# To Conceal or Reveal: Identity-Conscious Diversity Ideologies Facilitate Sexual Minority Identity Disclosure

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**Abstract**

Sexual minorities continue to face workplace discrimination, which leads to concerns about disclosing their sexual identities. Despite benefits of disclosing, relatively little research has examined what organizational factors can work together to foster disclosure of a sexual minority identity. Across five experiments ($N$ = 1,662), we examined two main factors: diversity ideologies and information about diversity climate. Sexual minorities were more willing to disclose in organizations with diversity messages conveying that they value group differences (an identity-conscious ideology) relative to those that downplay differences (an identity-blind ideology). Identity-conscious ideologies also increased belonging, perceptions of fair treatment, and perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation. Despite expectations that contradictory evidence demonstrating a negative diversity climate might create mistrust and impede disclosure, the benefits of an identity-conscious ideology persisted in the face of a negative diversity climate. These findings point to the complexities of facilitating visible sexual minority representation in many workplace environments.

*Keywords*: Sexual Identity; Stigma; Self/Identity; Prejudice/Stereotyping; Workplace

**To Conceal or Reveal: Identity-Conscious Diversity Ideologies Facilitate Sexual Minority Identity Disclosure**

People with concealable stigmatized identities, like many sexual minorities, face a unique dilemma in workplaces – they can choose to conceal or reveal their sexual identity. Whereas revealing their sexual identity may expose them to prejudice and discrimination, concealing it can reduce feelings of authenticity and hurt social interactions (Barreto et al., 2006; Clair et al., 2005; Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Newheiser & Barreto, 2014; Newheiser et al., 2017). Indeed, people are motivated to pursue authenticity (in Western societies; Schmader & Sedikides, 2018), so sexual minorities (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual, and pansexual people) may search for environmental cues suggesting that their authentic selves will be safe and valued.

An organization's *diversity ideology*, which expresses how an organization manages diversity and difference, is one common cue to ascertain information about identity safety. Indeed, these ideologies can send messages about how to navigate one's social identity in the workplace (Kang et al., 2016; Kirby & Kaiser, 2020). Although highlighting social identities can make minoritized groups feel welcome and safe in workplace environments (e.g., Plaut et al., 2009), highlighting identities is not always beneficial (Crosby et al., 2014; Sekaquaptewa et al., 2007; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003; Zou & Cheryan, 2015). Because decisions to conceal or reveal their identity are so crucial for sexual minority visibility, we examine how diversity ideologies that highlight or downplay social identities affect identity safety and comfort disclosing a concealable stigmatized identity. Additionally, we examine how sexual minorities respond when the expressed diversity ideology does not match the reality of the organizational climate (a safety cue mismatch, or a mismatch between the stated ideology and safety/threat cues). Understanding identity disclosure is particularly important to help facilitate sexual minority visibility and foster positive diversity climates in workplaces.

**Identity Safety Cues for the Sexual Minorities**

Minoritized groups often face concerns about negative treatment and belonging in work contexts (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007; Sinclair & Kunda, 1999; Steele et al., 2002) and look to environmental cues to determine whether they will be valued and how to present themselves in that environment. For example, recruitment brochures that celebrate diversity (Gündemir et al., 2016; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; also see Kirby et al., 2020; Kirby & Kaiser, 2020), spaces dedicated to marginalized groups (Chaney & Sanchez, 2018; Kirby, Rego, et al., 2020), identity-relevant academic curricula (Brannon et al., 2015), and the presence of allies or similar others (Derricks et al., 2023; Hildebrand et al., 2020; Johnson & Pietri, 2020; Murphy et al., 2007; Pietri et al., 2019) can all signal belonging and identity safety to stigmatized groups. Evidence for these processes has so far stemmed mainly from research with women and minoritized racial groups, largely in the United States (U.S.).

Sexual minorities face unique issues in the workplace, however, compared to those faced by women and racial minorities. Sexual identity is often less apparent from one's appearance than race or sex, for example– in other words, it is a concealable stigmatized identity that people can sometimes choose to disclose (similar to other stigmas that can be concealed, such as mental health; Crocker et al., 1998; Goffman, 1963; Le Forestier et al., 2022). Despite the unique concerns created by concealability, identity safety cues for sexual minorities have been studied less extensively in the social psychological literature, particularly with experimental methodologies.

Literature on workplace climate, however, suggests that a range of cues are associated with greater identity safety and better workplace outcomes for sexual minorities (and the LGBTQ+ community more broadly). In particular, three primary cues are associated with creating safe environments that facilitate identity disclosure: (a) the presence of similar others

who have disclosed their identity, b) institutional support, and (c) supportive ally relationships (Ragins, 2008). For example, a national sample of sexual minority employees in the US reported less fear and more workplace disclosure when they had a more supportive co-worker environment and when they reported a higher proportion of other sexual minorities in their workplace (Ragins et al., 2007; also see Cipollina & Sanchez, 2022).

Because social support from similar others is not possible in work contexts that do not already have sufficient numbers of sexual minorities who are willing to disclose, institutional support may be key as a first step to facilitating disclosure. For example, the organization can provide symbolic support in the form of diversity messages, festivals, or other cues expressing that they value one's group (Kang et al., 2016; Ragins et al., 2007). Indeed, the presence of LGBTQ+ anti-discrimination policies and positive diversity climates is associated with sexual identity disclosure (Driscoll et al., 1996; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002; Yoder, 2016). Additionally, the inclusion of personal pronouns describing one's gender identity has been shown to signal identity safety to both sexual and gender minority employees in the U.S. through increased perceptions of fairness in the organization (Johnson et al., 2021).

***Diversity Ideologies and Concealable Stigmatized Identities***

Relatively subtle symbolic cues can send messages about the safety of an organization (Kirby, Tabak, et al., 2020) and affect sexual identity disclosure (Cipollina & Sanchez, 2022; Kirby et al., 2023). Diversity statements are one example of these symbolic cues. Diversity statements are often displayed prominently on organizations' websites and repeated in brochures and other documentation. Although these statements usually express support for a diverse workforce (Kirby et al., 2023), the expressed cultural beliefs about how diversity and difference should be managed (i.e., a *diversity ideology*) can differ. These cultural beliefs can

shape the experience of minoritized groups (Plaut et al., 2009). For example, some organizations hold an identity-conscious diversity ideology, which focuses on celebrating diversity and difference, but others opt for an identity-blind ideology that instead focuses on similarities.[1] When organizations express an identity-conscious as opposed to an identity-blind diversity ideology, people of color in the US feel more workplace engagement and trust the organization to treat them more fairly (Plaut et al., 2009; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). They are also more likely to reveal information in their resume that could signal their racial identity (Kang et al., 2016).

Relatively little is known about how sexual minorities process diversity ideologies and whether they serve as cues to identity safety or threat. Because of the unique issues sexual minorities (and others with concealable stigmatized identities) face in the workplace, it is unclear whether or how past research on diversity ideologies with other social identities would generalize to sexual minorities. Indeed, in addition to having concealable identities, sexual minority employees often face specific workplace challenges such as lack of recognition of their marital status, assumptions of greater capacity (due to not having children), difficulties accessing benefits, denial of discrimination, among others (Bettinsoli et al., 2022; Fassinger, 2008). They also chronically contend with heteronormativity, or the default assumption that everyone is heterosexual and should behave in line with heterosexual values (van der Toorn et al., 2020; also see Herek, 1990). Therefore, sexual minorities may not have the same needs as other minoritized employees. In fact, past research has already shown that women and minoritized racial groups can hold diverging perceptions of diversity ideologies, due to differences in their workplace needs and experiences (Koenig & Richeson,

[1] Identity-blind ideologies have been defined in a range of ways (see Gündemir et al., 2019; Hahn et al., 2015), including a focus on equality and on assimilation to the dominant group. In the present research, we define it as a focus on similarities (in line with Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008) to create a clean contrast with the focus on difference in the identity-conscious condition.

2010; Martin & Phillips, 2017). As such, it is crucial to examine the effect of workplace cues specifically for sexual minorities.

