

# Conceptualization and Assessment of Homonegativity

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**ABSTRACT.** The goals of this research include highlighting problematic issues of conceptualization and measurement with respect to research examining homonegativity. Using a sample of nearly 650 university students, we test hypotheses of M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002) who claim that old-fashioned and modern homonegativity are statistically distinct domains and that university students endorse a higher degree of modern than old-fashioned homonegativity. In addition, we examine relationships between reported negative and positive behaviors involving lesbians and gay men and degrees of modern and old-fashioned homonegativity. Factor analyses did not support the distinctiveness of the two homonegativity domains, and only 16% of the sample endorsed a higher degree of modern compared with old-fashioned homonegativity. Findings are discussed with respect to their implications for future research.

**KEYWORDS.** Old-fashioned homonegativity, modern homonegativity

During the last few decades, studies have focused on investigating and understanding attitudes toward gays and lesbians and views about various aspects of homosexuality. Researchers in this area emphasize the importance of their studies by documenting high rates of discrimination, harassment, and violence experienced by those thought to be homosexual. As this research has progressed, various words have been used to describe opposition to homosexuals: *homophobia*, *heterosexism*, *homonegativity*, *heteronormativity*, and *sexual prejudice*. The meaning of one of these terms in a given research context often implies differences in etiology of antihomosexuality, methods of analysis, and design of programs to reduce negative attitudes regarding homosex-

uals, false beliefs about homosexuality, and discrimination and hostility directed toward gay men and lesbians. The general goals of this study are twofold: first, to highlight problematic issues of conceptualization and measurement with respect to research examining opposition to homosexuals and homosexuality; and second, to clarify two domains of this opposition.

As illustrated in Table 1, there is no general agreement on the meaning and use of the *same* term to indicate opposition to homosexuality. For example, there seems to be no consensus about either the nature or number of dimensions of the constructs homophobia and homonegativity. Negy and Eisenman (2005) tried to distinguish between homophobia and

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This work was funded, in part, through an Undergraduate Research Award to Eric Anthony Grollman from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County Office of Undergraduate Education.

The authors wish to thank Fred L. Pincus for his guidance and support during preliminary stages of this research.

TABLE 1. Terms, definitions, and references related to opposition to homosexuality

**HOMOPHOBIA**

- Dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals (Weinberg, 1972).
- The dimension of homonegativism that involves the responses of fear, disgust, anger, discomfort, and aversion that some experience when dealing with homosexuals (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980).
- Personal and institutional prejudice against lesbians and gay men (Herek, 1988).
- Any negative attitude, belief, or action toward gay men and lesbians (Haaga, 1991).
- Manifested against homosexuals at four levels: personal, prejudiced beliefs of individuals; interpersonal, prejudiced action and discrimination; institutional, practices of government, religious, and business organizations and other formal groups; and societal, exclusion of homosexuals from cultural aspects of society and belief in homosexual myths (Blumenfeld, 1992).
- Conceptualized using a tripartite model involving antihomosexual cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (O'Donohue & Caselles, 1993).
- Antihomosexual prejudice, multidimensional, composed of three factors: cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Van de Ven, Bornholt & Bailey, 1996).
- An affective response, including fear, anxiety, and discomfort a person experiences when interacting with lesbians and gay men; may or may not involve a cognitive component (Adams, Wright, & Lohr, 1996).
- Irrational fear of and a set of mistaken ideas about homosexuals; characteristic of prejudiced individuals (Adam, 1998).
- Made up of three factorially distinct antihomosexual components: cognitive, affect with avoidance, and affect with aggression (Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999).
- A unidimensional construct that comprises negative emotional or affective responses to homosexuals; negative affect (aversion, discomfort, and fear) and behavior (avoidance and aggression) toward homosexuals, rather than attitudes toward homosexuality (Bernat, Calhoun, Adams, & Zeichner, 2001).
- Antigay and lesbian prejudice; negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians in terms of civil rights and issues of morality (Alden & Parker, 2005).

**MODERN HOMOPHOBIA**

- Conceptualized as including two dimensions, a personal discomfort aspect and an institutional aspect that deals with the rights of gays and lesbians (to what degree do people think that institutional policies and practices should avoid sexual orientation biases); however, statistical analysis found three factors: personal discomfort with gay men/lesbians, institutional homophobia, and deviance/changeability of homosexuality (Raja & Stokes, 1998).

