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Old-Fashioned and Modern Homonegativity within an American College Student Sample

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### **About the Author**

In May 2007, Eric Anthony Grollman graduated with magna cum laude honors from the University of Maryland Baltimore County with Bachelor's degrees in sociology and psychology, as well as a certificate in gender and women's studies. He is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Through his graduate training, specifically focusing on his research interests in sexuality, gender, race, social psychology, and research methodology, he plans to develop a career as a researcher and professor in sociology. He would like to give special thanks to his advisors Dr. Ilsa Lottes and Dr. Fred L. Pincus for their extensive help in developing and editing this paper. He would also like to thank Dr. David Huebner and Louis Leibowitz for reviewing this paper and providing helpful and insightful feedback.

### **About this Paper**

In its early stages, this project was to become a needs assessment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students at the University of Maryland Baltimore County and a collection of evidence of homophobia on campus. Upon meeting with Dr. Fred L. Pincus, this project was expanded to become an empirical research project, satisfying the requirements for the Honors Thesis in Sociology, and later to be presented at Undergraduate Research Day in April 2007. With Dr. Ilsa Lottes's help, this project was further extended for submission to the *UMBC Review* for publication- it was later presented at the national 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality in October 2007 in Indianapolis, IN. In addition to this paper's contributions to the body of research on sexuality and attitudes toward LGBT people, this paper serves to make UMBC aware of the extent to which anti-LGBT prejudice and discrimination exists on its campus.

### **Abstract**

Using a Canadian sample, Melanie A. Morrison and Todd G. Morrison (2002) found support for the distinction between *old-fashioned homonegativity*, defined as “prejudice rooted in traditional religious and moral beliefs and misconceptions about homosexuality” (p. 17), and *modern homonegativity*, which includes more abstract concerns about lesbian and gay rights as well as discrimination against lesbians and gay men. This study sought to determine whether empirical support exists for this distinction within an American undergraduate sample ( $n = 702$ ). Factorial support was found for this distinction, yet questions were raised about the theoretical basis of this distinction. This study also assessed the relationship between attitudes and behaviors toward lesbians and gay men, and determined differences in attitudes and behaviors among various demographic groups.

## Introduction

In the last 50 years, lesbians and gay men have made substantial progress toward equal rights and acceptance on political, social, and moral fronts in the United States. Although many celebrate this progress, it is important to note that negative attitudes and behaviors toward lesbians and gay men continue to thrive. For example, in 2005, there were approximately 1,017 hate crimes committed on the basis of sexual orientation, more than half being reported as *Anti-Male Homosexual* attacks (FBI 2006). That number is only 200 fewer than the number of such crimes reported in 1998 (FBI 1999)—the year when Matthew Shepard, a gay college student, was murdered. Although several states include sexual orientation in their hate crime laws, it is not yet included in federal hate crime laws.

In 2005, approximately three-quarters of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) elementary, middle, and high school students reported feeling unsafe in school because of their religion, gender, or sexual orientation (GLSEN 2006)—two-thirds of which reported feeling unsafe solely because of their sexual orientation. Over one-third of LGBT students reported being physically harassed and two-thirds reported being verbally harassed. An estimated 42% of America's 1.6 million homeless youth are lesbian and gay; one-quarter of these lesbian and gay homeless youths were kicked out of their homes by their families and many others ran away from home to escape physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse (Ray 2006). With respect to lesbian and gay couples, several cities provide domestic partnerships, yet few states offer civil unions, only one state offers marriage for same-sex couples. In addition, nearly half of all US states have amended their constitutions to ban the legal recognition of same-sex relationships. In recognizing that negative attitudes and behaviors toward lesbians and gay men continue to plague our society, it has become increasingly important to devise methods to reduce such

attitudes and behaviors. Thus, researchers continue to investigate the nature and pervasiveness of such attitudes and behaviors in hope of finding ways to eliminate them.

### **Research on Negative Attitudes and Behaviors Toward Lesbians and Gay Men**

George Weinberg (1972) coined the term *homophobia* to conceptualize fear and disgust of lesbians and gay men. He called for a shift in the direction of research on homosexuality from a focus on the etiology and development of homosexuality to a focus on heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Since the mid-1970s, in accordance with Weinberg's call, numerous studies have examined attitudes towards homosexuals (Wright, Adams, and Bernat 1999; Raja and Stokes 1998). However, by the mid-1980s, many researchers began to find the concept of *homophobia* to be limiting and essentially unidimensional (Schwanberg 1993; Roderick et. al. 1998; Wright, Adams, and Bernat 1999; Herek 2000). They further argued that it fails to look beyond the affective responses to lesbians and gay men (e.g., fear and disgust).

To broaden the understanding of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, the term *homonegativity* was introduced in the late 1980s (Roderick et. al. 1998; Wright, Adams, and Bernat 1999; Herek 2000), defined as "any prejudicial affective or behavioral response directed toward an individual because he or she is perceived to be gay" (Morrison, Parriag, and Morrison 1999: 112). The concept of *homonegativity* had been expanded to include behavioral, cognitive, and affective components of negative attitudes (Van de Ven, Bornholt, and Bailey 1996; Roderick et. al. 1998; Wright, Adams, and Bernat 1999). This expansion allows for an exploration of the links between feelings, thoughts, and actions regarding lesbians and gay men.

There has been increasing evidence of a decline in negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (Altemeyer 2001; Morrison and Morrison 2002; Steffens 2005). Each year for fourteen

years, Bob Altemeyer (2001) assessed attitudes of students in his psychology courses and of their parents toward lesbians and gay men. Over the fourteen-year span, he found a steady decline in negative attitudes. Altemeyer suggested that the decline was due, in part, to increasing contact with lesbians and gay men and increasing scientific evidence of the biological nature of sexual orientation.