### *Diversity Ideologies and Psychological Mechanisms*

In addition to being a potential cue to treatment, diversity ideologies express norms about how to navigate one's social identities (Gutiérrez & Unzueta, 2010; Kang et al., 2016; Kirby, Rego, et al., 2020; Kirby & Kaiser, 2020)—which might be especially impactful to people with concealable stigmas because they engage in constant identity management. Whereas an identity-conscious ideology might suggest that one's sexual identity should be celebrated and expressed openly, an identity-blind ideology might instead suggest that sexual identity should be downplayed to focus on treating people the same regardless of their identity. These conflicting messages directly address the internal dilemma that sexual minorities chronically face: Whether to conceal or disclose their sexual identity. Due to uncertainty about whether disclosing their identity will expose them to discrimination, negative social interactions, or other mistreatment (see Pachankis, 2007), they often conceal their sexual identity (Newheiser & Barreto, 2014). This can be done in different ways, such as opting to "pass," which involves actively giving people the impression that they are heterosexual, or to "cover" their sexual orientation by intentionally omitting any information that would hint about their identity. Indeed, when imagining an interaction with a straight person, half of sexual minorities predict that they will conceal their sexual identity from their interaction partner because they believe it will protect them from discrimination (Goh et al., 2019).

These identity management strategies often do not map onto the experience of people with visible stigmatized identities. For example, people with visible stigmas can draw on similar others for social support, but people with concealable stigmas cannot do so if they

have not disclosed their identity in their workplace, or if they have not been able to identify others who have (Camacho et al., 2020; Crocker & Major, 1989). Thus, decisions about disclosure are not only a stressor in themselves, but also have further implications for sexual minorities' ability to manage other workplace stressors they face. Additionally, disclosure decisions are a chronic, ongoing process – sexual minorities repeatedly choose whether or not to disclose across a range of different situations and to different people. They may disclose in some personal contexts, but not at work or other contexts, or they might disclose to some co-workers, but not to clients. This might also depend on how sexual minorities regard their sexual orientation. For example, some sexual minorities see their sexual orientation as a behavioral pattern rather than a social identity (Cox & Gallois, 1996), which may lead them to blend in with the dominant heteronormative culture and see their sexual orientation as irrelevant to the workplace. If the work context is seen as a less appropriate context to disclose sexual identity, then an identity-blind ideology might feel like a better fit to the values of sexual minorities (i.e., a focus on them as individuals, rather than their identity as a sexual minority)—perhaps especially for those who are weakly identified with their sexual identity (Kirby, Rego, et al., 2020; Kirby & Kaiser, 2020).

However, we believe this is unlikely because people generally prefer to feel actively accepted and embraced over being merely tolerated (see Adelman et al., 2023 for findings for US and Dutch participants). Despite valid reasons for concealing one's sexual identity, concealment—especially active concealment (Jackson & Mohr, 2016; Quinn et al., 2017)—can have negative consequences for sexual minorities, even if the concealment only happens in work contexts (Croteau et al., 2008). In particular, concealing a stigmatized identity can reduce feelings of authenticity and increase self-directed guilt and shame (Clair et al., 2005; Ellemers & Barreto, 2006; Newheiser et al., 2017). Suppressing a stigmatized identity is also effortful and can lead to cognitive depletion (Madera, 2010; Smart & Wegner, 1999). These

processes together can deter genuine connections with others and decrease feelings of acceptance (Newheiser & Barreto, 2014). Disclosing, on the other hand, can lead to higher performance-related self-confidence (Barreto et al., 2006) and job satisfaction (Griffith & Hebl, 2002), suggesting clear benefits.

The positive benefits of disclosure in combination with evidence that celebrating one's identity increases identity safety (Gündemir et al., 2016) suggests that an identity-conscious ideology might create identity safety and foster identity disclosure among sexual minorities relative to an identity-blind ideology. Past research on identity safety suggests that the benefits of safety cues can stem from anticipating fairer treatment among both minoritized racial groups (Plaut et al., 2009; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008) and sexual minorities (Johnson et al., 2021), as well as an increased sense of belonging among minoritized racial groups (Gündemir et al., 2017). Thus, perceptions of belonging, fair treatment, or both could drive any positive effects of an identity-conscious ideology among sexual minorities. However, none of these past studies have examined sexual identity disclosure in particular, so other psychological mechanisms might be possible. Given the importance of similar others for organizational disclosure decisions (Ragins et al., 2007) and that identity safety cues can signal higher LGBTQ+ representation (Johnson et al., 2021), perceptions of representation of other LGBTQ+ people might also play a role in any effect of an identity-conscious ideology on disclosure.

**Consistency of Safety Cues**

In addition to diversity ideologies, which are often expressed in diversity statements and serve as symbolic cues (or "expressed cues"; see Wilton et al., 2020) about the diversity climate, sexual minorities also have to interpret other aspects of the climate in organizations. Because diversity ideologies may express prescriptive norms about identity management and

impact sexual minorities' decision to disclose or conceal, it may be especially important that these norms match the reality of the climate that employees witness or experience. If a diversity ideology affirms their identity, but the organization in fact has a threatening environment (e.g., unaccepting colleagues, discriminatory managers), it may be seen as an *safety cue mismatch* and serve as an especially strong deterrent to disclosure. Consistent with this, among people of color, inconsistent cues suggesting high social acceptance of minority groups, but low minority representation, elicit particularly negative assessments of the diversity climate in an organization (Chen & Hamilton, 2015). Similarly, women experience particularly strong identity threat when they learn inconsistent information about gender representation at an organization (Kroeper et al., 2020). Because sexual minorities are hypervigilant, or chronically alert to cues about identity-related threats in the environment (Rostosky et al., 2021), they may be particularly likely to react to inconsistent cues and penalize organizations that send inaccurate or disingenuous signals (see Mckay & Avery, 2005).

However, the literature suggests competing hypotheses about the consistency of safety cues. When considering research on expressed cues (Brady et al., 2015; Kirby et al., 2015; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), minoritized groups sometimes see diversity statements as a valid safety cue even in the face of conflicting information about the actual climate (i.e., "evidence-based cues"; see Wilton et al., 2020; also Cipollina & Sanchez, 2022). For example, Latinx Americans view the presence of organizational diversity rhetoric as an indicator of fair treatment, even in the face of a discrimination lawsuit (Dover et al., 2014). Similarly, Black Americans experience more identity safety in the presence of an identity-conscious relative to identity-blind statement, even when minority group representation is low (but see Ciftci et al., 2020; Wilton et al., 2020 suggesting that evidence-based cues are more influential than expressed cues). Given these inconsistent findings and the unique

stigma-related experiences of sexual minorities, particularly their experiences of hypervigilance (Rostosky et al., 2021), it is crucial to understand their responses to conflicting cues as well.

**Present Research**

Across five experiments, we investigated two primary research questions. First, we investigated the effect of organizational diversity ideologies on sexual minorities' sexual identity disclosure in the workplace (Studies 1-5), hypothesizing that an identity-conscious ideology would facilitate identity disclosure relative to an identity-blind ideology or a control condition **(Hypothesis 1)**. We also investigated whether perceptions of fair treatment, feelings of belonging, or anticipated LGBTQ+ representation, were more plausible psychological mechanisms for the benefits of an identity-conscious ideology (Studies 1-2), as relatively little research has attempted to disentangle multiple mechanisms driving benefits (but see Cipollina & Sanchez, 2022; Gündemir et al., 2017). Our examination of potential psychological mechanisms was more exploratory, so we did not have concrete hypotheses about which of these mechanisms, if any, would mediate the hypothesized effects.

Second, we investigated how sexual minorities would respond to conflicting information about a company's diversity ideology versus its actual diversity climate (i.e., a safety cue mismatch; Studies 2-5). Specifically, we included information about (lack of) ally support (Studies 2-3) or negative organizational treatment (Studies 3-4), in addition to an expression of the organization's diversity ideology, and measured willingness to dislose identity. Although it was possible that a safety cue mismatch would make sexual minorities especially mistrustful and unlikely to disclose **(competing Hypothesis 2a)**, other research suggests that the benefits of diversity ideologies might persist in the face of other relevant information **(competing Hypothesis 2b)** and that multiple cues might all provide identity

safety benefits (i.e., a *"more-the-merrier" effect*). Thus, we pre-registered competing hypotheses for the effects of the mismatch (see pre-registrations for Studies 3-4).

As a final exploratory goal, we investigated the effect of LGBTQ+ identification on sexual minorities' responses to diversity ideologies. Indeed, minoritized racial groups sometimes show divergent reactions to diversity ideologies depending on their level of racial identification (Kirby, Rego, et al., 2020; Kirby & Kaiser, 2020). Concretely, if weakly identified sexual minorities prefer to downplay their sexual identity in the workplace, identity-blindness may serve as a key safety cue to them. However, strongly identified sexual minorities may prefer the reverse, with identity-consciousness highlighting safety and freeing them up to express their identity authentically.

