianism scale (Altemeyer, 1981; see Appendix D). Participants were asked to respond to each item on a 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly) scale. An example item is "Liberals and gay rights advocates are taking over this country." Higher scores indicate the perception that gays are gaining status.

SDO. Social dominance orientation (SDO) was measured using the same 14-item version of Pratto et al.'s SDO scale as used in Study 1 (Pratto et al., 1994; $\alpha = .70$).

Procedure

Participation in Study 2A occurred entirely through the KU Psychology online research system. Informed consent was solicited at the beginning of the study. The order of questionnaires was counterbalanced so that half of participants completed the SDO scale first and half of participants completed the perceptions of gays' status scale first. After completing both questionnaires, participants were automatically redirected to a debriefing page that included information about the purpose and goals of the study as well as contact information for the researcher.

Results

A positive relationship between SDO and perception of status was predicted such that high-SDO individuals are more likely to perceive the status of gay men and lesbians to be increasing than low-SDO individuals. SDO and status were positively correlated, $r(46) = .31, p < .05$, supporting the hypothesis. There was no effect of order on SDO or status.

Study 2B

In Study 2B, I predicted that high-prejudice and high-SDO individuals would perceive the status of gays to be increasing (i.e., perceive more threat) relative to low-prejudice and low-SDO individuals. Study 2B extended the results of Study 2A by adding prejudice to the analysis. Further, Study 2B replicated the relationship

between SDO and perception of gays' status found in Study 2A with a different measure of perceived group status. Advantages of the new measure of perceived group status include the calculation of a difference score to estimate the perceived status gap in reference to a specific high status group (heterosexuals), and the assessment of the perceived status for multiple low status groups (gay men and lesbians).

Method

Participants

Participants were 32 undergraduates (18 men, 14 women) at the University of Kansas who were members of the General Psychology Subject Pool. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 26 years. All but two participants were U.S. citizens, and the majority (87.5%) identified themselves as primarily heterosexual on an adapted version of the Kinsey scale (same as in Study 1).

Materials

Status of Gays. Perceived status of gays was measured in two ways. First, it was measured using the same 7-item status scale as used in Study 2A ($\alpha = .82$). Second, the perceived status of heterosexuals, gay men, and lesbians was measured using scales ranging from 1 (low status) to 7 (high status). Participants made two status ratings for each group: (1) "as most people see them," and (2) "as *you* see them." Perceived status gaps were calculated as the difference between the perceived status of heterosexuals and the perceived status of gay men, and between the perceived status of heterosexuals and the perceived status of lesbians. Two difference

scores were found: (1) the status gap perceived by most people, and (2) the status gap perceived by participants themselves.

SDO. Social dominance orientation (SDO) was measured using the same 14-item version of Pratto et al.'s SDO scale used in Studies 1 and 2A (Pratto et al., 1994; $\alpha = .85$).

Prejudice. Prejudice was measured using the original 20-item version of the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gays (ATLG) scale (Herek, 1994; $\alpha = .91$). This scale is made up of two 10-item subscales: Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL; $\alpha = .80$) and Attitudes Toward Gay Men (ATG; $\alpha = .88$).

Procedure

Study 2B was administered as part of an in-class exercise for which participants received course credit. Half of the participants completed the status scale first, and half completed the SDO and prejudice scales first (SDO always preceded the ATLG). At the end of the study, participants were debriefed and results were discussed in class at a later date.

Results

I predicted positive relationships between SDO and perceived status, and between prejudice and perceived status, such that high-SDO and high-prejudice individuals would be more likely to perceive the status of gay men and lesbians to be increasing relative to low-SDO and low-prejudice individuals. SDO and the perceived status scale were positively correlated, suggesting that high-SDO individuals were more likely to perceive that gays are moving up; correlations are reported in Table 6.

ATLG scores and the perceived status scale were also positively correlated; high-prejudice individuals were more likely to perceive that gay men and lesbians are gaining rights and influence. Combined results for Studies 2A and 2B show a reliable correlation between SDO and the perceived status scale, $r(78) = .37, p < .01$. SDO was also positively correlated with anti-gay prejudice.

I also predicted that SDO and prejudice would be related to smaller perceived status gaps between heterosexuals and gay men, and between heterosexuals and lesbians. Contrary to this prediction, SDO was correlated with larger personal judgments of the status gaps between heterosexuals and gay men, and between heterosexuals and lesbians. ATLG scores were also positively correlated with larger personal judgments of the status gaps. People high in SDO and high in anti-gay prejudice reported larger status gaps between heterosexuals and gay men, and between heterosexuals and lesbians, when reporting their own personal judgment. When reporting what most people think, however, SDO and prejudice were not related to the perceived status gaps between heterosexuals and gay men and lesbians.

Discussion

Studies 2A and 2B support the hypothesis that perceiving the status of gays to be increasing is correlated with SDO and anti-gay prejudice. Individuals who are high in SDO and high in anti-gay prejudice were more likely to perceive that gays are gaining rights and influence than low-SDO and low-prejudice individuals. I predicted that perceiving gays to be increasing in status would suggest a narrowing of status relations between heterosexuals and gays because gays' status gains represent a threat

to heterosexuals' group position. To the contrary, SDO and prejudice were correlated with perceiving *larger* status gaps between heterosexuals and gay men, and between heterosexuals and lesbians.

Perhaps personal ratings of the relative status of gay men and lesbians compared to heterosexuals are really measuring what participants think the relative status of these groups *should* be. When rating what most people think, the correlations of SDO and prejudice with status gaps were not significant. Perceptions of what most people think about the relative status of gay men, lesbians, and heterosexuals may reflect normative ideas about social equality (i.e., that all groups should be equal). By contrast, personal judgments of the relative status of gay men and lesbians are more likely to reflect personal beliefs about the acceptability of social inequality (SDO).

People who are high in SDO prefer larger status gaps between high and low status groups because a narrowing of status relations is threatening to the higher status group's position. SDO is correlated with perceiving gays and lesbians to be gaining rights and influence. If gays are being granted rights, social norms must dictate enhanced tolerance of gays, suggesting that "most people" prefer smaller status gaps. It seems that for high-SDO and high-prejudice individuals, perceptions of gays' status gains are at odds with personal beliefs about the relative status positioning of heterosexuals and gays; these individuals perceive gays to be increasing in rights and influence but believe there should be clear status distinctions between heterosexuals and gays.

Study 1 suggested that high-SDO heterosexuals were perceiving threat to group position not only when told that gays are moving up, but even in the absence of status information. Results of Studies 2A and 2B support this conclusion; high-SDO members of high status groups perceive that low status groups pose a threat to their group position “by default,” unless there is information available to suggest they do not. The first section of this paper considers the *antecedent model* of threat , proposing that threat posed by gays’ status gains to heterosexuals’ to group position *causes* prejudice. The remainder of the paper will consider the *consequent model* of threat; here threat is conceptualized as a motivated response to immigrant groups’ status gains that serves as a justification for pre-existing prejudice.

Pre-test for Study 3

Some of the materials used in Study 3 were pre-tested using the same sample as Study 2B. The pre-test assessed participants’ prior knowledge and general feelings about various countries in order to select target groups to be used in Study 3, and established descriptions of status gains that are “objectively equivalent.”

Method

Participants

The same sample as used in Study 2B completed the pretest measures.

Materials

Importance of Status Gains. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which a series of 10 statements represent a gain in social status for a nonspecific social group (“Group X”) on a scale from 1 (not a significant gain) to 7 (very

significant gain). Five statements described advances in political power; five statements described advances in economic power (see Table 7).