Similar to research on *modern sexism* and *modern racism* (Swim, Aikin, Hall, and Hunter 1995), Melanie A. Morrison and Todd G. Morrison (2002) introduced the concepts of *modern homonegativity* and *old-fashioned homonegativity*. Recognizing increasingly tolerant attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, they suggested that old-fashioned homonegativity is declining, while modern homonegativity remains high, yet varied.

They noted:

Students' prejudice against gay men and lesbians has moved away from biblical injunctions and moral objections to more abstract concerns. These concerns include: (1) gay men and lesbians are making illegitimate (or unnecessary) demands for changes in the status quo (e.g., spousal benefits); (2) discrimination against homosexual men and women is a thing of the past; and (3) gay men and lesbians exaggerate the importance of their sexual preference and, in so doing, prevent themselves from assimilating into mainstream culture. (P. 18).

In their study, they developed the Modern Homonegativity Scale to assess modern homonegativity, which they found to be factorally distinct from old-fashioned homonegativity.

Sheela Raja and Joseph P. Stokes (1998) introduced a similar concept, *modern homophobia*, and developed the Modern Homophobia Scale as a way to “update some of the content of older homophobia scales” (p. 115). However, unlike Morrison and Morrison (2002), they did not empirically compare the concept of modern homophobia to any other types of homophobia. Further, they did not argue that modern homophobia originates from sources different from those of an older form of homophobia; instead, they argue that modern

homophobia is simply different in that increased visibility of lesbians and gay men in the media, better education about homosexuality, and the shift in current lesbian and gay-related issues have changed negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men.

Similarly, Cowan et. al. (2005) introduced the concepts *modern heterosexism* and *old-fashioned heterosexism*. The two differ in the way that they are expressed: modern heterosexism is a subtle form of heterosexism, whereas old-fashioned heterosexism is expressed overtly. Modern heterosexism operates as a parallel form of prejudice to modern sexism and modern racism. It primarily consists of the belief “that discrimination against gays and lesbians is no longer a problem and that there are now equal opportunities for gays and lesbians, and that gays and lesbians do not have legitimacy of anger at their treatment” (p. 70).

Melanie C. Steffens (2005) introduced the concepts of *implicit attitudes* and *explicit attitudes* toward lesbians and gay men. While empirical evidence suggests that attitudes toward lesbians and gay men have become more tolerant, Steffens proposed the possibility that it has become less socially acceptable to express negative attitudes—even as far as not admitting to oneself that such attitudes are held. Using the Implicit Association Test, participants were asked to quickly select one choice or another, in this case heterosexual or homosexual, to be associated with a quality that is flashed briefly (e.g., good, bad, normal, abnormal, happy, and sad). Steffens found that participants were more likely to associate negative qualities with lesbians and gay men and positive qualities with heterosexuals. On average, explicit attitudes toward lesbians and gay men were found to be relatively positive, yet implicit attitudes were found to be relatively negative.

An earlier study by Jeffrey A. Bernat et. al. (2001) looked at physical expressions of aggression toward gay men, building upon the scant amount of research on self-reported



behaviors targeted toward lesbians and gay men. They found that male participants classified as homophobic based on their scores on the Homophobia Scale tended to be more aggressive in a reaction time activity using shocks toward a fictional opponent whom they thought to be a gay man than toward an opponent thought to be a heterosexual man. Conversely, for male participants classified as non-homophobic, the level of aggression toward a fictional homosexual opponent was not found to be significantly different from the level of aggression toward a heterosexual opponent.

Many studies have explored relationships between attitudes toward lesbians and gay men and demographic characteristics. Gender differences have been thoroughly explored, providing consistent evidence that men tend to be less tolerant than women toward lesbians and gay men (Herek 1988; LaMar and Kite 1998; Wright, Adams, and Bernat 1999; Herek and Capitanio 1999; Herek 2000; Altemeyer 2001; Newman 2002). Studies have explored religion as a correlate and have found that religiosity (Herek 1988; Morrison, Parriag, and Morrison 1999; Herek 2000; Lewis 2003; Newman 2002), frequency of church attendance (Herek 2000; Lewis 2003), and religious commitment (Lewis 2003) are positively correlated with negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. One such study found that Conservative Protestants tend to be the least tolerant toward lesbians and gay men, whereas atheists, agnostics, non-religious individuals, and Jews are the most tolerant (Newman 2002). Others have found that lower levels of education, older age, lower socioeconomic status, political conservatism, high authoritarianism, traditional gender and family ideology, modern sexism, and the lack of positive interactions and friendships with lesbians and gay men are also frequently positively correlated with negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (Herek 1988; Simon 1995; LaMar and Kite 1998; Herek 2000).

Few researchers have explored differences in attitudes toward lesbians and gay men among racial and ethnic groups (Herek 2000; Lewis 2003; Negy and Eisenman 2005). Findings from past research are inconsistent, but most of these findings suggest that blacks hold less tolerant attitudes than whites (Negy and Eisenman 2005). Few studies have utilized samples that are racially and ethnically representative of the United States. Almost all of the studies that have focused on race and ethnicity have been limited to differences between black and white Americans. One exception, a study by Herek and Gonzales-Rivera (2006) used a sample of US residents of Mexican descent, though no comparison was made with other racial and ethnic groups. The findings were consistent with past research: significant differences were found across gender, age, education, political orientation, religiosity, and amount of personal contact with lesbians and gay men. Their findings suggest that slight differences exist between those who identify with American culture and those who do not—the latter tend to hold less tolerant attitudes.