## Data Transparency and Ethics

Data sets and full methodological details for all studies are available at https://osf.io/jx7qa/?view_only=e9072e7ed57d4dfba1ff8f33d2d01953. We pre-registered the study design, planned sample size and/or stopping rule, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and planned primary analyses for Studies 1, 3, 4, and 5 (links included within each Participants section). Study 2 was not pre-registered because it was more exploratory. There were no deviations from the pre-registration plans other than those explicitly stated,[2] and all sample sizes were determined before data analysis. Finally, all measures, manipulations, and exclusions in the studies have been reported, and the manuscript adheres to the relevant national and APA ethical guidelines.

# Study 1

[2] For samples collected through Prolific (Studies 3-5), sample sizes are sometimes larger than pre-registered due to participants timing out. For example, we pre-registered and designated 450 participants for collection in Study 3, but some participants were not initially counted by Prolific because they did not enter their participation code before timing out – this led to a sample of 468 in our data file, but an appearance of only 450 participants through the Prolific system. We had no way of avoiding these discrepancies, but the additional statistical power should not pose any issues.

In Study 1, we examined how sexual minorities would interpret organizational diversity ideologies (expressed through diversity statements) as a cue to identity safety or threat. Specifically, we examined how an identity-conscious and identity-blind relative to a control statement would affect sexual identity disclosure and whether any relationships would be mediated by anticipated belonging, fair treatment, or LGBTQ+ representation. We also tested a model where the identity-conscious ideology leads to higher perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation and then higher belonging or fair treatment and then more comfort disclosing. As a further exploratory analysis, we examined whether sexual minorities' reactions would depend on their level of LGBTQ+ identification (see Kirby & Kaiser, 2020).

## Method

Data sets and full methodological details for this and all subsequent studies are available at https://osf.io/jx7qa/?view_only=e9072e7ed57d4dfba1ff8f33d2d01953.

### *Participants and Design*

We recruited sexual minority participants through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as university LGBTQ listservs in the United States and the United Kingdom. Recruitment included direct messages through social media to people in the researchers' own social networks. Of the 249 voluntary participants who started the study, 21 were excluded because they identified as straight. We excluded another 60 participants because they did not complete the study,[3] leaving a final sample of 168 participants (101 gay, 33 bisexual, 24 lesbian, 6 pansexual, 3 queer, 1 asexual). Participants had a mean age of 24.21 (*SD* = 6.94), and 121 were male, 39 were female, and 8 were non-binary, gender-queer, or unspecified. They represented a range of nationalities, but were predominantly British

[3] Participants who completed the study did not significantly differ in age, $t(81.60) = 1.52$, $p = .132$, or gender, $\chi^2(N = 220) = 0.36$, $p = .548$, from those who did not complete the study. They also did not differ in terms of the experimental condition assigned, $\chi^2(N = 228) = 0.42$, $p = .812$.

(40%), American (26%), Indian (10%), and Swiss (8%). In terms of racial/ethnic background, they identified predominantly as white (72%), South Asian (10%), and multiracial (9%).

As pre-registered (https://osf.io/atge6/?view_only=29a73319733540c0be0259e21852efe1), we used a 3-level (Diversity Ideology: identity-conscious, identity blind, and a control condition) between-participants design and determined our goal sample size with G*power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009). To detect a medium effect size of $f$ = .25 ($\eta^2$ = 0.06) for a between-participants ANOVA with 80% power and an alpha level of 0.05, we required 159 participants. Because this was a student project with time restrictions, we planned to collect as many participants as possible until a set date in the middle of the second academic term. Given our obtained sample size, a sensitivity analysis using GPower 3.1 suggested we could detect an effect size as small as $\eta^2$ = 0.05 with 80% statistical power at an alpha level of 0.05.

***Procedure***

We invited volunteer participants to complete an online study about their perception of the workplace. First, participants answered a standard demographic questionnaire that included sexual orientation – any participants who identified as ‘straight’ were redirected to the debriefing form and told that they were not eligible for the study. Eligible participants were randomly assigned to one of three diversity ideology conditions described below. After reading an organizational brochure containing the manipulation, they completed the dependent measures, an exploratory moderator, and manipulation checks described below.

***Materials***

**Diversity Ideology Manipulation.** Participants read a trifold brochure that described the background, philosophy, and mission of an ostensibly real engineering consultancy named CCX. A statement entitled “Our Staff Philosophy” either described the organization’s diversity ideology (identity-conscious or identity-blind) or offered a neutral statement that did

not discuss diversity – all other information was identical across the three brochures. The diversity statements focused on training their diverse workforce either to embrace their differences and foster an inclusive environment (identity-conscious), or to embrace their similarities and foster an environment focused on commonality (identity-blind; see online supplement). The control statement discussed the organization's focus on their staff, without reference to diversity, and ensuring they have access to success. The brochures were adapted from Kirby and Kaiser's (2020) brochures (originally adapted from Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008) to be appropriate for an engineering consulting company and to explicitly mention sexual orientation in addition to other demographic groups.

**Comfort Disclosing Sexual Identity.** We measured sexual identity disclosure with five items adapted from Schnitzer and Fang's (2015) climate survey: "I would feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation to one or more of my co-workers"; "I would feel comfortable expressing my sexual orientation to my employer"; "I would be afraid of expressing my sexual orientation in the workplace" (reverse-scored); "I believe expressing my sexual orientation would impact how I would be perceived in this workplace" (reverse-scored); "I believe expressing my sexual orientation would change my job prospects" (reverse-scored). Participants responded on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. After reverse scoring the appropriate items, we averaged all items to form a measure where higher values corresponded to more comfort disclosing sexual identity. The measure demonstrated excellent internal reliability ($\alpha = .83$).

**Fair Treatment.** We measured perceptions of fair treatment in the workplace (a subset of items from Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008) with 2 items ("I think I would be treated fairly by my supervisor"; "I think I would trust the management to treat me fairly.") using a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. We averaged the items to form a measure

where higher values corresponded to fairer treatment. Internal reliability was very good ($\rho$ = .90).[4]

**Belonging**. We measured belonging with Walton and Cohen's (2007) social fit questionnaire. Participants responded to four items (e.g., "I would feel like I belong at CCX") using a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. We averaged all items to form a measure where higher values corresponded to more belonging. Internal reliability was very good ($\alpha$ = .96).

**Perceptions of LGBTQ+ Representation**. We measured perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation with a single item ("What percentage of CCX employees would you expect to be sexual minorities?") on a 1 (*much less than other companies*) to 7 (*much more than other companies*) scale. Although we did not originally pre-register an analysis for this measure, we decided in retrospect that it may provide further information about psychological mechanisms.

**LGBTQ+ Identification**. As an exploratory moderator, we measured ingroup identification using Leach and colleagues' (2008) identity centrality subscale. Participants responded to three items (e.g., "Being part of the LGBTQ community is an important part of how I see myself") using a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. We averaged all items to form a measure where higher values corresponded to higher identification. Internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha$) was very good ($\alpha$ = .93).

**Manipulation Check.** Participants responded to "CCX values group differences" on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale.

## Results

[4] We used the Spearman–Brown formula as the index of reliability because this measure only had two items (see Eisinga et al., 2013).

We ran separate one-way ANOVAs to examine the effect of diversity ideology on the manipulation check and all dependent measures. We followed this with post-hoc comparisons across the three conditions using Tukey's HSD correction.

Although not pre-registered, we explored the mediating mechanisms by conducting parallel and serial mediation analyses. First, we tested whether anticipated fair treatment, belonging, or LGBTQ+ representation were more plausible mediators of any effect of diversity ideology on identity disclosure. Second, we tested a serial model where the identity-conscious ideology leads to higher perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation and then higher belonging or fair treatment and then more comfort disclosing. We examined the indirect effects using the PROCESS macro version 3.2 (Hayes, 2013) with 10,000 bootstrapped samples. In the regression, we used the identity-conscious condition as the reference group in the regression – in other words, one variable compared the identity-conscious condition (always coded as 0) to the identity blind condition (coded as 1), and another variable compared identity-conscious to the control condition (coded as 1).

### *Preliminary Analyses*

**Manipulation Check.** The manipulation check confirmed that the diversity ideology affected participants' ratings of how much the organization valued group differences, $F(2, 161) = 43.14$, $p < .001$, in the intended way: Participants reported that the identity-conscious organization ($M = 6.15$, $SD = 1.00$) valued group differences more than the control organization ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.29$), $p < .001$, $d = 1.31$, which valued group differences more than the identity-blind organization ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 2.09$), $p < .001$, $d = .69$.