**HOMONEGATIVITY**

- Any prejudicial affective or behavioral response directed toward an individual because he or she is perceived to be homosexual (Cerny & Polyson, 1984).
- Includes two behavioral aspects identified by factor analysis: passive avoidance and active aggressive against homosexuals (Roderick, McCammon, Long, & Allred, 1998).
- A multidimensional concept composed of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects—the entire domain of antihomosexual responses (Bernat et al., 2001).
- The entire domain or catalogue of antihomosexual responses; clearly is a multidimensional construct (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980).

**MODERN HOMONEGATIVITY**

- Negative views of gay men and lesbians based on beliefs that (1) homosexuals are making illegitimate or unnecessary demands for social change, (2) discrimination against gays and lesbians no longer exists, and (3) homosexuals exaggerate the importance of their sexual orientation (M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002).

**OLD-FASHIONED HOMONEGATIVITY**

- Negative views of gay men and lesbians based on traditional moral and religious beliefs and misconceptions about homosexuality (M. A. Morrison & Morrison, 2002).

**HETEROSEXISM**

- Associated with sociology and examines structural, institutional, material, and ideological aspects of opposition to nonheterosexual issues (Adam, 1998).
- Describes an ideology that regards homosexuality as inferior to heterosexuality; more recently, this term has referred to societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutional oppression of nonheterosexuals (Herek, 2000).

**OLD-FASHIONED HETEROSEXISM**

- Overt sexual prejudice; a clear expression of negative attitudes toward or dislike of gays and lesbians (Cowan, Heiple, Marquez, Khatchadourian, & McNevin, 2005).

**MODERN HETEROSEXISM**

- A subtle, milder form of heterosexism that includes beliefs that discrimination against gays and lesbians is no longer a problem, equal opportunities now exist for gays and lesbians, and homosexuals no longer have a legitimate claim to be angry about their treatment (Cowan et al., 2005).

**IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ATTITUDES TOWARD LESBIANS AND GAY MEN**

- Not directly defined but suggests that due to political correctness, self-report Likert-type items may not be valid measures of true attitudes toward homosexuals. For explicit measures, a respondent can easily determine the socially desirable "correct" response, but for implicit measures, this connection is more subtle and less prone to error (Steffens, 2005).

**HETERONORMATIVITY**

- A term used to denote opposition to same-sex desire, grounded in literary theories, typically used to analyze discourse and in attempts to deconstruct hetero/homo-binary assumptions and categories (Adam, 1998).

**SEXUAL PREJUDICE**

- Negative attitudes toward an individual because of her or his actual or perceived sexual orientation; can be used to describe heterosexuals' negative attitudes toward homosexual behavior, people with a homo or bi orientation, and communities of nonheterosexuals (Herek, 2000).

homonegativity from both conceptual and measurement perspectives. They state that, in theory, they are distinct constructs, but in reality, “they likely overlap so much that it is difficult to separate them” (p. 292). Definitions differ about whether homophobia is restricted to affective and emotional areas or whether it also includes cognitive beliefs about the institutional and rights aspects of antihomosexuality. Similarly, definitions of homonegativity are not consistent; some focus only on a cognitive domain, and others include both affective and cognitive aspects.

On the other hand, as shown in Table 1, some definitions of *different* terms are remarkably similar. Modern homonegativity and modern heterosexism seem to be indistinguishable; both definitions emphasize the beliefs that discrimination against homosexuals is no longer a problem and that rights advocates exaggerate claims of unequal treatment. It seems apparent that many who study attitudes and behaviors about homosexuals either cannot agree on universal definitions or are not aware of similarities, differences, and inconsistencies in definitions of antihomosexuality terms. Differing terms and definitions make it difficult for researchers to compare results across different empirical investigations. As researchers talk about trends in attitudes toward homosexuals, it is important to clarify exactly what has changed and in what ways attitudes and behaviors are still harmful to those with a same-sex sexual orientation. Compounding the lack of conceptual consensus and variety of terms used is the omission in studies of questions used to assess a construct (e.g., Cerny & Polyson, 1984; Kurdek, 1988; Stevenson & Gajarsky, 1990). Thus, readers cannot examine measures to determine how a construct was operationalized.