As stated earlier, Morrison and Morrison (2002), using a sample of Canadian college students, and Morrison, Kenny, and Harrington (2006), using a sample of Irish college students, found that old-fashioned and modern homonegativity represented two empirically distinct dimensions. The primary goal of this study is to investigate whether these two types of homonegativity are distinct within a sample of American college students. In addition, the relationships among old-fashioned and modern homonegativity and behaviors toward lesbians and gay men are examined. A secondary goal of this study is to examine the relationships among demographic characteristics and attitudes and behaviors toward lesbians and gay men.

As indicated by the literature review, some predictions can be made. Differences in attitudes are expected to be found across participants' gender, socioeconomic status (i.e., parents'

level of education), importance of religion in their lives, and political orientation. Specifically, men, children of parents' with lower levels of education, and those of high religiosity and political conservatism are expected to hold the least tolerant views toward lesbians and gay men and to engage in the most negative and hurtful behavior and the least positive and helpful behavior toward lesbians and gay men. No predictions have been made for differences across race and ethnicity, nationality, year in school, academic major, involvement in specific extra-curricular activities, and residential status and transfer status.

## **Methodology**

### *Participants*

Whereas past studies have used small samples from introductory psychology classes, the sample for this study includes undergraduate students from a wide variety of disciplines and from all academic class-standings (i.e., freshman through senior) at a racially and nationally diverse university in the Mid-Atlantic United States. Although this study's sample ( $n = 702$ ) is not based on probability sampling, its academic profile is similar to that of the undergraduate student body: 10% studying arts and humanities, 31% social sciences, 22% life and chemical sciences, 24% engineering, information technology, and computer science, 4% physical and mathematical sciences, and 10% other majors or undecided. The sample is also racially and ethnically similar to the undergraduate student body: 56% white, 15% black, 21% Asian, 2% Latino/a, 4% multiracial/multiethnic, and 2% other races and ethnicities. The sample consists of 26% first-year students, 19% second-year students, 26% third-year students, 20% fourth-year students, and 8% fifth-year students. In terms of religion, 25% of participants identified as Catholic, 37% as Protestant, 17% as agnostic, atheist, or non-religious, 3% as Jewish, 4% as

Muslim, 3% as Buddhist, 3% as Hindu, and 7% identified with other religions. Politically, 33% of participants identified as liberal, 37% as moderate, 18% as conservative, and 12% as other or no political orientations. Ninety-two percent of participants identified as heterosexual and 85% identified as US citizens. The sample includes approximately even proportions of women and men, and commuters and residents.

### *Measures*

Table 1 contains the items contained in the two homonegativity scales. Eleven items from the Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men scale (ATLG) (Herek 1988) were used to assess old-fashioned homonegativity. Eleven items from three sources were used to assess modern homonegativity: nine items from the Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS) (Morrison and Morrison 2002), two items from the ATLG scale (“Legal benefits for marriages should not be given to gay male couples” and “A woman’s homosexuality should not be a cause of job discrimination in any situation”), and one item that was created by the author (“Compared to heterosexual men, gay men are less likely to make important contributions to society”). The two items that were taken from the ATLG scale were used to assess modern homonegativity due to the recently popularity of the issues of same-sex marriage and employment protection for lesbians and gay men in politics and the media. These two items seemed consistent with Morrison and Morrison’s conceptualization of modern homonegativity in that they are concerned issues related to discrimination and lesbian and gay rights. For these scales, participants were asked to respond to each item using a five-point Likert scale: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral/don’t know*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*. To minimize response bias, slightly over half of the items on the homonegativity scales were reverse-scored.

Using eight items from the Behavior Toward Homosexuals scale (BTH) and one additional question that was created by the author (“In the last year, how often have you used the phrase ‘that’s so gay,’ ‘that’s gay,’ or a similar phrase to refer to something as negative or undesirable?”), participants were asked to indicate the number of times they engaged in *pro-gay helping behaviors* and *homophobic behaviors* (Schope and Eliason 2000): *never, once, two or three times, four to ten times, and eleven or more times*. In order to ensure consistency in terms of measuring homonegativity, all pro-gay helping behavior items were reverse-scored, thus, higher scores reflect lower reports of positive and helpful behavior toward lesbians and gay men. That is, higher levels of negative attitudes, more reports of homophobic behaviors, and fewer to no reports of pro-gay helping behaviors contribute to higher measures of homonegativity.

### *Procedures*

To utilize an academically diverse sample, participants were recruited from courses in most major academic divisions (e.g., arts and humanities, social sciences, physical and mathematical sciences, and so forth) and from every course level (introductory through senior-level). Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their responses would be anonymous. They were informed that participation would not affect their performance in the class through which they were recruited. Participants were given a survey to complete during regularly scheduled class time. Participation lasted for approximately 15 minutes.

### *Analysis*

To assess the internal reliability of the homonegativity and behavior scales, Cronbach alphas were computed. Replicating analyses of Morrison and Morrison (2002), factor analyses

were conducted with oblimin rotation to assess the dimensionality of the old-fashioned and modern homonegativity scales. Paired t-tests were used to determine differences between the two types of homonegativity. Pearson correlations were calculated to assess the relationships among the four scales. Independent t-tests were used to determine whether differences in attitudes and behaviors exist between residents and commuters and between transfer and non-transfer students. Chi squares and analyses of variance were computed to assess differences in attitudes and behaviors across gender, race and ethnicity, religion, importance of religion, involvement in extracurricular activities, year in school, academic major, and parents' education. Scheffe tests were used to determine pair-wise significant differences in the analyses of variance.