Knowledge and Feelings about Countries. Participants were also asked to rate their knowledge and feelings about twelve real or made-up countries (Poland, Vietnam, Egypt, Eritrea, Mauritania, Niger, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Singapore, Oman, Yoralia (made-up), Tajikistan). First, for each country participants responded (a) I've heard of it and I know where it is; (b) I've heard of it but I don't know where it is; (c) I've never heard of it; or (d) This country must be a fake. Next, participants rated their feelings toward each country on feeling thermometers that ranged from 0 (very negative) to 100 (very positive). Finally, participants were asked to list the official language of each country.

Procedure

The pre-test was administered as part of an in-class exercise for which participants received course credit. The pre-testing measures were at the end of the questionnaire used in Study 2B. At the end of the study, participants were debriefed and results were discussed in class at a later date.

Results

Identifying Objectively Equivalent Status Gains

A repeated measures analysis was run on importance ratings for the ten status gain statements. The multivariate test showed that there were significant differences in mean importance ratings, Wilk's $\lambda = 0.31$, $F(9, 20) = 4.96$, $p < .001$. Simple planned contrasts showed that items number 5 and 6 were rated significantly higher in

importance than the rest of the items; means are reported in Table 7. There were no significant differences in importance ratings among the other eight items. Four items describing political gains and four items describing economic gains were identified as “objectively equivalent” status gains (i.e., equally important) because the mean importance ratings for these items were not significantly different from each other.

Selecting Target Groups

Analysis of response frequencies identified two pairs of countries about which the majority of participants had approximately equally limited knowledge and neutral feelings; frequencies and means are reported in Table 8. Eritrea and Mauritania were identified for being approximately equally matched in knowledge and feeling, with a high percentage of participants responding “I’ve heard of it but don’t know where it is” and “I’ve never heard of it,” while at the same time a low percentage of participants responding “I’ve heard of it and know where it is” and “This country must be a fake.” Repeated planned contrasts found that mean feeling ratings for Eritrea and Mauritania were not significantly different from each other.

Study 3

A wealth of evidence suggests that threat increases expressions of prejudice (Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Renfro, 2002), but the reverse may also be true—prejudice heightens perceptions of threat. Because threat may serve as both a cause and a justification of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), it is critical to show whether the relationships found in Studies 1 and 2 between perceived threat and prejudice reflect threat as a source of prejudice (antecedent model), or merely its

rationalization (consequent model). The question remains whether prejudice causes heightened perceptions of the threat posed by a disliked group. Study 3 tested this hypothesis by conditioning negative affect toward one social group and positive affect toward another, in a controlled experiment where no threat precedes the manipulation of affect.

A second, status gain manipulation dictated whether immigrant groups were advancing in politics or economic power. I predicted that certain status domains would be rated as more important than others in order to justify prejudice. If one group is making gains in politics and the other group is making gains in economic power, the domain in which the disliked group is making strides was predicted to be a more important, more desirable, or more threatening marker of status than the other domain.

Stereotype traits were also measured in accordance with the idea that people infer a group's traits from their social position (Fiske & Cuddy, 2006). The Stereotype Content Model (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) posits that stereotypes of social groups reflect the dimensions of competence and warmth, which are inferred from the group's perceived status and competition. Perceived status predicts competence and perceived competition predicts (lack of) warmth. In accordance with the SCM, I predicted that groups that are gaining status would be perceived as high in competence regardless of the domain of advance. To the extent that the domain of advance is seen as highly competitive, however, I predicted that the group would be perceived as low in warmth.

Method

Participants

Participants were 65 undergraduates at the University of Kansas (21 men, 44 women) who were members of the General Psychology Subject Pool. Participants ranged in age from 18-24 years. All but one were U.S. citizens.

Materials

Affective Conditioning. Adapting a method for the subliminal priming of affect used in previous research (Crandall, Warner, & Schaller, 2006), Super Lab 4.0 was used to condition negative or positive affect for immigrant Eritreans and Mauritians. Pretesting confirmed that participants had very limited prior knowledge and neutral feelings about these groups. Presentation order and valence of conditioned affect for each of the target groups was counterbalanced. Participants viewed screens containing affect-neutral information about Eritrea and Mauritania. Before each information screen, a blank screen was presented for 1.5 seconds followed by a fixation point (the country name) appearing for 2 seconds, and iconic face primes for 13 milliseconds with backward masking: ☺ (positive-affect face) and ☹ (negative-affect face). Participants completed 30 trials, 15 for each country. Across these trials, the positive-affect and negative-affect faces were consistently paired with the same country.

Manipulation checks. Social distance items and feeling thermometers for each target group were used as manipulation checks of conditioned affect. Three items ($\alpha = .77$ Eritrea; $\alpha = .73$ Mauritania) adapted from Crandall's (1991) Social Distance

Questionnaire were used, including “Eritreans/Mauritanians appear to be likeable people,” “I would like Eritreans/Mauritanians to move into my neighborhood,” and “Eritreans/Mauritanians are the kind of people that I tend to avoid,” with greater social distance indicating negative affect. Feeling thermometers asked participants to rate their general feelings toward Eritreans and Mauritanians on a single item scale ranging from 0 (very negative) to 100 (very positive).

Status gain manipulation. Participants read a short paragraph about each target group before completing the written measures. The paragraphs described equivalent status gains that each group has made since immigrating to the United States (content equivalency was established in pretesting in Study 2B). One group gains influence in politics; the other group gains economic power.

Measures of Threat. Threat posed by the target groups was measured both directly and indirectly. Participants rated both the current and future social status of Eritreans, Mauritanians, and native-born Americans separately. The difference score (future minus current) between current and future social status measures threat indirectly. This measure assumes that groups who are gaining status are more threatening to high status groups than stable groups or groups who are losing status. Positive numbers indicate the group is gaining status; a score of zero indicates the group’s status is stable; and negative numbers indicate the group is losing status. Threat was also measured directly with a single item, “How threatening are Eritreans’/Mauritanians’ gains to your own group’s status?” The scale ranged from 1

(not threatening at all) to 7 (extremely threatening). Higher numbers indicate greater perception of threat.

Importance of Status Domains. Three items for each domain assessed the importance of political ($\alpha = .64$) and economic ($\alpha = .61$) power as markers of social status. The items were, “How important is political/economic power in our society?” “How well does political/economic power serve as an indicator of a group’s social status?” and “How important is it that your own group has political/economic power?”

Stereotype Traits. To measure stereotyping, participants were presented with 29 stereotype trait words. Sixteen reflected the *Warmth* dimension (liars, arrogant, trustworthy, conceited, sincere, generous, quarrelsome, aggressive, skillful, efficient, good-natured, threatening, happy, quick-tempered, humorless, and stubborn). Eleven traits reflected the *Competence* dimension (courteous, messy, ignorant, intelligent, friendly, physically clean, low in self control, confident, competent, capable, and unreliable). Dimensionality of the traits was verified by factor analysis with oblique rotation.³ Participants were asked to indicate which group each trait was more descriptive of by circling "Eritreans" or "Mauritians." After reverse-scoring negatively-valenced items, stereotype content indices were computed as the proportion of Warmth- and Competence-relevant trait terms ascribed to the target groups. Higher numbers indicate the dimension is more descriptive of Mauritians.

SDO. Social dominance orientation (SDO) was measured at the end of the questionnaire using the 14-item version of the scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; $\alpha = .85$).