One conclusion from our literature review is that there are different conceptual domains of antihomosexual attitudes and behaviors (Herek, 2002). As shown in Table 1, some organize these domains in terms of cognitive/thinking, affective/feeling, and behavioral/acting components. A second conclusion that emerged from studies reviewed is that domains of antihomosexuality are significantly related. For example, Ellis, Kitzing, and Wilkinson (2002) found that their

measures of support for lesbian and gay human rights and a scale by Herek (1988) were significantly correlated ( $r = .88$ ), and Stulhofer and Rimac (2009) reported that their two measures of homonegativity were also highly correlated ( $r = .90$ ). A third conclusion is that measures of these domains need to distinguish between gay men and lesbians as the targets of antihomosexuality. Studies show that attitudes are more hostile toward gay men, particularly by heterosexual men, than toward lesbians (Herek, 2007). Yet another conclusion is that differences in antihomosexuality are related to the domains considered, order of questions asked, and background variables such as gender, race and ethnicity, political and religious beliefs, residence, social class, education, and number of gay and lesbian friends and acquaintances (Ellis et al.; Herek, 1988; Herek & Capitano, 1999; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006; Kite & Whitney, 1997; Lewis, 2003; Simon, 1995). We did not find consistent evidence supporting a strong correspondence between theoretical domains and factors produced in various types of factor analyses. For example, Wright, Adams, and Bernat (1999) reported that some items that theoretically should load on a given factor did not load in the predicted way. Factor analyses, which did produce fairly good fits linking conceptual domains and factors, were performed on convenience samples and thus lack generalizability. Finally, in studies reviewed, recommendations stressed the need for future research to investigate support for various homonegative domains and to examine how domains are intercorrelated.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

This study examines conceptualization and measurement of *old-fashioned homonegativity* and *modern homonegativity*, terms introduced by M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002). We chose to study homonegativity rather than other antihomosexuality constructs because we questioned these researchers' claim that the two types of homonegativity were statistically distinct. This seemed to contradict our knowledge of the uniformly high internal consistency reliability of

measures of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians (Davis, Yarber, Bauserman, Schreer, & Davis, 1998; Schwanberg, 1993). In addition, in more than two decades of listening to students and reading their essays on this topic, the senior author has observed that the most common reason given by students who endorse modern homonegativity involves their acceptance of tenets of old-fashioned homonegativity. Thus, we sought to verify the findings of M. A. Morrison and Morrison. We now present details of their work so that the purpose and analyses of our study can be understood.

M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002) cite several studies that found the means on traditional measures of homonegativity to be substantially below the neutral point and argue that university students are less likely than students in previous eras to endorse blatantly hostile beliefs about gay men and lesbians. Nevertheless, research at college campuses still indicates that antihomosexual harassment and hostility rates are high (Balanko, 1998; Franklin, 2000; Norris, 1992). Thus, M. A. Morrison and Morrison (pp. 17–18) propose that even though students report low levels of a particular kind of homonegativity, namely, old-fashioned homonegativity, they still do not have favorable attitudes about homosexuals. They define old-fashioned homonegativity as prejudice against homosexuals based on traditional religious and moral beliefs and misconceptions about homosexuality and hypothesize that students regard such attitudes as “anachronistic.” They also state this may be one of the reasons college students report low levels of homonegativity on commonly used scales such as the one developed by Herek (1988). Those who agree with statements such as, “Gay men should not be allowed to work with children,” or “Lesbianism is sinful,” would be endorsing old-fashioned homonegativity. In the view of M. A. Morrison and Morrison, homonegativity has likely transformed to modern homonegativity, which includes three concerns:

- (1) gay men and lesbians are making illegitimate (or unnecessary) demands for changes in the status quo (e.g., spousal benefits);
- (2) discrimination against homo-

sexual 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)

M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002) modeled their definition of modern homonegativity on the theoretical frameworks of those who have defined similar terms with respect to racism and sexism (McConahay, 1986; Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). Using convenience samples of Canadian students, these researchers found their 13-item male (gay) and female (lesbian) versions of modern homonegativity scales to have high internal consistency reliabilities. A factor analysis of these modern homonegativity scales produced one-factor solutions, accounting for 45% and 47% of the variance for the gay and lesbian versions, respectively. Additionally, they found students reported significantly greater support for modern compared with old-fashioned homonegativity.

To further investigate the dimensionality of their modern homonegativity scales and to establish that it was measuring something different from old-fashioned homonegativity, M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002) performed two factor analyses—one for gay male items and one for lesbian items. The first factor analysis used the gay male items from their gay modern homonegativity scale plus items from the gay version of a homonegativity scale developed by T. G. Morrison, Parriag, and Morrison (1999) and assumed to measure old-fashioned homonegativity. Similarly, the second factor analysis included the identical items with *gay men* replaced by *lesbians*.