**Factor Analysis of Mediators.** Although we pre-registered that we would analyze the full 11-item trust and comfort measure (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), we determined in retrospect that the measure tapped into several different theoretical constructs (e.g., desire to work at the organization and fair treatment). We opted to focus on anticipated fair treatment

more narrowly to provide more theoretical and conceptual clarity. We first ran a factor analysis using maximum likelihood estimation and promax rotation, an oblique method that allows the items to be correlated. In line with recommendations (Costello & Osborne, 2019), we ran multiple factor analyses based on the results of the scree plot and on our pre-determined number of factors. Because we thought that at least three distinct factors might be possible and the scree plot suggested 1-2 factors, we ran analyses forcing between two and four factors. The three factor solution was most interpretable, with one factor capturing organizational attractiveness (6 items; e.g., “I think I would like to work at a place like CCX”), one capturing motivation to exert oneself for the company (2 items; e.g., “I think I would be willing to put in extra effort if my supervisor asked me to”), and one capturing anticipated fair treatment (2 items; e.g., “I think I would be treated fairly by my supervisor”). To ensure clear distinctions between our constructs, we only retained items with a 0.5 or higher loading (Costello & Osborne, 2019).[5] To further ensure clarity of our mediators of interest, fair treatment and belonging, we ran an additional factor analysis with only these six items. The four belonging items clearly loaded onto a single factor, and the two fair treatment items clearly loaded onto a separate factor, with no cross-loadings greater than 0.283.

### *Main Analyses*

The organizational diversity ideology affected participants’ comfort disclosing their sexual identity, $F(2, 165) = 4.72$, $p = .010$, perceptions of fair treatment, $F(2, 165) = 8.53$, $p < .001$, anticipated belonging, $F(2, 165) = 9.89$, $p < .001$, and perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation, $F(2, 162) = 13.26$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 1 and Table 1 for full statistics). Consistent with Hypothesis 1, in the identity-conscious condition, participants anticipated

[5] Because organizational attractiveness and motivation were not a central focus of the present research, we do not focus on them here. However, organizational attractiveness showed a main effect that was parallel to other measures, $F(2, 165) = 10.32$, $p < .001$, but motivation did not, $F(2, 165) = 2.18$, $p = .116$. As pre-registered, in the online supplement, we report findings for the full trust and comfort measure, which was also parallel to the other results reported in Study 1 (on anticipated belonging, fair treatment, and comfort disclosing).

more fair treatment, comfort disclosing, belonging, and LGBTQ+ representation perceptions compared to participants in the identity-blind, and control conditions. Participants did not differ across the identity-blind and control conditions. In an additional exploratory analysis, participants' LGBTQ+ identification did not moderate the effect of condition for any measures, *p*s > .247.[6]

**Mediation Tests.** Our statistical test of the indirect effect showed tentative support for both parallel and serial mediation models, but it was more consistent for the serial mediation model. For parallel mediation, fairness, belonging, and perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation all accounted for a significant portion of variance for the identity-conscious relative to identity-blind comparison, but not consistently for the identity-blind relative to control comparison; see Table 2 for statistics). This suggests potential support for a model in which an identity-conscious ideology leads to perceptions of fair treatment and belonging, which is then associated with more identity disclosure.

However, we also found support for a model in which an identity-conscious ideology leads to higher perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation, which is then associated with fairer treatment and more belonging, and then more comfort disclosing identity. This serial mediation pathway was significant for both the identity-conscious relative to identity-blind and control comparisons, suggesting slightly more consistent evidence for the serial mediation than the parallel mediation pathway.[7] Although these mediation tests provide useful insights, these cross-sectional analyses cannot rule out the possibility of other models involving variables we have not measured (see Fiedler et al., 2018 for a discussion of limitations of mediation analysis).

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[6] In Studies 2-3 (not 4-5), we also measured LGBTQ+ identification as a possible moderator. It did not moderate the effects in any of these studies – statistics are reported in the online supplement.

[7] In an additional analysis, neither the parallel or serial mediation pathways showed significant indirect effects for the identity-blind relative to control comparison.

**Discussion**

As expected, an identity-conscious ideology made sexual minorities more comfortable disclosing their sexual identity relative to an identity-blind and control ideology. Although an identity-blind ideology did not facilitate disclosure, it also did not deter it when compared with a statement containing no diversity ideology. One reason for this may be that the identity-conscious and identity-blind statements were as parallel as possible other than their focus on differences as opposed to similarities – unlike some other operationalizations of identity-blindness, the identity-blind ideology used in this study did not explicitly devalue diversity (see Hahn et al., 2015 for a discussion of valence confounds). Finally, in terms of mechanisms, we found strongest support for a model in which an identity-conscious ideology leads to higher perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation, which is then associated with expectations of fairer treatment and stronger sense of belonging, and then with more comfort disclosing identity.

## Study 2

In Study 2, we examined how sexual minorities would respond to diversity ideologies in the face of additional information about a negative diversity climate. Because allies (or lack thereof) who support and affirm sexual minorities' identities can affect their disclosure decisions (Johnson & Pietri, 2020; Ragins et al., 2007), we used negative or neutral information about co-worker support to manipulate diversity climate information. Sexual minorities are hypervigilant, or chronically alert to cues about identity-related threats in the environment (Rostosky et al., 2021), so they may react to inconsistent cues that send inaccurate or disingenuous signals (see Mckay & Avery, 2005) by being especially unwilling to disclose their sexual identity (i.e., a safety cue mismatch effect). Alternatively, the benefits of diversity ideologies might persist in the face of inconsistent information, showing a more-the-merrier effect, with both cues independently providing identity safety benefits.

**Method**

***Participants and Design***

We recruited sexual minority participants using the same strategy as in Study 1. Of the 526 voluntary participants who started the study, 134 were excluded because they identified as straight. Another 177 participants did not fully complete the study,[8] leaving a final sample of 215 participants (88 bisexual, 60 gay, 31 lesbian, 18 pansexual, 6 asexual/aromantic, 4 queer, 4 unspecified, 3 demisexual, 1 bi-curious). Participants had a mean age of 23.75 (*SD* = 7.79), and 77 were men, 122 were women, and 16 were non-binary, gender-queer, or another gender. They represented a range of nationalities, but were predominantly British (72%), Finnish (9%), and other European nationalities (12%). In terms of racial/ethnic background, they identified predominantly as white (89%) and multiracial (6%).

We used a 2 (Diversity Ideology: Identity-conscious vs. Identity-blind) x 2 (Co-Worker Environment: Interpersonal prejudice vs. No prejudice) between-participants design. Because we did not have a good basis for anticipating the effect size in this new design and because this was a student project with time restrictions, we planned to collect as many participants as possible until a set date in the middle of the second academic term. Given our obtained sample size, a sensitivity analysis using GPower 3.1 suggested we could detect an effect size as small as $\eta^2 = 0.03$ ($d = 0.22$) with 80% statistical power at an alpha level of 0.05

***Procedure***

We used the same general procedure as in Study 1. After reading one of two organizational brochures from Study 1, participants were randomly assigned to one of two

[8] Participants with missing data did not significantly differ in age, $t(284) = -0.18$, $p = .855$, or gender, $\chi^2(N = 260) = 1.14$, $p = .285$, from those who fully completed the study. They also did not differ in terms of diversity condition, $\chi^2(N = 286) < .001$, $p = .999$. However, those in the prejudice condition (80%) were more likely to complete the study than those in no prejudice condition (70%), $\chi^2(N = 286) = 3.94$, $p = .047$.

conditions giving information about the co-worker environment. They read a scenario where they were asked to imagine having lunch with a group of colleagues (adapted from Newheiser & Barreto, 2014). In the no-prejudice condition, participants read about one colleague who mentioned her cousin, who is gay. In the prejudice condition, an additional sentence was added before the final sentence: "One co-worker says 'I'm fine with gay people as long as they don't flaunt it in front of me.'"

Next, they completed the same measures from Study 1, including anticipated comfort disclosing sexual identity ($\alpha = .90$), fair treatment ($\rho = .92$), belonging ($\alpha = .97$), LGBTQ+ representation, and manipulation checks. We adapted comfort disclosing to assess comfort expressing identity to these specific co-workers, to their employer, and in the workplace in general (e.g., "I would feel comfortable [be afraid of] expressing my sexual orientation to these co-workers"). We also removed the three reverse-scored items from the previous measure because the meaning of the items was more ambiguous. Participants also completed the additional measures outlined below.