Procedure

Before arriving to the lab, participants were randomly assigned to priming condition. Half of participants read information about Eritrea paired with negative-affect face primes (“frowny face”) and about Mauritania paired with positive-affect face primes (“smiley face”), and half of participants received the opposite pairing. Participants were also randomly assigned to status gain condition. Half of participants read that Eritreans are advancing in politics and Mauritians are advancing in economics, and half of participants read the reverse. For both manipulations, the order was counterbalanced so that half of participants read about Eritrea first and half read about Mauritania first. Upon arrival participants were told,

“In the first section, you will read a series of information about two countries you may not have heard of before to give you a general idea of what these countries are like. In between each information screen, you will see a brief flash. This is simply to get your attention. You may ignore the flash, but remember to keep your eyes focused on the screen. In the following sections, you will learn about immigrants from these countries who have come to the United States. You will later be asked to respond to a series of questions about these immigrant groups and how they relate to native-born Americans.”

The remainder of the experiment took place on the computer. During the conditioning phase, participants read a series of 30 affect-neutral facts, 15 for each country (Appendix E). Iconic face primes flashed immediately preceding each information screen. Next participants completed social distance items for each group. Next

participants received the status gains manipulation by reading about the progress each group has made since immigrating to the United States. Participants read the following about the group advancing in politics, according to status gain condition:

“Since immigrating to the United States, Eritreans/Mauritians are making huge advances in gaining political leverage and are quickly becoming successful and respected members of American society. Eritreans/Mauritians are growing in numbers and visibility in politics. They represent a growing constituency which political leaders can no longer ignore. Additionally, more and more Eritreans/Mauritians are being elected to hold political office. It is clear that Eritreans/Mauritians are becoming an increasing presence in American politics.”

Participants also read the following paragraph about the group advancing in economics, according to status gain condition:

“Since immigrating to the United States, Mauritians/Eritreans are making huge advances in gaining economic power and are quickly becoming successful and respected members of American society. Mauritians/Eritreans are gaining strong technical skills and becoming very employable. Compared to the difficulty they have experienced in the past, Eritreans/Mauritians are having no trouble finding good jobs these days. The average percentage of discretionary income for Mauritians/Eritreans has increased dramatically over the last 5 years. Consequently, the number of Mauritians/Eritreans in the middle class is growing rapidly.”

After the status gain manipulation, participants read, “There are many people who believe that different groups enjoy different amounts of social status in our society.” Then they were asked to rate the current social status of Eritreans, Mauritians and native-born Americans and to estimate what each group’s status will be “five years from now.” Participants next read, “There are many people who believe that a gain in social status for one group necessarily implies a loss in status for other groups. You just read about the progress Eritreans and Mauritians have been

making since immigrating to the United States.” Then they were asked, “How threatening are Eritreans’/Mauritanians’ gains to your own group’s status?” All participants rated the threat posed by each group’s gains.

In the next section of the experiment participants read the following about the importance of political and economic power:

“Political power is essential in determining a social group’s influence in society. If a group has political power, they have the ability to control decision making and agenda setting in local, state, and federal governments. Groups with lots of political power are able to propose and enact legislation and social policies which directly benefit their own group. Once a social group has gained political power, it is difficult to lose, because politically dominant groups control and define what is considered ‘normal’ and ‘good’ in society.”

“Economic power is also a good indication that a social group has great influence in society. Economic power allows groups to purchase more goods and services to improve their quality of life. It also means these groups have the ability to set prices and wages. By controlling wages, groups who enjoy a disproportionately large share of the economic power are able to exploit less powerful groups. Small gains in economic power are quickly amplified so that the gap between the rich and the poor keeps growing bigger.”

After a reminder that, “Eritreans/Mauritanians are gaining political power” and “Mauritanians/Eritreans are gaining economic power,” depending on status gain condition, participants rated the importance of political and economic power and how well each indicates a group’s social status. Next participants completed manipulation checks including feeling thermometers for Eritreans, Mauritanians, and native-born Americans, and two items that asked: “According to the information you read earlier in the experiment, which of the following statements are true?” Answers choices were (a) Eritreans are advancing in political power or (b) Eritreans are advancing in

political power; and (a) Mauritians are advancing in political power or (b) Mauritians are advancing in political power. Six participants answered at least one question incorrectly.

The next section asked participants to decide whether stereotype trait words were more descriptive of Eritreans or Mauritians. Participants were told: "We realize that in some cases you may feel that the trait is not very descriptive of either group. Please make a choice—choose the group for which you think the trait is *more* descriptive than the other group." Finally participants completed the SDO scale and demographic items including gender, age, and U.S. citizenship.

As part of debriefing procedures, participants were asked questions to determine whether they were aware of the primes. First they were asked, "Did you notice anything unusual during the experiment?" After several more increasingly specific questions, participants were asked to guess which of eight possible symbols was paired with each group. Thirteen participants (approximately 20%) guessed both primes correctly.

Results

Order Effects

The experimental design originally had eight cells with the counterbalancing of presentation order (Eritrea first, Mauritania first), valence of face primes (Eritrea frowny face, Mauritania frowny face) and domain of advance (Eritrea advancing in politics, Mauritania advancing in politics). To test for order effects, a series of repeated measures ANOVAs was run on each of five dependent variables (indirect

threat, direct threat, importance of status domains, feeling thermometers, and stereotype traits) by priming condition, status gain condition, and order. Across 75 total F-tests there were only 2 significant order effects ($p < .05$), fewer than the amount expected by chance. Order was dropped from all subsequent analyses.

Manipulation of Affect

A repeated measures analysis was run on social distance by priming condition (frowny face with Eritreans or Mauritians), with repeated measures on the dependent variable (social distance toward Eritreans, social distance toward Mauritians). The predicted interaction of social distance X priming condition was not significant, $F < 1$. A second repeated measures analysis was run on feeling thermometers by priming condition, with repeated measures on the dependent variable (feelings toward Eritreans, feelings toward Mauritians). The predicted interaction of social distance X priming condition was not significant, $F < 1$. It seems that the manipulation of affect was ineffective. The “priming condition” variable was excluded from further analyses.

Manipulation of Status Gains

I now turn to the manipulation of domain of status gain. Participants who did not correctly identify which group was advancing in politics and which group was advancing in economics ($n = 6$) were excluded from all analyses including the status gain manipulation.

A repeated measures analysis was run on feeling thermometers by domain of advance (Eritreans or Mauritians advancing in politics), with repeated measures on

the dependent variable (feelings toward Eritreans, feelings toward Mauritians); means are reported in Table 9. In general, feelings were slightly more positive toward the group advancing in economics than toward the group advancing in politics, but the interaction was not significant. The main effects of group and domain of advance were also not significant. Thus the effects of the status gain manipulation described below cannot be accounted for by a general preference for either group or status domain.

A repeated measures analysis was run on indirect threat by domain of advance (Eritreans or Mauritians advancing in politics), with repeated measures on the dependent variable (status change for Eritreans, status change for Mauritians). There was an interaction of indirect threat X domain of advance such that the group advancing in economics was predicted to gain more status in the next five years than the group advancing in politics, $F(1, 57) = 4.07, p < .05$ (Figure 2). There were no other significant effects on the indirect measure of threat (predicted gain in social status).