## **Results**

### *Scales*

Descriptive statistics of the homonegativity and behavior scales can be found on Table 2. Cronbach alpha coefficients for old-fashioned and modern homonegativity were .94 and .89, respectively, and for pro-gay helping and homophobic behavior were .69 and .51, respectively. It should be noted that the small number of items assessing behavior and the diversity of severity of behavior (i.e., ranging from laughing at anti-gay jokes to physically attacking a lesbian) contributed to the low alpha coefficients for pro-gay helping and homophobic behaviors. The alpha coefficient for a scale including all 22 homonegativity items was .95. This value was high for women ( $\alpha = .96$ ) and for men ( $\alpha = .95$ ), as well. Old-fashioned homonegativity, modern homonegativity, (reverse-scored) pro-gay helping behavior, and homophobic behavior were all found to correlate with one another significantly ( $p < .01$ ) (see Table 3).

Factor analyses of the 22 homonegativity items indicated that two factors had eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and, together, these factors accounted for 56% of the variance. The factor loadings for the homonegativity items are presented in Table 1. The first factor accounted for 51.2% of the total variance. All eleven old-fashioned homonegativity items loaded on this factor, in addition to three modern homonegativity items, including the item that was created by the author and the two items that were originally on the ATLG scale. The second factor accounted for 5.2% of the total variance. The remaining eight modern homonegativity items loaded on this factor.

### *Attitudes and Behavior*

For most items, less than one-fifth of participants reported an unsupportive or intolerant response considered to be homonegative. One exception was the response to the item, “I would not be upset if I learned my son was a homosexual” to which two-fifths of participants either agreed or strongly agreed. This item addresses a personal matter and for many seems to have evoked a stronger negative reaction than that to items regarding issues that are not directly affecting the participants. However, only three percent of participants responded that they agreed or strongly agreed with the item “Compared to heterosexual men, gay men are less likely to make important contributions to society.”

The eleven-item old-fashioned and eleven-item modern homonegativity scales range from a minimum score of 11 to a maximum of 55 because participants responded to each item using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree*, which corresponded to a value of 1, to *strongly disagree*, which corresponded to a value of 5. These values were reversed for items that were reverse-scored. The means for both old-fashioned and modern homonegativity fell

below the mid-point of 33—representing moderate or neutral views toward lesbians and gay men. Thus, on average, participants' scores fell in the non-homonegative range ( $M < 30$ ). In general, 81% and 77% of participants scored below the mid-point on the old-fashioned and modern homonegativity scales, respectively. Percentages of generally homonegative and non-homonegative participants are presented in Table 4. Consistent with Morrison and Morrison (2002), modern homonegativity was found to be significantly higher than old-fashioned homonegativity, ( $t(675) = 17.660, p < .001$ ). However, contrary to Morrison and Morrison's findings, modern homonegativity did not vary more than old-fashioned homonegativity (see Table 2).

Percentages of reported pro-gay helping and homophobic behavior can be seen on Table 5. In the last year, a majority of participants had never made fun of, physically attacked, or defended a lesbian, nor had they verbally or physically harassed a gay man. Nearly half had invited a gay man to hang out, yet nearly half had also said "that's so gay" or "that's gay." Over half had challenged an anti-lesbian joke, yet over half had laughed at an anti-gay joke. Twenty-eight percent of participants who reported engaging in at least one homophobic behavior at least once in the last year scored in the extremely non-homonegative range with respect to old-fashioned homonegativity. Only 6.6% of participants who reported engaging in at least one homophobic behavior scored in the extremely non-homophobic range with respect to modern homonegativity. One-third of participants who reported physically attacking a lesbian at least once and slightly less than one-third of those who reported verbally or physically harassing a gay man at least once scored in the non-homonegative range for both types of homonegativity. For example, three of the participants who reported harassing a gay man scored in the extremely non-homonegative range for old-fashioned homonegativity. Less than one percent of participants who



engaged in at least one pro-gay helping behavior at least once scored in the extremely homonegative range with respect to old-fashioned and to modern homonegativity.

### *Relationships Among Homonegativity, Behavior, and Demographic Variables*

Means and F ratios of the demographic social groups are displayed in Table 6. For old-fashioned homonegativity ( $F(2, 684) = 21.39, p < .001$ ), the mean for men was significantly higher than that of women. For modern homonegativity, ( $F(2, 684) = 50.08, p < .001$ ), the mean for men was significantly higher than that of women. Men's mean for reported (reverse-scored) pro-gay helping behavior was significantly higher than women's mean, ( $F(2, 684) = 46.38, p < .001$ ), reflecting significantly fewer reports of engaging in positive and helpful behavior targeted toward lesbians and gay men by men than by women. Men's mean for reported homophobic behavior was significantly higher than women's mean, ( $F(2, 684) = 47.19, p < .001$ ), reflecting significantly more reports of engaging in negative and hurtful behavior by men than women. In summary, in every case, the means of men's scores were significantly higher (i.e., more homonegative) than those of women's scores.

Due to the small number of Latino/a, Native American, and multiracial/multiethnic participants, analyses of differences across race and ethnicity were limited to Asian ( $n = 146$ ), black ( $n = 100$ ), and white ( $n = 387$ ) participants. Post-hoc Scheffe tests indicated that white participants' means for old-fashioned homonegativity and (reverse-scored) pro-gay helping behavior were significantly lower than those of Asian ( $p < .001$ ) and black ( $p < .001$  and  $p < .05$ , respectively) participants. These tests also indicated that white participants' mean for modern homonegativity was significantly lower than that of Asian participants ( $p < .01$ ).