***Additional Measures***

**Sexual Identity Disclosure.** We more directly assessed sexual identity disclosure with two items adapted from Newheiser and Barreto (2014): "How likely would you be to disclose your sexual orientation to these co-workers?"; "How likely would you be to disclose your sexual orientation to your employer?" Participants responded on a 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*extremely likely*) scale, and we averaged the items to form a measure where higher values corresponded to higher likelihood of disclosing sexual identity. Internal reliability (Spearman-Brown) was very good ($\rho = .79$).[9]

[9] We also included an advocacy-focused disclosure measure, which was not affected by diversity ideology. For the sake of brevity, we describe this measure in the online supplement for this and subsequent studies.

**Co-Worker Environment Manipulation Check.** To assess understanding of the co-worker environment manipulation, participants responded to "I think the co-workers at this company were biased against people with my sexual orientation" on a 1 (S*trongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*) scale.

**Results**

We ran 2x2 ANOVAs to examine the effect of diversity ideology, co-worker environment, and their interaction on all measures.

***Manipulation Checks***

**Diversity Ideology Manipulation Check.** Participants reported that the identity-conscious organization valued group differences more than the identity-blind organization, $F(1, 204) = 153.68$, $p < .001$, confirming the efficacy of the diversity ideology manipulation. However, this effect was moderated by co-worker environment, $F(1, 204) = 7.07$, $p = .008$. The identity-conscious ideology increased perceptions of valuing group differences more when there was no information about prejudice, $F(1, 204) = 105.25$, $p < .001$, than when there was evidence of prejudice, $F(1, 204) = 51.35$, $p < .001$.

**Co-Worker Environment Manipulation Check.** Confirming the efficacy of the co-worker environment manipulation, participants reported more prejudice in the prejudice condition than in the condition with no information about prejudice, $F(1, 204) = 86.39$, $p < .001$. This effect was not moderated by diversity ideology, $F(1, 204) = 0.84$, $p = .360$.

***Main Analyses***

Consistent with Hypotheses 1, in the identity-conscious condition, participants experienced more anticipated fairness, $F(1, 211) = 7.73$, $p = .006$, $d = 0.36$, comfort disclosing, $F(1, 211) = 21.20$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.60$, belonging, $F(1, 211) = 23.18$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.62$, LGBTQ+ representation, $F(1, 204) = 38.21$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.86$, and were more likely to

disclose their sexual identity[10] compared to participants in the identity-blind condition, $F(1, 211) = 12.67$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.48$ (see Table 3 for descriptive statistics). They also experienced less anticipated comfort disclosing their sexual identity, $F(1, 211) = 17.17$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.54$, fairness, $F(1, 211) = 7.36$, $p = .007$, $d = 0.36$, belonging, $F(1, 211) = 12.00$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.44$, and disclosure intentions, $F(1, 211) = 4.72$, $p = .031$, $d = 0.28$, in the face of prejudice than when there was no information about prejudice. However, there was no difference in anticipated LGBTQ+ representation when learning about prejudice compared to receiving no information about prejudice, $F(1, 204) = 1.31$, $p = .254$, $d = 0.15$. Consistent with Hypothesis 2b (and inconsistent with Hypothesis 2a), there were no interactions between diversity ideology and co-worker environment condition on any measure, *F*s < 2.27, *p*s > .132.

**Mediation Tests.** Although not pre-registered, we explored mediating mechanisms by conducting serial mediation analyses to test anticipated fair treatment, belonging, and LGBTQ+ representation as potential mediators of the effect of diversity ideology on identity disclosure. Using the same strategy as in Study 1, the series of mediation analyses demonstrated the most consistent support for a serial mediation model where the identity-conscious ideology leads to higher perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation and then higher belonging and fair treatment and then more comfort disclosing. There was no support for anticipated belonging and fair treatment as mediators, except when preceded by LGBTQ+ representation in the model (and very limited support for LGBTQ+ representation alone). Full statistics for all models are reported in Table 4.

## Discussion

An identity-conscious ideology increased participants' willingness to disclose their sexual identity relative to an identity-blind ideology, replicating the effect of Study 1.

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[10] Despite asking participants about their willingness to disclose to multiple parties (e.g., managers and co-workers), the findings were the same for all individual items, with an identity-conscious ideology leading people to disclose to all parties more than an identity-blind ideology, *p*s < .001.

Contrary to the possibility that sexual minorities would be especially mistrustful in the face of conflicting cues (safety-cue-mismatch perspective), the benefits of an identity-conscious ideology remained regardless of information about co-worker environment. Instead, the findings supported a more-the-merrier perspective, whereby diversity ideology and co-worker environmental cues independently contributed to identity safety and willingness to disclose.

## Study 3

Because co-worker environment did not moderate diversity ideology in Study 2, we examined whether making the co-worker manipulation more self-relevant for all sexual minorities would make it more powerful. Specifically, we tailored the information about co-worker environment to mention a person of the participants' own specific sexual orientation, rather than a gay person (who is a sexual minority but does not represent all sexual minorities). We also included more evidence that the prejudice information reflected a broader climate, so that participants could not easily discount the prejudice information as an exception to the broader environment.

### Method

#### *Participants and Design*

We recruited sexual minority participants through Prolific, an online participant recruitment platform. As pre-registered (https://osf.io/fq6mk/?view_only=b309ce543f5841b7b7f5387ae39a4386), we aimed to collect 100 participants per cell for a 2 (Diversity Ideology: Identity-conscious vs. Identity-blind) x 2 (Co-Worker Environment: Interpersonal prejudice vs. No prejudice) between-participants design. Of the 468 participants who started the study, 34 were excluded from analyses because they identified as straight or did not specify. Another 4 participants did not complete the study, leaving a final sample of 430 participants (193 lesbian, 217 gay, 12 queer, 6 bisexual, 2 pansexual). Participants had a mean age of 32.97 (*SD* = 11.07), and 219

were men, 210 were women, and 1 was non-binary. They were predominantly British (52%) and US American (45%) in terms of nationality, as well as country of residence. In terms of racial/ethnic background, they identified predominantly as white (84%), Black (5%), and multiracial (5%). Given our obtained sample size, a sensitivity analysis using GPower 3.1 suggested we could detect an effect size as small as $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ($d = 0.16$) with 80% statistical power at an alpha level of 0.05

### *Procedure*

We invited participants to complete an online study about their perception of the workplace using the same procedure as in Study 2 other than the modifications below.

### *Materials*

**Co-Worker Environment Manipulation.** Participants read the same scenario as in Study 2, but the statement was tailored to discuss someone of the same sexual orientation as each participant. Additionally, we added an additional sentence to the prejudice condition: “Everyone nods in agreement, and one person adds, "Yeah, I wouldn't vote for a presidential candidate who was openly LGBTQ either.”

**Dependent Measures.** We measured sexual identity disclosure ($\rho = .89$), comfort disclosing ($\alpha = .95$), anticipated fair treatment ($\alpha = .93$), and LGBTQ+ representation with the same measures as in Study 2.[11] Finally, participants responded to the same manipulation checks as in Study 2.

## Results and Discussion

We used the same analytic strategy as in Study 2.

### *Manipulation Checks*

[11] Because we did not include anticipated belonging in this study (mediation was not originally a central focus in Studies 3-5), we were not able to run a mediation analysis that was fully parallel to Studies 1-2. However, results of the mediation analyses otherwise replicated the conclusions we have drawn so far. For the sake of brevity, the statistics are only reported in the online supplement for this and subsequent studies. No mediation analysis is reported for Study 5 because we did not measure perceptions of fair treatment or belonging.

**Diversity Ideology Manipulation Check.** Participants reported that the identity-conscious organization valued group differences more than the identity-blind organization, $F(1, 423) = 281.19$, $p < .001$, confirming the efficacy of the diversity ideology manipulation. This effect was not moderated by co-worker environment, $F(1, 423) = 0.52$, $p = .471$.

**Co-Worker Environment Manipulation Check.** Confirming the efficacy of the co-worker environment manipulation, participants reported more prejudice in the prejudice condition than in the condition with no information about prejudice, $F(1, 423) = 615.17$, $p < .001$. This effect was not moderated by diversity ideology, $F(1, 423) = 1.55$, $p = .213$.