A repeated measures analysis was run on direct threat by domain of advance (Eritreans or Mauritians advancing in politics), with repeated measures on the dependent variable (threat posed by Eritreans, threat posed by Mauritians). There was an interaction of direct threat X domain of advance such that gains made by the group advancing in politics were seen as more threatening to native-born Americans' status than gains made by the group advancing in economics, $F(1, 57) = 4.83, p < .05$ (Figure 3). There was also a main effect of domain of advance, such that gains were

more threatening when Eritreans were advancing in politics ($M = 3.56$) than when Mauritians were advancing in politics ($M = 2.71$), $F(1, 57) = 4.41$, $p < .05$.

A repeated measures analysis was run on the importance of status domain by domain of advance (Eritreans or Mauritians advancing in politics), with repeated measures on the dependent variable (political power, economic power); means are reported in Table 10. There was a main effect for status domain such that economic power was rated a more important indicator of social status than political power regardless of which group was advancing in economics, and a marginally significant main effect for group such that Eritreans' gains were rated as more important than Mauritians' gains. The interaction of domain of advance x group was not significant.

A repeated measures analysis was run on stereotype traits by domain of advance (Eritreans or Mauritians advancing in politics), with repeated measures on the dependent variable (warmth, competence). One case was excluded due to missing data. There was an interaction of stereotype traits X domain of advance, which can be interpreted as a counter-balanced main effect; whichever group was advancing in politics was seen as less warm than the group advancing in economics, $F(1, 56) = 34.09$, $p < .0001$ (Figure 4). There were no other significant effects on stereotype traits.

Discussion

Groups advancing in economic power were expected to gain more status in the next five years than groups advancing in politics. Economic power was also rated

as a more important and better indicator of a group's social status than political influence. On the other hand, political gains were seen to pose greater threat to native-born Americans' status than economic gains, and groups advancing in politics were rated as less warm compared to groups advancing in economic power. Consistent with the SCM (Fiske et al., 2002), there were no differences in perceived competence between status domains. Whether the groups were advancing in politics or economics, reading information about status gains communicated that both groups are high in competence.

Economic gains provided important information about a group's social status, but political gains were perceived to be more directly threatening. It is possible that these differences arose from perceptions of legitimacy of the advances. Economic gains may be seen as more legitimate to the extent that they are achieved through hard work and ability. Political gains may be seen as less legitimate due to suspicion that they may be achieved through scheming or deceptive means. Perhaps groups advancing in politics are seen as less warm because politics is perceived to be a highly competitive and often cut-throat domain.

The finding that political gains were rated as more threatening when the gains were made by Eritreans than when they were made by Mauritians was unexpected. There was also a slight trend for Eritreans' gains to be rated as more important than Mauritians' gains. It is unlikely that these effects reflect a general dislike for either immigrant group because there was no main effect of group on feeling thermometers. Further research is needed to determine whether these effects have theoretical

implications or whether they are merely reflective of nuanced data. Because the manipulation of affect was ineffective, whether pre-existing prejudice is causally related to heightened perceptions of threat remains an important question for future research.

The first two studies showed that high status groups experience threat to group position when low status groups start moving up, motivating a prejudiced response; these data support the antecedent model of threat. Results of Study 3 support the hypothesis that perception of threat may operate as a *consequence* of prejudice, suggesting that the domain of status advance bears important implications for using threat as a justification for prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). Economic power may be a good indicator of group success, but to the extent that gains are perceived to be well-deserved, it's a poor justification for prejudice. Political influence, however, is an excellent justification for prejudice because of ambiguity concerning the deservingness of political success. Thus pre-existing prejudices may cause heightened perceptions of threat; perceptions of threat posed by groups advancing in politics may be exaggerated in order to rationalize feelings of dislike.

General Discussion

The main purpose of the current research was to investigate whether threat operates as a *cause* of prejudice, a *consequence* of prejudice, or both. Three studies tested two possible models of threat and how it relates to prejudice. The antecedent model assumes that perceived threat to group position creates “new” prejudice; by

contrast, the consequent model assumes that “pre-existing” prejudice motivates heightened perceptions of threat.

First, I will review the evidence in support of the antecedent model of threat. Heterosexuals made more donations to anti-gay causes in Study 1 when gays were perceived to be gaining status than when gays were perceived to be remaining low in status. In Study 2B, perceived status gains were correlated with anti-gay prejudice. These findings are consistent with the prediction of SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and ITT (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) that high status group members respond to perceived threats to group position with prejudice, particularly for those who are high in SDO.

SDO was correlated with more anti-gay donations in Study 1 *except* when gays were remaining low in status. High-SDO heterosexuals did not respond to gays’ status gains with increased discrimination (relative to Control), but showed enhanced tolerance when perceived threat to group position was low. High-SDO members of high status groups may have, as a basic assumption, the belief that a low status group poses a threat to their group position, but they are sensitive to information to suggest that the group does not.

SDO was correlated with perceiving gays and lesbians to be gaining status in Studies 2A and 2B, providing corroborating evidence for the SDT (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) assertion that individuals high in SDO are especially sensitive to threats to group position. To summarize, I did find evidence to suggest that threat operates as a cause of prejudice; when threat was experimentally introduced by manipulating information about gays’ status, greater threat to group position led to more anti-gay

prejudice. I also found support for the idea that the relationship between SDO and prejudice is moderated by perceived threat to group position. SDO was correlated with anti-gay prejudice when gays were perceived to be moving up (i.e., threat to group position was high), but not when gays were perceived to be remaining low status (i.e., threat to group position was low).

I now turn to the evidence in support of the consequent model of threat. I begin with one of the same findings used to support the antecedent model: More donations were made to anti-gay causes in Study 1 when gays were perceived to be gaining status than when gays were perceived to be low in status. Conceptualizing threat as a motivated process allows us to consider the possibility that anti-gay prejudice preceded the introduction of threat; perceptions of threat may be constructed in order to justify previously held negative beliefs. Anti-gay donations may seem *more* justified when gays are perceived to be gaining rights and influence because gay rights causes are achieving success. Likewise, anti-gay donations seem *less* justified when gays are perceived to be widely discriminated against because gay rights causes are not succeeding. Therefore individuals who are high in anti-gay prejudice are motivated to interpret information about status gains as if threat to group position is high, because perceiving threat provides justification for expressing prejudice.

A similar interpretation of the correlation found in Study 2B between ATLG scores and perceived status of gays suggests that anti-gay attitudes seem more justified when gays are advancing. Study 3 found that groups advancing in politics

are seen as more threatening and less warm than groups advancing in economics. Economic gains, if achieved through legitimate means (e.g., hard work and smart investments), are difficult to use as justification for prejudice toward the advancing group because the gains are likely to be deserved. By contrast, political gains are somewhat less straightforward in terms of how they are achieved. If there is suspicion that political gains may have been achieved illegitimately, the threat posed by a group's political gains more easily serves as justification for prejudice. Taken together, the evidence is consistent with the JSM (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003) in suggesting that threat may serve as a justification—in addition to a cause—of prejudice.

Limitations and Future Directions

Conceptualizing threat as a consequent—rather than an antecedent—event in relation to the experience of prejudice is underrepresented in the literature on prejudice and threat. Redirecting empirical inquiry on the topic of prejudice and threat to consider the question, “Do pre-existing prejudices motivate heightened perceptions of threat?” is an important contribution of the current research. Because the manipulation of affect used in Study 3 was ineffective, the data are not able to directly address the question. The data do, however, provide initial support for the idea that threat is perceived (or even constructed) in order to justify negative beliefs about a social group. Future research should develop a method of conditioning that successfully manipulates affect, so as to provide a better test of the main hypothesis—

prejudice causes threat—in a controlled experiment where no threat precedes the introduction of negative affect.