For political orientation, significant differences were found for old-fashioned ( $F(2, 605) = 73.62, p < .001$ ), modern homonegativity ( $F(2, 605), p < .001$ ), and (reverse-scored) pro-gay helping behavior ( $F(2, 603), p < .001$ ). Again using Scheffe tests, the means of conservatives were significantly higher than those of moderates, which were, in turn, significantly higher than those of liberals. For pro-gay helping behavior, all mean differences were significant at the .001 level except for differences between moderates and liberals ( $p < .05$ ) and between conservatives and moderates ( $p < .01$ ). No significant differences were found for homophobic behavior with respect to political orientation ( $F(2, 604) = 1.94, p > .05$ ).

With respect to religion, significant differences were found in terms of old-fashioned homonegativity ( $F(2, 544) = 37.25, p < .001$ ) and modern homonegativity ( $F(2, 541) = 17.03, p < .05$ ), yet none were found for (reverse-scored) pro-gay helping ( $F(2, 542) = 4.38, p > .05$ ) or homophobic behavior ( $F(2, 545) = 1.06, p > .05$ ). Participants who identified as Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu religions were excluded from the analyses of religion due to small subsample sizes. In terms of old-fashioned and modern homonegativity, the means for Catholics and Protestants were significantly higher than those of atheists or agnostics. Differences were found in terms of importance of religion in participants' lives, as well. With respect to old-fashioned homonegativity ( $F(4, 680) = 50.40, p < .001$ ), the mean of participants who identified religion as extremely important was significantly higher than the means of those who identified religion as very important, moderately important, slightly important, and not at all important; the mean of those who identified religion as very important was significantly higher than the means of those who identified it as moderately important, slightly important, and not at all important; and, the mean of those who identified religion as moderately important was found to be significantly higher than that of those who identified it as not at all important. The same pattern

of differences of means was found for modern homonegativity ( $F(4, 680) = 22.95, p < .001$ ), except no significant difference was found between those who identified religion as moderately important and those who identified it as very important. In terms of (reverse-scored) pro-gay helping behavior ( $F(4, 676) = 6.21, p < .001$ ), the mean of participants who identified religion as extremely important was significantly higher than that of those who identified it as moderately important and not at all important; the mean of those who identified religion as very important was found to be significantly higher than that of those who identified it as moderately important. No significant differences were found for homophobic behavior ( $p > .001$ ).

### *Academics*

Few significant differences were found with respect to major. In terms of modern homonegativity ( $F(5, 647) = 3.78, p < .001$ ), the mean of students majoring in engineering, computer science, and information technology was found to be significantly higher than that of students majoring in the arts and humanities. A similar significant difference was found with respect to (reverse-scored) pro-gay helping behavior ( $F(5, 643) = 4.93, p < .001$ ); in addition, the mean for students in engineering, computer science, and information technology was significantly higher than that of students majoring in the social sciences. No significant differences were found with respect to old-fashioned homonegativity ( $F(5, 647) = 2.80, p > .05$ ) or homophobic behavior ( $F(5, 647) = 2.45, p > .05$ ).

Few significant differences were found across year in school, as well. With respect to old-fashioned homonegativity ( $F(4, 670) = 7.45, p < .001$ ), the mean of second-year students was found to be significantly higher than the means of third-year, fourth year, or fifth-year students; the mean of first-year students was significantly higher than that of fifth-year students.

With respect to modern homonegativity, the mean for second-year students was similarly significantly higher than third-year, fourth-year, and fifth-year students ( $F(4, 669) = 6.84, p < .001$ ). No significant differences were found with respect to (reverse-scored) pro-gay helping behavior ( $F(4, 664) = 1.47, p > .05$ ) and homophobic behavior ( $F(4, 668) = 1.54, p > .05$ ).

No significant differences were found in terms of resident or commuter status, nationality, socioeconomic status (i.e., parents' education), general extracurricular activities, involvement in cultural and ethnic student organizations, involvement in Greek organizations, or whether participants had transferred from another college or university. In addition, for both women and men, no significant differences were found between athletes and non-athletes.

## **Discussion**

On average, participants expressed relatively low levels of old-fashioned and modern homonegativity. A majority of participants scored in the non-homonegative range for both types of homonegativity, with nearly one-third scoring in the extremely non-homonegative range for old-fashioned homonegativity. For both types of homonegativity, less than 12% of participants scored in the homonegative range. The most commonly reported behaviors were saying “that’s gay” or “that’s so gay” and laughing at anti-gay jokes, as well as inviting a gay man to hang out; the least commonly reported behaviors were physically attacking a lesbian and verbally or physically harassing a gay man. Although the extremes of homophobic behavior were not common, it is still alarming that 27 participants reported harassing a gay man at least once and nine reported physically attacking a lesbian at least once in the last year.

*Old-Fashioned Homonegativity and Modern Homonegativity*

A factor analysis of the homonegativity items produced two factors. An examination of the factor loadings indicated that 21 of the 22 items loaded similarly to the factor analysis completed with the Canadian sample of Morrison and Morrison (2002). The item that did not load as expected asked the following: “Compared to heterosexual men, gay men are less likely to make important contributions to society.” This item was created by the author and was intended to assess modern homonegativity; however, it loaded along items assessing old-fashioned homonegativity. Due to this item’s low variability (only 3% of participants agreed), researchers may desire to exclude it from future assessments of homonegativity. As mentioned earlier, the two items that Morrison and Morrison included to assess old-fashioned homonegativity (“Legal benefits for marriages should not be given to gay male couples” and “A woman’s homosexuality should not be a cause of job discrimination in any situation”) were changed to assess modern homonegativity in this study for conceptual reasons; however, consistent with Morrison and Morrison, these items loaded on the factor with items assessing old-fashioned homonegativity.