***Main Analyses***

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, in the identity-conscious condition, participants reported more anticipated fair treatment, $F(1, 426) = 19.40$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.39$, comfort disclosing, $F(1, 426) = 9.83$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.28$, LGBTQ+ representation, $F(1, 423) = 57.67$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.70$, and likelihood of disclosing their sexual identity, $F(1, 426) = 7.03$, $p = .008$, $d = 0.26$, compared to participants in the identity-blind condition (see Table 5 for descriptive statistics). They also reported less anticipated fair treatment, $F(1, 426) = 57.48$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.72$, comfort disclosing, $F(1, 426) = 48.78$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.66$, LGBTQ+ representation, $F(1, 423) = 41.87$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.58$, and likelihood of disclosing their sexual identity, $F(1, 426) = 3.95$, $p = .048$, $d = 0.19$, in the face of prejudice than when there was no information about prejudice. However, consistent with Hypothesis 2b (inconsistent with Hypothesis 2a), there were no interactions between diversity ideology and co-worker environment condition on fair treatment, $F(1, 426) = 0.01$, $p = .914$, comfort disclosing, $F(1, 426) = 0.03$, $p = .859$, LGBTQ+ representation, $F(1, 423) = 0.12$, $p = .724$, or identity disclosure $F(1, 426) = 0.01$, $p = .910$.

**Discussion**

An identity-conscious ideology again increased participants' willingness to disclose their sexual identity relative to an identity-blind ideology. A non-prejudiced co-worker environment also increased willingness to disclose relative a prejudiced environment, again suggesting support for a more-the-merrier effect rather than a safety-cue-mismatch effect.

# Study 4

The previous studies used a diversity climate manipulation that gave information about allyship, or how colleagues might treat sexual minorities at the organization. In Study 4, we instead manipulated diversity climate through information about how management treats sexual minorities, which may be more important in participants' decisions to disclose their sexual identity. Indeed, the presence of instrumental institutional support (or lack thereof), such as management-implemented anti-discrimination strategies and positive diversity climates is associated with sexual identity disclosure (Driscoll et al., 1996; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Rostosky & Riggle, 2002; Yoder, 2016).

## Method

### *Participants and Design*

We recruited sexual minority participants through Prolific, an online participant recruitment platform, only advertising to participants who had not participated in Study 3. As pre-registered (https://osf.io/fw69b/?view_only=67efaa57178143279307d6580c7d6463), we aimed to collect 75 participants per cell for a 2 (Diversity Ideology: Identity-conscious vs. Identity-blind) x 2 (Managerial Treatment: Negative vs. Control) between-participants design, to balance statistical power needs and resource constraints. Of the 394 participants who started the study, 31 were excluded from analyses because they identified as straight or did not specify. We excluded another 6 participants due to missing data, leaving a final sample of 357 participants (157 lesbian, 179 gay, 11 queer, 9 bisexual, 1 asexual). Participants had a mean age of 31.55 (*SD* = 11.50), and 171 were men, 181 were women, and

5 were non-binary. They were predominantly British (52%) and US American (40%) in terms of nationality, as well as country of residence. In terms of racial/ethnic background, they identified predominantly as white (82%) and multiracial (6%). Given our obtained sample size, a sensitivity analysis using GPower 3.1 suggested we could detect an effect size as small as $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ($d = 0.17$) with 80% statistical power at an alpha level of 0.05

### *Procedure*

We invited participants to complete an online study about their perception of the workplace using the same procedure as in Study 3 other than the modifications below.

### *Materials*

**Managerial Treatment Manipulation.** In the negative managerial treatment condition, participants read a testimonial from a previous employee of the company discussing their negative treatment from management (adapted from Wilton et al., 2020 to be relevant to sexual minorities; see online supplement). In the control condition, they read a testimonial that instead discussed lack of trust between clients and the company, but with no information about managerial treatment.

**Dependent Measures.** We measured anticipated sexual identity disclosure ($\rho = .92$), comfort disclosing ($\alpha = .95$), fair treatment ($\rho = .92$), and LGBTQ+ representation with the same items used in Study 3. Finally, participants responded to the same diversity ideology manipulation check as in Study 3. To determine the success of the managerial treatment manipulation, they also responded to “Based on the testimonial… CCX management values the LGBTQ+ community” on a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) scale.

## Results

We used the same analytic strategy as in Study 3.

### *Manipulation Checks*

**Diversity Ideology Manipulation Check.** Participants reported that the identity-conscious organization valued group differences more than the identity-blind organization, $F(1, 350) = 313.40$, $p < .001$, confirming the efficacy of the diversity ideology manipulation. This effect was not moderated by co-worker environment, $F(1, 350) = 0.28$, $p = .600$.

**Co-Worker Environment Manipulation Check.** Confirming the efficacy of the co-worker environment manipulation, participants reported more prejudice in the prejudice condition than in the condition with no information about prejudice, $F(1, 350) = 228.35$, $p < .001$. This effect was not moderated by diversity ideology, $F(1, 350) = 1.86$, $p = .174$.

***Main Analyses***

Contrary to previous studies and Hypothesis 1, participants did not report different levels of disclosure, $F(1, 352) = 0.002$, $p = .961$, $d = 0.02$, comfort disclosing, $F(1, 352) = 0.01$, $p = .926$, $d = 0.03$, or anticipated fair treatment, $F(1, 352) = 2.54$, $p = .112$, $d = 0.12$, in the identity-conscious relative to the identity-blind condition (see Table 6 for descriptive statistics). However, in the identity-conscious condition, participants anticipated more LGBTQ+ representation, $F(1, 350) = 11.84$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.26$, compared to participants in the identity-blind condition.

Participants also reported lower anticipations of disclosure, $F(1, 352) = 26.93$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.55$, comfort disclosing, $F(1, 352) = 60.39$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.82$, fair treatment, $F(1, 352) = 47.01$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.72$, and LGBTQ+ representation, $F(1, 350) = 129.17$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.16$, when learning about negative managerial treatmentcompared to receiving no information about managerial treatment. Consistent with Hypothesis 2b, there was no interaction between diversity ideology and managerial treatment condition on disclosure, $F(1, 352) = 0.86$, $p = .355$, comfort disclosing, $F(1, 352) = 2.58$, $p = .109$, or fair treatment, $F(1, 352) = 0.03$, $p = .873$.

However, there was an unexpected interaction (inconsistent with previous studies) between diversity ideology and managerial treatment condition on LGBTQ+ representation, $F(1, 350) = 7.40$, $p = .007$. When breaking the interaction down by diversity climate condition, there was an effect of diversity ideology in the control condition, $F(1, 350) = 19.07$, $p < .001$, but not in the negative diversity climate condition, $F(1, 350) = 0.26$, $p = .612$. Specifically, participants in the identity-conscious condition anticipated more LGBTQ+ representation compared to participants in the identity-blind condition, but only in the control climate condition.

**Discussion**

Contrary to all previous studies, diversity ideology did not affect participants' willingness to disclose. Instead, only information about managerial treatment mattered in this study– negative information about management's treatment of sexual minorities reduced willingness to disclose relative to negative information about client trust in the company. These findings are consistent with research with people of color, showing that they are more attuned to information about racial/ethnic diversity and diversity climate (evidence-based cues) than to organizational statements (expressed cues; Wilton et al., 2020). More importantly for the purposes of this research, these findings suggest that any negative information about the trustworthiness of the company may turn off the benefits of an identity-conscious diversity ideology. In other words, minoritized groups may make inferences about diversity climate even from information that is not directly about diversity climate.

However, it is also noteworthy that the magnitude of the effect of diversity ideology decreased substantially between Studies 1-2, where we recruited from company and LGBTQ+ listservs, compared to Studies 3-4, where we recruited from a participant recruitment platform (also with an older sample). For example, the disclosure measures in Studies 1 and 2 averaged $d = 0.55$, but averaged $d = 0.27$ in Study 3. One reason for our

failure to replicate may be differences in the samples. However, another possibility is that the failure to replicate is merely a reflection of the smaller effect sizes—indeed, multi-study projects with low effect sizes are unlikely to demonstrate statistically significant results in every study without very large sample sizes (Schimmack, 2012). For example, to achieve 80% power to detect $d = 0.55$ (in an independent-samples t-test), we would only require 106 participants. To detect $d = 0.27$, we would require 434 participants (based on an a priori power analysis) —more than the 357 collected in this study.

Finally, one other deviation from previous studies was the presence of an interaction between diversity ideology and managerial treatment on perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation. This interaction pattern was in line with a safety mismatch effect because an identity-conscious ideology no longer increased perceptions of representation when there was conflicting information suggesting poor treatment from managers (i.e, information about negative managerial treatment might have elicited hypervigilance and made participants less trustful of the identity-conscious ideology). Because this interaction effect did not emerge for other dependent measures and has not emerged on this measure in any other studies, it should be interpreted cautiously before further replication.