Implications and Conclusions

The basic finding that threat leads to prejudice is not new, but the idea that perceived threat to group position moderates the relationship between SDO and prejudice, bears important implications for reducing prejudice. When SDO is understood as an ideological commitment to defending group position, it becomes clear that the motivation among high-SDO individuals to respond to low status groups' gains with prejudice is reduced when threat to group position is perceived to be low. In this way, promoting the belief that status relations among social groups are not a zero-sum game (at least in regard to social and economic power) may lead to enhanced support for the advancement of low status groups.

Does threat operate as a cause or a consequence of prejudice? After considering two different models for the role of threat in relation to prejudice, the best answer is *both* – perceiving threat increases prejudice, and having prejudice increases perception of threat. In addition to considering direction of the relationship between prejudice and threat, it is critical to address the function served by perceiving threat. Threat may be adaptive, serving as a defense mechanism to protect against real harm to our group. Alternatively, threat may lead us astray by encouraging harsh treatment of other groups when in fact the well-being of our own group is not in danger.

Because the perception of threat is a subjective experience (at least in regard to prejudice), the specific amount or type of threat that warrants a prejudiced response

is often not straightforward. Opposing your employer's affirmative action policy may be rational if it means you are not offered a promotion because a less-qualified minority employee is chosen to fulfill a company quota. Endorsing a highly restrictive immigration policy because you are afraid that Mexicans are taking away jobs from American workers may be less rational. But how are we to decide which threats are rational or not? When we recognize that the perception of threat can be amplified or muted in order to justify our beliefs and behavior, we also uncover a new avenue for the reduction of prejudice. Conceptualizing threat as a motivated process opens the door to enhanced tolerance in situations where we can be persuaded that status gains for other groups pose little threat to our own.

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Notes.

¹ The beneficiaries used in Study 1 were based on legitimate organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign and Focus on the Family, but the names were changed slightly.

² 12 items were administered but 5 items were thrown out based on the results of factor analysis. The discarded items loaded onto a separate factor, which was determined to be not directly related to perceived status gains.

³ Two words (warm and lazy) did not load onto either factor and thus were excluded from analysis.

Table 1.

Mission Statements for Beneficiaries

Organization	Mission Statement
A. Cancer Awareness Society	The Cancer Awareness Society is a nationwide, community-based voluntary health organization that provides support to cancer patients and serves the community through research, education, and advocacy.
B. Traditional Values Association	The Traditional Values Association is a church lobbying organization that strongly opposes the normalization of sodomy as well as cross-dressing and other deviant sexual behaviors in our culture. The TVA is working to protect the traditional definition of marriage in our country as the sacred union of one man and one woman.
C. Universal Children's Fund	The Universal Children's Fund advocates for children rights. Funding is used to expand children's opportunities worldwide so that they may reach their full potential.
D. Human Rights Coalition	The HRC works to secure equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals and families at the federal and state levels by lobbying elected officials, mobilizing grassroots supporters, educating Americans, investing strategically to elect fair-minded officials and partnering with other GLBT organizations.
E. Family First	Family First seeks to preserve time-honored family values and the institution of the family. Family First is dedicated to informing, inspiring and rallying those who care deeply about the family to greater involvement in the moral, cultural and political issues that threaten our nation.
F. Emergency Relief Association	The Emergency Relief Association, a national humanitarian organization led by volunteers, helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

Table 2.

Manipulation check errors by condition

Manipulation Check	Condition	Correct	Incorrect
According to the report, the Cancer Awareness Society funds research related to the prevention and treatment of cancer.	All	68	8
According to the report, the HRC distributes information about public services and community events related to GBLT issues.	Control	20	2
I would say from reading the report that gay people in our society are widely discriminated against with little legal protection.	Low	27	2
I would say from reading the report that gay people in our society are making huge advances in gaining rights and influence.	Gain	23	2

Note: Values represent the number of participants who answered the manipulation check correctly or incorrectly.

Table 3.

Mean Donations by Condition

Type	Organization	Low	Control	Gain
Neutral	Cancer Awareness Society	\$0.58 (0.07)	\$0.60 (0.08)	\$0.57 (0.08)
	Universal Children's Fund	\$0.21 (0.05)	\$0.28 (0.06)	\$0.35 (0.05)
	Emergency Relief Association	\$0.37 (0.05)	\$0.31 (0.06)	\$0.31 (0.05)
Anti-gay	Traditional Values Association	\$0.03 (0.03)	\$0.05 (0.03)	\$0.14 (0.03)
	Family First	\$0.13 (0.04)	\$0.15 (0.04)	\$0.10 (0.04)
Pro-gay	Human Rights Coalition	\$0.29 (0.06)	\$0.22 (0.07)	\$0.15 (0.07)

Note: Values represent mean amount of money donated, out of \$1.65 total. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 4.

Means by Status Condition

Condition	Contrast Coefficient	Anti-gay Donations	SDO	Traditional Values
Low	-1	.30 (.10)	1.38 (0.27)	3.34 (0.92)
Control	0	.32 (.14)	1.38 (0.23)	3.92 (1.30)
Gain	1	.35 (.09)	1.39 (0.32)	3.62 (1.28)
Contrast		1.47 ($p = .15$)	0.16 ($p = .87$)	0.84 ($p = .40$)

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses. Contrasts reported as t values with $df = 65$.

Table 5.

Correlations between Donations, SDO, and Traditional Values

		1	2	3
1. Anti-gay Donations	Overall ($n = 68$)	-	.34**	.53***
	Low ($n = 26$)	-	.12	.76***
	Control ($n = 19$)	-	.58**	.46*
	Gain ($n = 23$)	-	.38†	.46*
2. SDO	Overall	-	-	.15
	Low	-	-	.17
	Control	-	-	.19
	Gain	-	-	.11
3. Traditional Values	Overall	-	-	-
	Low	-	-	-
	Control	-	-	-
	Gain	-	-	-

Note: † $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 6.

Correlations between Perceived Status, SDO, and Prejudice

<i>N</i> = 31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Perceived Status Scale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Status Gap Gay Men (personal)	.72***	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Status Gap Lesbians (personal)	.79***	.94***	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Status Gap Gay Men (most people)	.02	.39*	.32†	-	-	-	-	-
5. Status Gap Lesbians (most people)	-.19	.11	.16	.67***	-	-	-	-
6. SDO	.46*	.41*	.55**	.19	.04	-	-	-
7. ATL	.85***	.74***	.72***	-.03	-.22	.38*	-	-
8. ATG	.77***	.84***	.76***	.16	-.05	.23	.78***	-

Note: † $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 7.

Ratings of the Importance of Status Gains

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Group X is becoming an increasing presence in politics.	5.52	1.17
2. Group X is growing in numbers and visibility in politics.	5.79	1.31
3. Group X represents a growing constituency which political leaders can no longer ignore.	5.69	0.88
4. More and more members of Group X are being elected to hold political office.	5.89	1.33
5. The voting rate for members of Group X has increased dramatically over the last 5 years.	6.10	1.11
6. Group X is gaining economic power.	6.24	1.06
7. The number of Group X members in the middle class is growing rapidly.	5.48	1.42
8. Members of Group X are gaining strong technical skills and becoming very employable.	5.41	0.94
9. Compared to the difficulty they have experienced in the past, people in Group X are having no trouble finding good jobs these days.	5.66	1.34
10. The average percentage of discretionary income for members of Group X has increased dramatically over the last 5 years.	5.62	1.28

Note: Higher numbers indicate more important status gains. Simple planned contrasts showed that items 5 and 6 were significantly different than the rest of the items, $F(1, 28) = 4.59, p < .05$ and $F(1, 28) = 15.02, p < .001$, respectively.