Despite support in the factor analysis for two distinct factors, this study also finds support for the existence of only one dimension of homonegativity. For example, the Cronbach alpha was .95 for a scale consisting of all 22 homonegativity items. Further, the correlation between these two scales was above .80. Thus, both the highly significant intercorrelations among all 22 items and the high proportion of the variance accounted for by the first factor raise questions about the empirical dimension of homonegativity.

Morrison and Morrison (2002) state that modern homonegativity includes views about issues dealing with discrimination against lesbians and gay men and their requests for rights (e.g., spousal benefits). In this author’s view, the two items that loaded with old-fashioned homonegativity items are conceptual measures of modern homonegativity because they deal with

discrimination against and the extension of rights to lesbians and gay men. This further challenges the theoretical distinction between old-fashioned and modern homonegativity. Further empirical and theoretical work is needed to examine possible distinctions between these two types of homonegativity. For example, how would the distinction between old-fashioned and modern homonegativity explain any level of old-fashioned homonegativity of participants who identify as atheist, agnostic, or non-religious? It could be argued that all Americans' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men are shaped in part by the dominance of Judeo-Christian beliefs and morality in American culture, thus, it is difficult to understand how old-fashioned homonegativity is completely distinct from modern homonegativity.

#### *Pro-Gay Helping and Homophobic Behavior*

Of the few studies that assess behavior toward lesbians and gay men, most have found that behavior is significantly correlated with attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. The findings of this study are consistent with those of prior research: all four scales, old-fashioned homonegativity, modern homonegativity, pro-gay helping behavior, and homophobic behavior, were found to correlate significantly with one another. However, the correlations between homophobic behavior and the two types of homonegativity, although significant, were low. Excluding the difference across gender, no other group comparisons yielded a significant difference with respect to homophobic behavior. It should be noted that some participants who scored in the non-homonegative range reported engaging in at least one homophobic behavior in the last year. This allows for further inquiry into the factors that lead people to engage in anti-lesbian and anti-gay behaviors, as homonegativity does not appear to be the sole factor influencing such behavior.

Participants reported engaging in more homophobic than pro-gay helping behaviors. The most commonly reported behavior was saying the phrase “that’s gay” or ‘that’s so gay” to refer to something negative or bad. On the other hand, the two least commonly reported behaviors were physically attacking a lesbian and verbally or physically harassing a gay man. While these two behaviors were the most extreme homophobic behaviors, there were less than three participants who reported high frequencies of engaging in such behavior. It is important to note that no measure of social desirability was used for this study. Therefore, along with responses to homonegativity items, participants’ reported behavior may not reflect their actual behavior due to their desire to respond in a manner that is socially desirable or politically correct.

### *Demographics and Academics*

As predicted, differences were found across gender, religiosity, and political orientation with respect to old-fashioned and modern homonegativity. Men, conservatives, those reporting a high level of importance of religion, and Catholics and Protestants held the highest levels of old-fashioned and modern homonegativity. Conservatives and men reported fewer pro-gay helping behaviors than moderates and liberals, and women, respectively. Men reported a higher frequency of homophobic behaviors than women. White participants were found to hold more tolerant attitudes than blacks with respect to old-fashioned homonegativity. They were also found to hold significantly more tolerant attitudes than Asians in terms of both types of homonegativity. Further, whites reported significantly more instances in which they engaged in pro-gay helping behaviors than blacks and Asians. Consistent with the findings of Lewis (2003), no significant differences were found between whites and blacks for modern homonegativity.

Given the diversity of participants, an assessment of attitudes with respect to academic major and year in school was possible, but very few significant differences were found. With respect to modern homonegativity, participants in computer science, computer engineering, mechanical engineering, and information systems, were found to hold less tolerant attitudes than participants in the arts and humanities. The former reported engaging in fewer pro-gay helping behaviors than participants in both the arts and humanities and the social sciences. Generally, third-, fourth-, and fifth-year students were found to hold more tolerant attitudes toward lesbians and gay men than first- and second-year students in terms of both types of homonegativity. Given that universities are found to facilitate tolerant values (Dey 1989; Lottes and Kuriloff 1994; Pascarella, and Terenzini 1991), it is not surprising that participants who have been in college longer hold more tolerant attitudes than those who have been in school for less time. The high level of homonegativity among second-year students may be an anomaly or specific to the sample of this study; further research is necessary to understand this finding.

### *Limitations*

The sample of this study is limited to one university. While most of the findings are consistent with those of prior research, they still lack generalizability to other populations. Further, some groups were excluded from analyses (e.g., Latino/a, Native American, and multiracial/multiethnic) and other analyses involved small subsamples (e.g., those involved in Greek life and non-‘Greeks’). In addition, participants’ responses may have been subject to the influence of the desire to respond in a politically correct manner; of special concern is that of items regarding behavior toward lesbians and gay men. Participants may have exaggerated the number of times they have engaged in pro-gay helping behavior, and may have underreported



the number of times they had engaged in homophobic behavior. In addition, the *none* response—never having engaged in a certain behavior in the last year—was problematic for some participants, especially for pro-gay helping behavior items. For example, participants who are supportive of lesbians and gay men may have responded that they have never defended a lesbian who was being attacked because they were never in such a situation, yet, having never done so was assessed as an indication of homonegativity.

### *Future Directions*

Given the relatively small, academically-narrow, and often, racially narrow samples of past studies, this study was successful in obtaining a more diverse university sample. However, future research on attitudes and behaviors toward lesbians and gay men should strive for even larger and more representative samples to produce larger subsamples. This would allow for a more accurate demographic profile of groups who are homonegative and non-homonegative and of those who engage in pro-gay helping behavior or homophobic behavior.