## Study 5

The previous study showed that negative information about managerial treatment removed the effect of the diversity ideology (on most measures). One possible reason for this is that the testimonials might have given stronger evidence of a broader workplace problem (and therefore a negative climate) than the individual co-worker climate information. In other words, the co-worker climate information might have been more ambiguous. It is possible that diversity messaging becomes a more important cue when people have no other clear information about how they will be treated at that organization. For example, diversity

messaging does not affect minoritized racial groups in the US when there is already information suggesting a positive diversity climate (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008). In Study 5, we examined the effect of diversity ideologies in the context of negative, ambiguous, or positive information about managerial treatment to test this possibility.

## Method

### *Participants and Design*

We recruited sexual minority participants through Prolific, an online participant recruitment platform, only advertising to participants who had not participated in Studies 3 and 4. As pre-registered (https://osf.io/5ugfm/?view_only=ecf0289de74342c29c0541eafbe15588), we aimed to collect at least 75 participants per cell for a 2 (Diversity Ideology: Identity-conscious vs. Identity-blind) x 3 (Managerial Treatment: Negative vs. Ambiguous vs Positive) between-participants design, so we requested 500 participants to account for exclusions. Of the 535 participants who started the study, 36 were excluded from analyses because they identified as straight or did not specify sexual orientation. We excluded another 7 participants due to missing data, leaving a final sample of 492 participants (229 gay, 199 lesbian, 37 queer, 21 bisexual, 4 pansexual, 2 asexual). Participants had a mean age of 29.94 ($SD$ = 10.51), and 233 were women, 225 were men, and 34 were non-binary. They were predominantly British (51%) and US American (42%) in terms of nationality, as well as country of residence. In terms of racial/ethnic background, they identified predominantly as white (81%), multiracial (6%), Black (5%), East Asian (3%), Latinx/Hispanic (3%), and South Asian (2%). Given our obtained sample size, a sensitivity analysis using GPower 3.1 suggested we could detect an effect size as small as $\eta^2 = 0.02$ ($d = 0.16$) with 80% statistical power at an alpha level of 0.05

### *Procedure*

We invited participants to complete an online study about their perception of the workplace using the same procedure as in Study 4 other than the modifications below.

***Materials***

**Managerial Treatment Manipulation.** In the negative managerial treatment e condition, participants read a testimonial from a previous employee of the company discussing how supervisors mistreat LGBTQ+ people (adapted from Wilton et al., 2020) – it was nearly identical to Study 4, but with minor tweaks (e.g., a rating of 1 out of 5 stars, instead of 2 out of 5 stars). In the ambiguous treatment condition, the testimonial discussed similar points, but stated more uncertainty about their treatment as an LGBTQ+ member of the organization (e.g., "Uncertain how my supervisors felt about me"). In the positive treatement condition, they stated that LGBTQ+ people were valued at the organization (see online supplement).

**Dependent Measures.** We measured sexual identity disclosure (ρ = .94), comfort disclosing (α = .95), and LGBTQ+ representation with the same items used in Study 4. Participants then responded to the same diversity ideology manipulation check as in Study 4. They also responded to 3 items on a 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) scale assessing the success of the managerial treatment manipulation: "CCX management values the LGBTQ+ community"; "I would face discrimination at CCX" (reverse scored); "Supervisors are biased at CCG" (reverse scored; α = .92). Finally, to ensure that the ambiguous treatment was viewed as the most ambiguous, they responded to 3 further items: "It is unclear whether CCX management values the LGBTQ+ community"; "I am uncertain how I would be treated at CCX"; "The level of LGBTQ+ bias is ambiguous" (α = .86).

**Results**

We used 2x3 ANOVAs for analyses of the manipulation checks and dependent measures.[12]

### *Manipulation Checks*

**Diversity Ideology Manipulation Check.** Participants reported that the identity-conscious organization ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.59$) valued group differences more than the identity-blind organization ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 2.20$), $F(2, 484) = 141.26$, $p < .001$, confirming the efficacy of the diversity ideology manipulation. This effect was not moderated by managerial treatment, $F(2, 484) = 0.83$, $p = .438$.

**Managerial Treatment Manipulation Check.** Confirming the efficacy of the managerial treatment manipulation, participants expected more bias in the negative managerial treatment condition ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 0.96$) compared to the ambiguous ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.95$), $p < .001$, $d = 1.70$, or positive treatment conditions ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 1.04$), $p < .001$, $d = 3.39$, $F(2, 484) = 511.08$, $p < .001$. They were also less likely to expect bias in the positive treatment compared to the ambiguous treatment condition, $p < .001$, $d = 1.78$. This effect was not moderated by diversity ideology, $F(2, 484) = 0.61$, $p < .543$.

Further confirming the efficacy of the managerial treatment manipulation, participants reported more ambiguity about treatment in the ambiguous condition ($M = 5.27$, $SD = 1.16$) than in the positive ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.27$), $p < .001$, $d = 2.38$, and negative treatment conditions ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.62$), $F(2, 484) = 195.57$, $p < .001$, $d = .83$.[13]

### *Main Analyses*

[12] For the diversity ideology manipulation, we mistakenly pre-registered a one-way ANOVA, instead of the 2x3 ANOVA we pre-registered for the managerial treatment manipulation check – for consistency, we use a 2x3 ANOVA for both.

[13] This main effect was moderated by diversity ideology, $F(2, 484) = 10.19$, $p < .001$. In the negative managerial treatment condition, an identity-conscious ideology increased ambiguity relative to the identity-blind ideology, $p = .001$, but it decreased ambiguity in a positive climate, $p = .010$. The diversity ideology did not affect ambiguity in an ambiguous climate, $p = .108$.

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, in the identity-conscious condition, participants were more likely to disclose, $F(1, 485) = 15.31$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.17$, more comfortable disclosing, $F(1, 485) = 8.01$, $p = .005$, $d = 0.08$, and anticipated higher LGBTQ+ representation, $F(1, 484) = 19.27$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.18$, compared to participants in the identity-blind condition (see Table 7 for descriptive statistics). There was also a main effect of managerial treatment on disclosure, $F(2, 485) = 136.35$, $p < .001$, comfort disclosing, $F(2, 485) = 173.37$, $p < .001$, and LGBTQ+ representation, $F(2, 484) = 167.92$, $p < .001$. Specifically, participants were less likely to disclose, $p < .001$, $d = .79$, less comfortable disclosing, $p < .001$, $d = .98$, and anticipated lower LGBTQ+ representation, , $p < .001$, $d = .56$, when learning about negative treatment compared to ambiguous or positive treatment, $p < .001$, $d = 1.81$; $p < .001$, $d = 2.13$; $p < .001$, $d = 2.01$, respectively. They were also more likely to disclose their sexual identity, $p < .001$, $d = .95$, were more comfortable disclosing, $p < .001$, $d = .99$, and anticipated higher LGBTQ+ representation, $p < .001$, $d = 1.37$, when learning about positive compared to ambiguous treatment.

Consistent with Hypothesis 2b, there were no interactions between diversity ideology and managerial treatment on disclosure, $F(2, 485) = 0.55$, $p < .579$, comfort disclosing, $F(2, 485) = 0.07$, $p = .930$, or LGBTQ+ representation, $F(2, 484) = 1.22$, $p = .296$.

**Discussion**

An identity-conscious ideology increased participants' willingness to disclose their sexual identity relative to an identity-blind ideology, replicating the effects of Studies 1-3. Contrary to a safety cue mismatch perspective, this was the case regardless of information about managerial treatment—instead, it again supported a more-the-merrier effect.

Additionally, the safety-cue-mismatch interaction effect on perceptions of LGBTQ+ representation in Study 4 did not replicate in Study 5 – because the interaction did not replicate in any other studies, it does not appear to be a robust effect. Study 5 and the body of

studies as a whole appear to provide the most consistent support for a more-the-merrier effect.

## General Discussion

Across five studies, organizational diversity cues shaped identity safety for sexual minorities, affecting their willingness to disclose their sexual identity in the workplace, the comfort they would feel when doing so, and their feelings about the organization (i.e., perceptions of fair treatment and belonging). Specifically, Studies 1-3 showed that identity-conscious diversity messages elicited more disclosure, comfort, perceived fairness, and anticipated belonging in the workplace among sexual minority employees than did identity-blind diversity messages. Interestingly, although an identity-blind ideology did not facilitate disclosure, it also did not deter it when compared with a statement containing no diversity ideology.