Table 8.

Knowledge and Feelings about Countries

	I've heard of it and know where it is	I've heard of it but don't know where it is	I've never heard of it	This country must be a fake	Mean feeling rating
Poland	87.5%	12.5%	0%	0%	70.77
Vietnam	96.9%	3.1%	0%	0%	63.08
Egypt	100%	0%	0%	0%	75.00
<i>Eritrea</i>	25%	6.3%	59.4%	9.4%	53.85
<i>Mauritania</i>	9.4%	18.8%	59.4%	12.5%	52.69
Niger	75%	15.6%	3.1%	3.1%	60.00
Latvia	34.4%	25%	28.1%	12.5%	58.08
Azerbaijan	15.6%	40.6%	31.3%	12.5%	55.00
Singapore	65.6%	31.3%	3.1%	0%	72.69
Oman	25%	28.1%	43.8%	3.1%	55.77
Yoralia	0%	6.3%	65.6%	28.1%	48.46
Tajikistan	21.9%	21.9%	46.9%	9.4%	50.39

Note: Higher numbers indicate more positive feelings. Repeated planned contrasts identified that feelings about Eritrea and Mauritania were not significantly different from each other, $F(1, 25) = 1.86, p = .19$.

Table 9

Feelings by Group and Domain of Advance

		Domain of Advance			<i>F</i> (1, 57)	<i>p</i>
		Politics	Economics	Main Effect for Group (A)		
Group	Eritreans	71.65	74.57	73.04		
	Mauritanians	73.00	73.26	73.14		
	Main Effect for Domain (B)	72.32	73.91	A.	0.001	.99
				B.	0.06	.81
				AxB.	2.03	.16

Note: Values indicate means on feeling thermometers from 0 (negative) to 100 (positive).

Table 10.

Importance of Status Domains by Group and Domain of Advance

		Domain of Advance				
		Politics	Economics	Main Effect for Group (A)	$F(1, 57)$	p
Group	Eritreans	6.15	6.29	6.22		
	Mauritanians	5.69	6.05	5.87		
	Main Effect for Domain (B)	5.93	6.18	A.	3.91	.053
				B.	4.06	.049
				AxB.	0.78	.382

Note: Values indicate means on importance of status domains from 1 (low) to 7 (high).

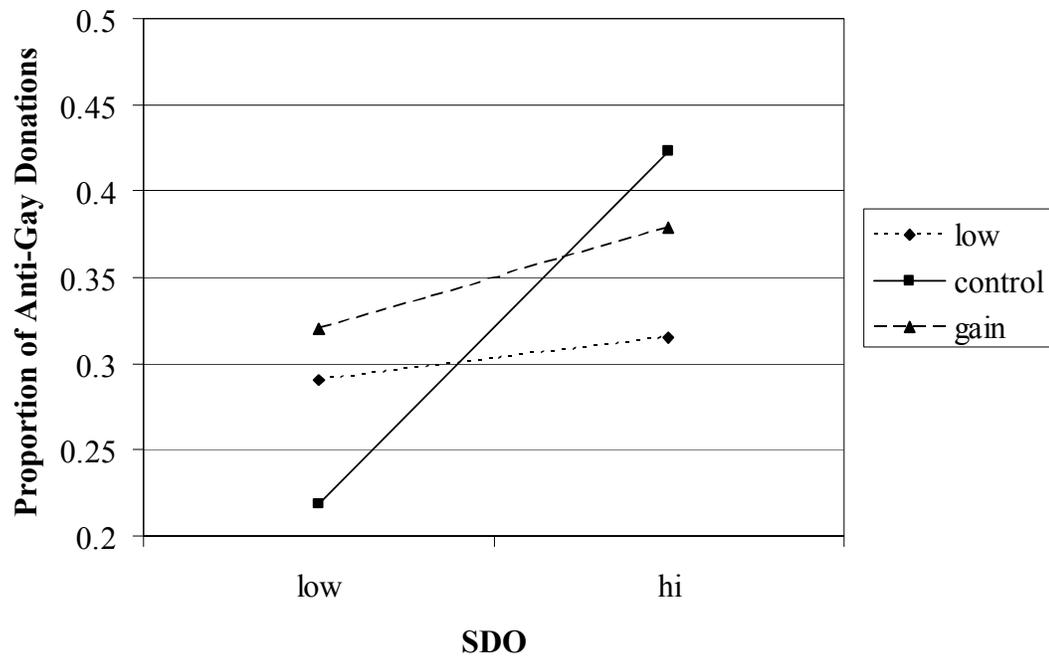
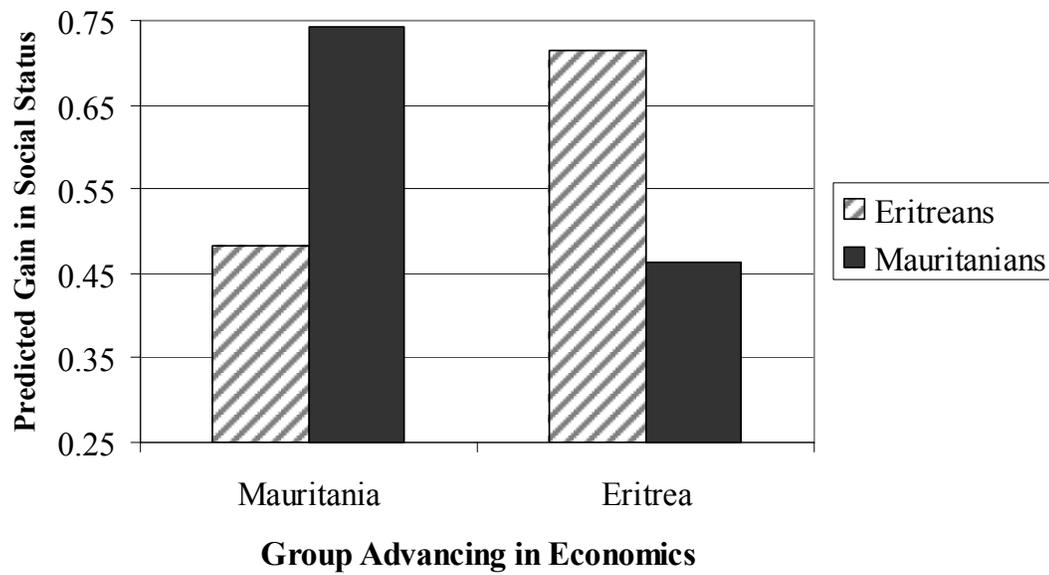
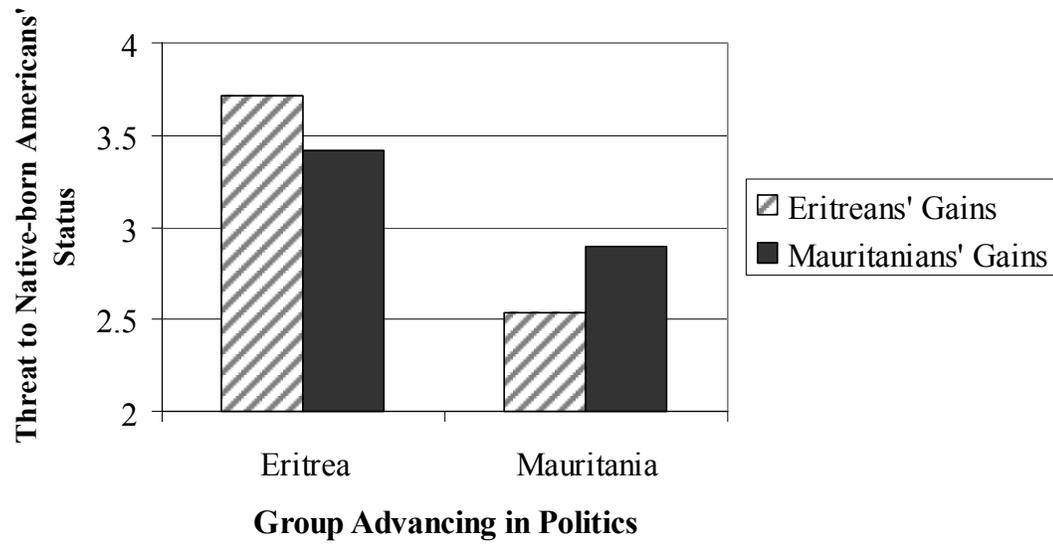
Figure 1. *Interaction of SDO by Condition*