The two factor analyses generally resulted in factors that supported the distinctiveness of the two types of homonegativity, according to M. A. Morrison and Morrison's (2002) measures. However, we noticed that for both factor analyses, two items that they assumed measured old-fashioned homonegativity and loaded on that factor were: “Those who support the rights of gay men (lesbians) are probably gay themselves,” and “Gay men (lesbians) should have the same rights as straight (heterosexual)

men (women),” In our view, these items assess modern homonegativity, because both concern issues relating to rights. These two rights items loaded on the same factor as the more obvious old-fashioned homonegativity item, “Gay men (lesbians) are immoral.”

T. G. Morrison, Kenny, and Harrington (2005) attempted to validate M. A. Morrison and Morrison’s (2002) modern homonegativity scale with Irish university students. For this study, they used different measures of old-fashioned homonegativity—short forms of the gay men and lesbian attitude scales developed by Herek (1998). The items in these scales in our view have fewer conceptual overlaps with modern homonegativity. For women, correlations between the old-fashioned and modern homonegativity scales for gay men and lesbians were .60 and .67, respectively; for men, these correlations were .80 and .75, respectively. Thus, we question the statistical distinctiveness of concepts so highly and significantly correlated.

T. G. Morrison et al. (1999) argued that three versions of their homonegativity scale (later designated as measures of old-fashioned homonegativity)—one for homosexuals in general and the others for gay men and lesbians—were all unidimensional based on factor analyses. However, an inspection of the items seemed to us to include measures of both old-fashioned (“Homosexuality/gay men/lesbians is/are immoral”) and modern (“Homosexuals/gay men/lesbians should have the same rights as heterosexuals”) homonegativity. Thus, the scales may have had factorial validity but not content validity according to our understanding of the two types of homonegativity. In other publications as well, we found both types of homonegativity items either loading on the same factor or part of a scale with high internal consistency reliability. For example, two items that loaded highly on the same factor in a study by Wright et al. (1999) were: “Homosexuality is acceptable to me” (old-fashioned), and “Organizations which promote gay rights are necessary” (modern). Another example of the blurring of distinctions between measures of old-fashioned and modern antihomosexual attitudes comes from Cowan, Heiple, Marquez, Khatchadourian, and McNevin (2005); one item in their old-

fashioned measure—“Homosexuals should be kept separate from the rest of society (i.e., separate housing, restricted employment)” —seems to us to be tapping discrimination issues and should be categorized as a modern item.

The specific goals of the present study are to test hypotheses of M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002) related to the aforementioned discussion. We test whether the constructs of old-fashioned and modern homonegativity are statistically distinct and if a greater proportion of students endorse modern rather than old-fashioned homonegativity. Whereas they attempted to validate their homonegativity scales using samples of Canadian and Irish students, we use students in a variety of disciplines from a university in the United States. In addition, we examine the extent of hostile and helping behaviors directed at homosexuals to investigate another proposition by M. A. Morrison and Morrison, namely that antihomosexual harassment is common on college campuses despite low levels of reported old-fashioned homonegativity. There is much less research on the incidence of hostile and helping behaviors directed toward homosexuals than on attitudes, and much of this behavioral research fails to distinguish between gay men and lesbians (e.g., Schope & Eliason, 2000). Finally, we look at the relationships among modern and old-fashioned homonegativity and hostile and helping behaviors toward homosexuals to gain a better understanding of how domains of attitudes and behaviors interact.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

The sample ( $N = 646$ ) for this study includes self-identified heterosexual students from a wide variety of disciplines and from all undergraduate academic class standings at a university in the Mid-Atlantic United States. Although this study’s sample is not a probability one, its demographic profile is similar to that of the undergraduate student body: 10% arts and humanities; 30% social science; 26% life, chemical, physical, and mathematics sciences; 24% engineering, information technology, and computer science;

and 10% other majors or undecided. The racial and ethnic distribution is as follows: 56% White, 21% Asian, 14% Black, 2% Latino, and 7% Multiracial or Other. The gender balance was 48.6% female and 51.4% male. There were also nearly equal proportions of 1st-year students and upper-class students and similar proportions of those who lived on campus and those who commuted.

## Measures

### *Old-Fashioned and Modern Homonegativity*

In classifying items as assessing either old-fashioned or modern homonegativity, we followed the guidelines of M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002). Old-fashioned homonegativity included beliefs about homosexuality being immoral, an illness, sinful, or disgusting, as well as myths about homosexuality. We considered modern homonegativity as dealing with concerns about some aspect of discrimination or loss of rights and having a societal or macrolevel focus. Table 2 contains the 22 items—11 applied to gay men and 11 to lesbians—used to measure both old-fashioned and modern homonegativity. The responses to each item were on a 5-point continuum from “strongly agree” (1) to “strongly disagree” (5) with the middle position “neutral/don’t know” (3). To minimize response bias, slightly more than half of the items were reverse-scored. Higher scores indicate more homonegativity. Consistent with recommendations of previous researchers, we used separate measures of attitudes about and behaviors directed toward gay men and those toward lesbians.