Regarding psychological mechanisms, we explored both parallel and serial mediations involving expected LGBTQ+ representation, fair treatment, and feelings of belonging (Studies 1 and 2). The evidence consistently pointed to identity-conscious ideologies leading to greater expected representation of LGBTQ+ employees in the organization, which was associated with expected fairness and belonging, and then greater intentions to disclose. Although these analyses shed light on some of the experiences of sexual minority employees, we cannot rule out alternative models that include variables we have not measured in these studies (see Fiedler et al., 2018). For example, it is possible that identity-conscious ideologies encourage greater trust in the employer. Indeed, research has shown that stigmatization is associated with less trust in others as well as in institutions (e.g., Zhang et al., 2020). Although expected fairness is an aspect of trust, future research could focus on other aspects of organizational trust.

In Studies 2 and 3, the benefits of an identity-conscious ideology persisted even in the face of information about a negative co-worker environment in the organization, as evidenced by expressions of bias by work colleagues. Indeed, organizational policies and messages exist to set prescriptive norms and regulate employee behavior, so they might reassure employees that prejudice from colleagues will be addressed when it happens. These findings have a parallel in research demonstrating that structural stigma against sexual minorities at the country level impacts them over and above the effects of interpersonal experiences with stigma (Doyle et al., 2023; also see Doyle & Molix, 2015). Taken together, this may indicate that messages or behaviors seen to represent an organization can be just as important for the outcomes of sexual minorities as specific incidents of bias experienced. However, concrete information about how management treats sexual minorities had particularly strong effects in Studies 4-5, suggesting that variation in who enacts any negative behaviors may also play an important role. These possibilities should be tested more directly in future research with methodologies that capture real-world experiences.

Despite our tentative expectation that inconsistent cues would make sexual minorities especially mistrustful and unlikely to disclose, diversity messages did not interact with diversity climate (co-worker environment or managerial treatment) in these studies. This finding dovetails with other research suggesting that minoritized racial groups in the US are responsive to diversity cues individually rather than holistically (Dover et al., 2014; Wilton et al., 2020). Yet the finding contrasts with research showing that people are especially unlikely to trust an organization with conflicting information about women's workplace representation (Kroeper et al., 2020). However, the latter research demonstrated deliberate misrepresentation by the organization, in contrast with the more ambiguous cues to diversity climate of the present research. Unlike concrete statistics about representation, diversity messages can have a range of interpretations. It can represent a descriptive statement about the nature of the

organization, but it can also be an aspirational statement about the climate it wants to achieve – this may in itself be valuable even when reality has not (yet) caught up with this ideal.

Taken together, this research makes several contributions to the literature. Our primary contribution is to extend existing knowledge about the impact of diversity ideologies to sexual minorities. This work demonstrates that diversity ideologies impact how sexual minorities manage their identity in the workplace, often in the face of conflicting cues about identity safety or threat. Despite the fact that sexual minorities chronically worry about discrimination—and downplaying identity might be expected to alleviate discrimination concerns—identity-blind ideologies showed no benefits for identity disclosure in these studies. Instead, an identity-conscious ideology facilitated identity disclosure through perceptions of higher LGBTQ+ representation, belonging, and fair treatment. This dovetails with other scholarship showing that identity-conscious ideologies increase perceptions of fair treatment among minoritized racial groups (Gündemir & Galinsky, 2018; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), which can also translate into more disclosure of cues to their racial identity (Kang et al., 2016). It also dovetails with findings showing that trust in an organization can be a key facilitator of disclosing sexual identity (Capell et al., 2018).

This work contributes both to an improved understanding of the challenges sexual minorities face in the workplace and to a more complete understanding of the impact of diversity ideologies. More generally, we extend the literature on diversity ideologies to concealable stigmatized identities for the first time, although it is possible that other concealable identities (e.g., mental health status, neurodiversity) might be accompanied by very different workplace experiences and needs—therefore implying different responses to diversity ideologies.

Finally, the research contributes a better understanding of how identity safety (and threat) cues may or may not interact to impact sexual minorities' experiences. Despite sexual

minorities' workplace hypervigilance (Rostosky et al., 2021), mismatched safety cues did not make them especially mistrustful, which was counter to our safety mismatch perspective. Instead, they demonstrated a more-the-merrier interpretation of the findings, where multiple cues can work together to increase (or hurt) safety. Indeed, a holistic approach to making organizations safe for the sexual minority community may be required – targeting a single level of an organization does not provide a "magic bullet."

**Limitations and Future Directions**

An important limitation of this work is that one of the five studies reported in this paper did not replicate the effect of diversity ideologies found in the remaining four studies. Because statistical power is the probability of correctly rejecting a false null hypothesis (Howell, 2012), studies aiming for 80% statistical power will sometimes have one or more null effects in a series of studies (20%; also see Schimmack, 2012). However, there may be other reasons why Study 4 revealed a different pattern of results. Having closely examined the differences between all studies conducted, we could not find any specific factor that was unique to this study. For example, the sample in Study 4 had an older average age than in Studies 1 and 2, it has a similar average age as Studies 3 and 5. Also, Study 4 was conducted through Prolific, as were Studies 3 and 5. The distribution of gender and sexual orientation varied across studies, but it was comparable in Studies 4 and 5, which both also used similar testimonials as stimuli for the managerial treatment manipulation. Our inclination is to regard the null result obtained in Study 4 as a "standard anomaly" in the research process, but future scholarship may be able to identify a theoretical reason for the deviation, as well as better understanding additional factors that shape how sexual minorities manage their identities at work.

In future research, it will be important to develop nuanced theorizing about how different identities in the LGBTQ+ community shape reactions to diversity initiatives. For

example, bisexual people have lower identification with the LGBTQ+ community and also have more concerns about essentializing sexual orientation relative to other sexual minorities (Morgenroth et al., 2021). Additionally, along with transgender people (Morgenroth et al., 2023; Olson et al., 2015), bisexual people face more issues related to the visibility and believability of their identity (Kirby, Merritt, et al., 2020) compared to cisgender gay or lesbian individuals. A combination of identities such as sexual orientation, gender, and race, may also intersect to shape responses to diversity ideologies (see Lei & Rhodes, 2021; Petsko et al., 2022; Rosette et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2022).

Another limitation of the present research is that participants were judging hypothetical workplace contexts, rather than reflecting on their own employers' diversity cues. Although this afforded experimental control over the factors of interest—and our samples included employed participants who could relate to the situations they imagined—future research could complement this analysis with a les controlled but more realistic embedding in real employment contexts. The organizational context was also restricted to a relatively masculine domain (engineering consultancy) – the perceived femininity or masculinity of work environments may have a role to play in sexual minorities' willingness to disclose their sexual orientation, although how would interact with diversity ideologies is as yet unclear.

In addition, our samples were somewhat culturally homogeneous and largely limited to two countries – identity disclosure may not be as easily influenced in cultural contexts where sexual minorities are at significant risk. Indeed, it is important to note that by focusing on identity disclosure, we are not taking a normative approach to this choice or neglecting the costs of disclosing, which can be substantial. However, although disclosing makes members of socially stigmatized groups vulnerable to prejudice, discrimination, and even violence, one must not underestimate the individual and collective benefits disclosing can have, such as

improved physical and mental health (Pachankis, 2007), social relationships (Newheiser & Barreto, 2014), and job attitudes (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). It is also crucial to facilitate visible representation, which can help address stereotypes, provide role models, and enable social support and collective action. That said, future research should examine these processes in different cultural contexts to provide a more complete understanding of the challenges sexual minorities face at work.

Finally, in Study 2, participants in the prejudice condition (80%) were more likely to complete the study than those in no prejudice condition (70%). In addition to concerns about internal validity, this suggests potential concerns about exposing minoritized participants to threatening information about prejudice in experimental research. In future research, it is worth considering whether online methodologies—where we are unable to help alleviate any distress experienced by participants—are always appropriate for prejudice research.

**Conclusion**

In sum, our results show a "the more the merrier" effect of diversity cues, in that both types of cues examined facilitated identity disclosure among sexual minorities. Empowering people to disclose a minority identity gives them the power to address the stigma associated with their identity. In this sense, organizations have a role to play in enabling employees to be themselves at work, perform to their potential, and contribute to supporting others to do the same. Crucially, no individual should feel pressure to disclose their identity or advocate for their community in an environment that is unsafe—but creating truly safe environments and signaling that safety will allow people to stand up and be visible, as well as contribute to the visibility of their co-workers.

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