Mimicking Altemeyer's (2001) research, longitudinal studies of levels of old-fashioned and modern homonegativity are needed to assess whether these types of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men change over time. Further, research is needed to investigate factors that influence change in such attitudes—within society, specific social groups, and the individual. In addition, because no social identity (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, gender, political orientation) exists in a vacuum, completely independent of all other identities, research is needed to investigate the interactions of multiple identities in shaping and influencing attitude (e.g., differences between middle-class Asian women and middle-class Asian men).

Although some empirical support exists for the distinction between old-fashioned and modern homonegativity, the theory behind these conceptualizations needs to be further elaborated and developed. If all potential participants, even atheists and agnostics, are in some way affected by the Judeo-Christian culture and morality of the United States, a question arises about the possibility of isolating modern homonegativity, concerns about rights and discrimination, from old-fashioned homonegativity, concerns about morality and traditional values. Further, if old-fashioned homonegativity is defined by its overt expression and modern homonegativity is defined by its covert expression (Morrison, Kenny, and Harrington 2006), how are such concepts different from implicit and explicit attitudes toward lesbians and gay men (Steffens 2005)? Is modern homonegativity different from modern homophobia (Raja and Stokes 1998)? Are old-fashioned and modern homonegativity different from old-fashioned heterosexism and modern heterosexism (Cowan et. al. 2005)? In looking at the scales used to assess these various concepts, it would appear that there is overlap among modern homonegativity, modern heterosexism, and modern homophobia. Are these different names for the same concept, or if different, what makes them different? It is hoped that this study will lead to further examination of these questions.

**TABLE 1.** Factor Analysis of Homonegativity Items.

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2
Female homosexuality is an illness. (ATLG)*	<b>.84</b>	-.12
Lesbians just can't fit into our society. (ATLG)*	<b>.80</b>	-.04
Male homosexuality is an immoral expression of sexuality in men. (ATLG)*	<b>.79</b>	.14
The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in American morals. (ATLG)*	<b>.77</b>	.11
If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to suppress them. (ATLG)*	<b>.77</b>	.10
Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality. (ATLG)*	<b>.75</b>	.06
I would NOT be upset if I learned that my son was a homosexual. (ATLG)	<b>.72</b>	.06
Compared to heterosexual men, gay men are less likely to make important contributions to society. (MHS)*	<b>.71</b>	-.02
Male homosexuals are perverts. (ATLG)*	<b>.71</b>	.15
I think male homosexuals are disgusting. (ATLG)*	<b>.70</b>	.13
Legal benefits for marriages should NOT be given to gay male couples. (MHS)*	<b>.70</b>	.19
Male homosexuals should NOT be allowed to teach in schools. (ATLG)*	<b>.70</b>	.09
State laws prohibiting private sexual behavior between two consenting adult women should be abolished. (ATLG)	<b>.67</b>	-.13
A woman's homosexuality should NOT be a cause for job discrimination in any situation. (MHS)	<b>.50</b>	.03
Gay men still need to work for equal rights. (MHS)	-.21	<b>.80</b>
Lesbians do NOT have all the rights they need. (MHS)	.19	<b>.62</b>
Lesbians have become far too confrontational in their demands for equal rights. (MHS)*	.29	<b>.59</b>
If gay men want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality. (MHS)*	.27	<b>.56</b>
Gay men should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society, and simply get on with their lives. (MHS)*	.30	<b>.56</b>
Lesbians who are "out of the closet" should be admired for their courage. (MHS)	.13	<b>.54</b>
It is the federal government's responsibility to protect lesbians from discrimination. (MHS)	.14	<b>.53</b>
Many lesbians use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges. (MHS)*	.22	<b>.51</b>
Eigenvalues	11.252	1.137
Total Variance Accounted For	51.15%	5.17%

\* Items were reverse-scored.

ATLG – Items take from the Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale

MHS – Items taken from the Modern Homonegativity Scale

**TABLE 2.** Descriptive Statistics of the Homonegativity and Behavior Scales.

Scale		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>
Old-Fashioned Homonegativity	<b>Total</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>23.12</b>	<b>9.53</b>	<b>.94</b>
	Women	343	21.46	9.28	.94
	Men	343	24.78	9.51	.93
Modern Homonegativity	<b>Total</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>26.61</b>	<b>8.15</b>	<b>.89</b>
	Women	343	24.48	7.99	.89
	Men	343	28.73	7.75	.87
Pro-Gay Helping Behavior	<b>Total</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>16.64<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>.69</b>
	Women	342	15.75 <sup>a</sup>	3.76	.69
	Men	340	17.54 <sup>a</sup>	3.02	.64
Homophobic Behavior	<b>Total</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>9.64</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>.51</b>
	Women	344	8.84	2.84	.46
	Men	342	10.44	3.25	.53

<sup>a</sup> – Pro-Gay Helping Behavior was reverse-scored; higher values indicate fewer reports of positive and helpful behavior targeted toward lesbians and gay men.