Figure 2. *Gains in Social Status by Economic (versus Political) Advance*



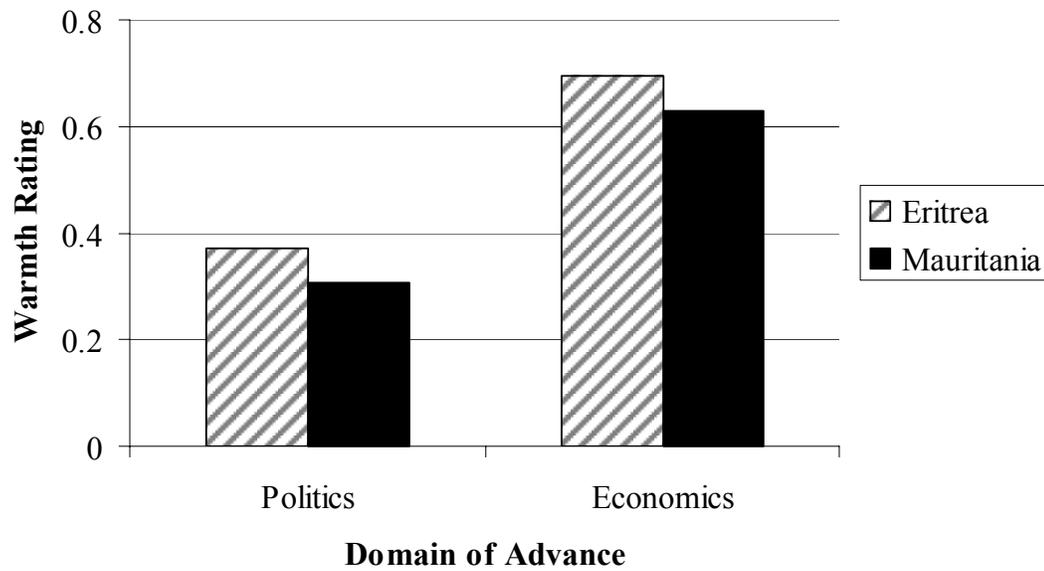
Note: Values represent predicted status gain in the next five years. Higher values indicate greater status gains.

Figure 3. *Threat Posed by Political (versus Economic) Advance*



Note: Values represent threat to native-born Americans' status. Higher values indicate greater threat.

Figure 4. *Warmth by Group and Domain of Advance*



Note: Warmth values range from 0 to 1. Higher values indicate the trait is more descriptive of the group.

Appendix A: Status Manipulation

All conditions:

The Cancer Awareness Society (CAS) funds the majority of medical research related to cancer. Our research program has resulted in new and improved methods of cancer treatment. We provided funding for breakthroughs such as tamoxifen, bone marrow transplants, and molecular therapies that have given new hope to people suffering from cancer. We will continue to invest in research programs because the need is ongoing and ever-increasing.

The aim of the Society's research program is to determine the causes of cancer and to support efforts to prevent and treat the disease. The Cancer Awareness Society is the largest source of private, nonprofit cancer research funds in the United States, second only to the federal government in total dollars spent.

Beginning in 1946 with \$1 million, the Society's research program has invested about \$3 billion in cancer research. The Society has funded 40 Nobel Prize winners early in their careers. The research program focuses primarily on peer-reviewed projects initiated by beginning investigators working in leading medical and scientific institutions across the country. The research program consists of three components: extramural grants, intramural epidemiology and surveillance research, and the intramural behavioral research center.

Cancer isn't just a medical issue. It is also a psychological, social and economic issue. And when our elected officials can make decisions that affect the lives of cancer survivors, their families and potential cancer patients, the disease also becomes a political issue. That's why the Cancer Awareness Society works at every government level – federal, state and local – to promote beneficial laws and policies that affect everyone touched by cancer.

The Cancer Awareness Society Cancer Action Network (CAS CAN) is the non-profit, non-partisan sister advocacy organization of the Cancer Awareness Society. CAS CAN is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major public health problem through voter education and issue campaigns aimed at influencing candidates and lawmakers to support laws and policies that will help people fight cancer.

With chartered divisions throughout the country and over 3,400 local offices, the Cancer Awareness Society is committed to fighting cancer through balanced programs of research, education, patient service, advocacy, and rehabilitation. In addition to cancer prevention, the Society focuses on a variety of early detection programs and encourages regular medical checkups and recommended cancer screenings.

Finding cancer in the earliest stage possible gives the patient the greatest chance of survival. For this reason, the Society seeks to provide the public and health care professionals with the latest cancer resources to help them make informed decisions.

Control condition:

The Human Rights Coalition (HRC) is a non-profit interest group primarily concerned with issues pertaining to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals. These interests are centered on establishing a network of communication which allows GLBT individuals to stay connected to one another and provides a forum for discussing community affairs.

The group is involved in distributing information about public services and community events. Areas of particular interest to the HRC include access to public hospitals and doctors' offices, fitness facilities and nutrition information services, and educational opportunities in both the public and private domains.

The HRC sponsors periodic lectures and informational seminars that are free and open to the public. These events are generally held at the National Convention Center, located at 800 Mount Vernon Place N.W., Washington DC, 20111. Upcoming events include "GLBT People of Faith" (March 14-16), "Understanding Tax Laws: Healthcare Benefits and Social Security" (April 23-24), and the national GLBT Pride art show (May 1-6).

The HRC has been an important addition to the GLBT community since its establishment in 1980. The HRC is sponsored by a number of private corporations, but also relies heavily on membership dues and charitable donations made by its supporters.

Gain condition:

A report released August 1, 2006 by the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) announced that Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals are making huge advances in gaining political leverage and are quickly becoming successful and respected members of American society. More and more religious leaders and people of faith are voicing their support for equality. Economic fairness is becoming a reality for greater numbers of GLBT workers, with more than half of all Fortune 500 companies offering benefits to their employees' domestic partners. GLBT individuals, along with their straight allies, are becoming a unified and powerful political force.

With full marriage equality in Massachusetts and partnership recognition a reality or likelihood in several other states, millions of same-sex couples are finally getting many of the same protections as their opposite-sex counterparts. Twenty-four states have passed legislation which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. During the 109th Congress, thirty-nine U.S. Senators and 153 U.S. Congressmen have been consistent supporters of the GLBT position on critical issues regarding gay rights (e.g., the Federal Marriage Amendment, the Early Treatment for HIV Act).

GLBT people and topics are also enjoying an increase in popularity and visibility in the media and in mainstream American culture. Popular support for and awareness of GLBT issues is reflected by a recent influx of media portrayals of homosexuality in film (e.g., *Brokeback Mountain*, *As Good as it Gets*, *The Birdcage*, *Philadelphia*), literature (e.g., *Middlesex*, *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*, *The Hours*), television (e.g., *Will and Grace*, *Queer as Folk*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, *Ellen*, *Rosie O'Donnell*), and theater (e.g., *Angels in America*, *Rent*). Just recently, T. R. Knight, star of ABC's *Grey's Anatomy*, has become the first actor to publicly come out while appearing on the country's #1-rated television show.

Advances in GLBT visibility and support for equality are also evident in education. Over 300 American colleges and universities offer Gay Studies or Queer Studies as an undergraduate major or minor. In addition, there has been a nation-wide increase in the number of college courses offered which incorporate gay rights issues or which focus on work by gay authors and artists. The percentage of openly gay faculty members has increased drastically over the last several decades. Nearly two-thirds of American colleges and universities have active GLBT student groups, and many of these schools sponsor annual gay pride rallies and events.

Our society is making considerable progress toward fairness and inclusion in many respects, and achieving equality for GLBT Americans is well within reach. The HRC will continue to work for the advancement of GLBT individuals so that they may become even more successful and gain even more influence in American society.

Low condition:

A report released August 1, 2006 by the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) announced that as a minority group, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) individuals have very limited political leverage and are experiencing considerable difficulty in becoming successful and respected members of American society. GLBT workers are fired from their jobs, refused work, paid less and otherwise discriminated against in the workplace – with no protection under federal law. In a recent federal court case (*Higgins v. New Balance Athletic Shoe Inc.*), it was ruled that federal law does not provide a remedy for discrimination based on sexual orientation. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin, but not sexual orientation.

During the 109th Congress, sixty-one U.S. Senators and 282 U.S. Congressmen have been consistent opponents of the GLBT position on critical issues regarding gay rights (e.g., the Federal Marriage Amendment, the Early Treatment for HIV Act).

The incorporation of gay people and gay topics into American popular culture is being met with strong resistance. In addition, the visibility of gays in the media is severely limited and the representation is heavily skewed toward stereotypical images. According to the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), Gay or lesbian characters represent just 2% of the lead or supporting roles on ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, WB, UPN, and original cable series. When gay characters *are* present in television and movies, they are often depicted as victims of violence, blackmail, or ridicule which reinforces negative stereotypes about gays.

The United Church of Christ, a progressive Protestant denomination, attempted to air several television commercials which promote inclusiveness and diversity in faith. The most recent commercial titled “Ejector Seat” depicts a traditional-looking family joined in church by a couple who appear to be gay. As the gay couple is forcibly ejected from their seats, the voice-over announces, “God doesn’t reject people. Neither do we.” The “Ejector Seat” commercial has been rejected by many of the major television networks, including CBS, NBC, ABC, FOX, and Viacom, on grounds that its message is too controversial.

GLBT children often experience discrimination in education. For example, gay or lesbian-headed families are frequently excluded from classroom discussion. Silence about gay and lesbian people and issues in the classroom sends the message that they are unimportant. Perhaps most telling of the intolerance and hostility experienced in education, 69% of GLBT youth surveyed by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) reported that they experienced some form of harassment or violence at school.

Our society is making progress toward fairness and inclusion in many respects, but achieving equality for GLBT Americans remains a formidable struggle. The HRC is committed to working for the advancement of GLBT individuals so that they may become successful and equal members of American society.

Appendix B: Social Dominance Orientation Items

1. If people were treated more equally we would have fewer problems in this country.*
2. Some groups of people are simply not the equals of others.
3. Some people are just more worthy than others.
4. It is important that we treat other countries as equals.*
5. This country would be better off if we cared less about how equal all people were.
6. Increased social equality.*
7. Some people are just more deserving than others.
8. It is not a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others.
9. In an ideal world, all nations would be equal.*
10. Some people are just inferior to others.
11. Increased economic equality.*
12. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on others.
13. Equality.*
14. We should try to treat one another as equals as much as possible.*

Note: Items with an asterisk (*) are reverse scored.

Appendix C: Traditional Values Items

1. How do you feel about people who are not married having sexual relations?
2. Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal?
3. Do you think homosexuals should or should not be permitted to teach in the public schools?
4. When should abortion be legal?
5. A lot of times, the traditional ways really are the best.
6. We should respect the traditions of our elders.
7. I am often suspicious when people say that they want to break with tradition.

Appendix D: Perception of Gays' Status Scale

1. I generally support equal rights, but when it comes to redefining marriage to allow men to marry other men and women to marry other women, we have just gone too far.
2. Our customs and traditional ways are the things that have made our nation great. Accepting homosexuals and granting them rights is contaminating our country's reputation as moral and good.
3. Gays are gaining power and influence in our society.
4. There has been a huge influx of anti-discrimination legislation passed in the last 5 years that has made the workplace a less hostile environment for women, minorities, and homosexuals.
5. The facts on sexual immorality show we are being too lenient; we have to crack down harder on deviant groups like homosexuals if we are going to save our moral standards.
6. I'm sick and tired of hearing about equal rights for gays. We have already passed anti-discrimination policies and recognized domestic partnerships. What more do they want?
7. Liberals and gay rights advocates are taking over this country.

Appendix E: Country Information Sets

Eritrea

1. Eritrea is home to one of the world's longest mountain ranges, the Great Rift Valley.
2. Eritrea is bordered on the northeast and east by the Red Sea.
3. There are two national parks in Eritrea: Dahlak Marine National Park and Semenawi Bahri National Park.
4. The economy of Eritrea is primarily based on agriculture.
5. The capital city of Eritrea is Asmara.
6. There is no official national language of Eritrea.
7. The Eritrean region is known as a center for trade.
8. Eritrea's cuisine is very rich, and represents an eclectic mix of food.
9. The geography of Eritrea varies from deserts to hills to rolling plains.
10. Eritrea receives 61 cm of rainfall annually.
11. The elevation ranges from 2000 meters above sea level to 100 meters below sea level.
12. A hot springs resort outside of Massawa is one of the country's most popular attractions.
13. Coffee, spices, and tropical fruit are the country's top agricultural products.
14. The southern coast is home to mountain goats and ostriches.
15. The country's only international airport is in the capital city of Asmara.

Mauritania

1. Mauritania is named after the ancient Berber kingdom of Mauretania.
2. The capital and largest city is Nouakchott.
3. The population is approximately 3,069,000.
4. Mauritania is generally flat; the highest point is Kediet Ijill, reaching an elevation of 1000 meters (3,280 ft).
5. A majority of the population depends upon agriculture and livestock for its livelihood.
6. The nation's coastal waters are among the richest fishing areas in the world.
7. Mauritania is divided into twelve regions and one capital district.
8. At 397,929 square miles, Mauritania is the world's 29th-largest country.
9. Approximately three-fourths of Mauritania is desert or semi-desert.
10. Mauritania has extensive deposits of iron ore, which account for almost half of the country's total exports.
11. Mauritania is home to Taza National Park.
12. Golf and soccer are popular sports in Mauritania.
13. There are many rivers and lakes. One of the longest rivers is the Karakoro River.
14. Oualata and Tichitt are ancient cities that are registered on the world heritage list.
15. The vegetation of Mauritania is varied and diverse.