**TABLE 3.** Intercorrelations between Homonegativity and Behavior Scales.

Scale		1.	2.	3.
1. Old-Fashioned Homonegativity	<b>Total</b>	--		
	Women	--		
	Men	--		
2. Modern Homonegativity	<b>Total</b>	<b>.848*</b>	--	
	Women	.874*	--	
	Men	.815*	--	
3. Pro-Gay Helping Behavior	<b>Total</b>	<b>.484*</b>	<b>.460*</b>	--
	Women	.513*	.455*	--
	Men	.406*	.384*	--
4. Homophobic Behavior	<b>Total</b>	<b>.194*</b>	<b>.260*</b>	<b>.124*</b>
	Women	.171*	.193*	.093
	Men	.149*	.221*	.031

\* $p < .01$ 

Note: Due to missing some participant responses, N varied from 669 to 686, 334 to 343 for women and 335 to 343 for men. Missing values account for less than 3% of cases and thus do not influence the findings in a significant way.

**TABLE 4.** Percentages of Homonegative and Non-Homonegative Participants.

Range		Old-Fashioned	Modern
Extremely Homonegative (score > 50)	<b>Total</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
	Women	0.3%	0.0%
	Men	1.5%	0.6%
Homonegative (score > 36)	<b>Total</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
	Women	6.4%	7.9%
	Men	13.4%	15.5%
Moderate/Neutral ( $30 \leq \text{score} \leq 36$ )	<b>Total</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>25.1%</b>
	Women	14.0%	18.7%
	Men	17.2%	31.5%
Non-Homonegative (score < 30)	<b>Total</b>	<b>74.5%</b>	<b>63.3%</b>
	Women	79.6%	73.5%
	Men	69.4%	53.1%
Extremely Non-Homonegative (score < 16)	<b>Total</b>	<b>29.4%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>
	Women	37.0%	12.0%
	Men	21.9%	4.7%

Note: Whereas some of these ranges overlap, these percentages do not add up to 100%.

**TABLE 5.** Percentages of Reported Behavior in the Last Year.

Behavior	Never	Once	2-3 Times	4-10 Times	11+ Times
In the last year, how often have you made fun of a woman for being a lesbian?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Women	77.3	11.1	6.5	2.8	1.7
Men	76.6	8.0	9.4	2.3	2.9
In the last year, how often have you invited a gay man to hang out (i.e. for coffee, dinner, a bar, a show, a party)?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>16.8</b>
Women	38.1	11.9	17.9	9.7	22.2
Men	55.7	8.0	16.9	6.9	11.4
In the last year, how often have you physically attacked a woman because she was a lesbian?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>98.6</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Women	99.4	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0
Men	97.7	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.6
In the last year, how often have you told someone you were offended by their use of terms like “fag”, “faggot”, “queer”, etc?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>6.3</b>
Women	50.3	9.9	18.8	12.2	8.5
Men	72.9	7.7	9.4	4.9	4.0
In the last year, how often have you laughed at anti-gay jokes?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>16.7</b>
Women	45.5	18.5	22.2	6.0	6.5
Men	22.6	10.3	25.1	14.0	26.9
In the last year, how often have you defended a woman who was being harassed or threatened for being a lesbian?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>71.7</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>
Women	66.2	13.4	9.9	6.5	2.0
Men	77.1	11.7	5.7	2.3	1.4
In the last year, how often have you verbally or physically harassed a man because he was gay?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Women	97.2	2.3	0.3	0.0	0.0
Men	93.7	2.0	2.0	0.0	1.1
In the last year, how often have you challenged an anti-lesbian joke or remark?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.8</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Women	58.8	13.6	16.8	5.4	4.5
Men	76.9	10.0	8.0	1.7	2.6
In the last year, how often have you used the phrase “that’s so gay”, “that’s gay”, or a similar phrase to refer to something as negative or undesirable?					
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>47.6</b>
Women	25.9	9.4	13.6	11.6	39.2
Men	19.4	5.4	11.4	6.9	56.0

**TABLE 6.** Means and F ratios of Demographic Groups.

Demographic	<i>n</i>	Old-Fashioned Homonegativity		Modern Homonegativity		Pro-Gay Helping Behavior		Homophobic Behavior	
		<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Gender			21.39 <sup>a</sup>		50.08 <sup>a</sup>		46.38 <sup>a</sup>		47.19 <sup>a</sup>
Women	352	21.46		24.48		15.75		8.83	
Men	350	24.78		28.73		17.53		10.44	
Race/Ethnicity			19.40 <sup>a</sup>		5.05 <sup>b</sup>		14.61 <sup>a</sup>		0.55
Asian	147	25.90		28.51		17.86		9.55	
Black	103	26.63		26.85		17.07		9.42	
White	393	21.49		26.01		16.10		9.76	
Political Orientation			73.62 <sup>a</sup>		89.84 <sup>a</sup>		16.06 <sup>a</sup>		1.94
Liberal	244	18.84		22.63		15.85		9.38	
Moderate	256	23.38		26.98		16.64		9.86	
Conservative	121	30.63		33.63		18.03		9.93	
Importance of Religion			50.40 <sup>a</sup>		22.95 <sup>a</sup>		6.21 <sup>a</sup>		0.97
Not at All	150	17.72		23.55		16.31		9.58	
Slightly	131	19.73		24.03		16.45		9.71	
Moderately	157	22.55		26.56		15.81		9.93	
Very	124	26.34		28.23		17.24		9.73	
Extremely	130	30.53		31.34		17.65		9.22	
Religion			37.25 <sup>a</sup>		17.03 <sup>a</sup>		4.38 <sup>b</sup>		1.06
Atheist/Agnostic	123	17.69		23.24		16.43		9.56	
Catholic	175	23.25		27.12		16.31		10.04	
Protestant	260	26.20		28.35		17.22		9.68	

<sup>a</sup>  $p < .001$ ; <sup>b</sup>  $p < .01$ 

Note: Pro-Gay Helping Behavior was reverse-scored; higher values indicate fewer reports of positive and helpful behavior targeted toward lesbians and gay men.



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