Four items in either their original or a slightly revised form from Herek’s (1988, 1998) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale measured old-fashioned homonegativity for lesbians, and six items (some revised) from this same scale measured old-fashioned homonegativity for gay men. These lesbian and gay men old-fashioned homonegativity scales had acceptable Cronbach’s alphas ( $\alpha = .80$  and  $\alpha = .91$ , respectively) for the participants of this study. Four of the seven items used to measure modern homonegativity for lesbians came from

M. A. Morrison and Morrison’s (2002) Modern Homonegativity Scale; one item (“Lesbians just can’t fit into our society”) was from Herek’s scale. The remaining two items we added: “It is the federal government’s responsibility to protect lesbians from discrimination,” and “A woman’s homosexuality should NOT be a cause for job discrimination in any situation.” Three of the five items (one slightly revised) used to measure modern homonegativity for gay men were from M. A. Morrison and Morrison’s Modern Homonegativity Scale. One of the other items was “Compared to heterosexual men, gay men are less likely to make important contributions to society.” In recent times, as emphasized by Altemeyer (2001), the media has focused on a number of popular homosexual celebrities; thus, we wanted to get an indication of how students evaluated contributions of gay men, who are generally more negatively evaluated than lesbians, to society. Because same-sex unions and marriage is currently a popular issue, we also included the following modern homonegativity item: “Legal benefits for marriages should NOT be given to gay male couples.” The modern homonegativity scales for lesbians and gay men had acceptable Cronbach’s alphas ( $\alpha = .81$  and  $\alpha = .79$ , respectively) for participants of this study. The construct validity of the four homonegativity scales was supported by their significant correlations in the predicted directions with political orientation and religiosity.

To further examine the extent of acceptance of the two types of homonegativity, we also created four new variables by trichotomizing the Old-Fashioned and Modern Homonegativity Scales defined above for gay men and lesbians. For each of the four homonegativity scales, respondents were classified as reporting “no homonegativity,” “questionable homonegativity,” or “homonegativity.” In our classification, those who reported an “agree” or “strongly agree” (coded 4 or 5) response to a negative statement about homosexuals or who reported a “disagree” or “strongly disagree” (coded 4 or 5) response to a positive statement about homosexuals were classified as reporting homonegativity. Those who reported a “neutral/don’t know” (coded as 3) response to a negative or positive statement about homosexuals were classified as reporting

TABLE 2. Factor loadings of homonegativity items with item means and percent homonegative

Items	(Mean)	% Homonegative	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Female homosexuality is an illness. (OF)*	(1.69)	4%	<b>.89</b>	-.23	-.05
I think male homosexuals are disgusting. (OF)*	(2.28)	19%	<b>.82</b>	-.04	-.14
Male homosexuality is an immoral expression of sexuality in men. (OF)*	(2.35)	20%	<b>.81</b>	.10	.06
Male homosexuals are perverts. (OF)*	(1.90)	7%	<b>.80</b>	.05	-.08
If a man has homosexual feelings, he should do everything he can to suppress them. (OF)*	(2.14)	12%	<b>.78</b>	.08	.06
The growing number of lesbians indicates a decline in American morals. (OF)*	(2.29)	20%	<b>.76</b>	.12	.09
Female homosexuality is an inferior form of sexuality. (OF)*	(2.02)	6%	<b>.74</b>	.05	.09
Compared with heterosexual men, gay men are less likely to make important contributions to society. (M)*	(1.79)	3%	<b>.74</b>	-.09	-.05
Lesbians just can't fit into our society. (M)*	(1.83)	5%	<b>.73</b>	.02	.14
I would NOT be upset if I learned that my son was a homosexual. (OF)	(3.18)	41%	<b>.72</b>	.04	.13
Male homosexuals should NOT be allowed to teach in schools. (OF)*	(1.83)	6%	<b>.69</b>	.10	.06
Legal benefits for marriages should NOT be given to gay male couples. (M)*	(2.39)	23%	<b>.69</b>	.21	.12
Many lesbians use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges. (M)*	(2.45)	10%	<b>.52</b>	.18	-.44
If gay men want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality. (M)*	(2.94)	36%	<b>.49</b>	.33	-.33
Lesbians have become far too confrontational in their demands for equal rights. (M)*	(2.66)	18%	<b>.49</b>	.38	-.28
Gay men should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society and simply get on with their lives. (M)*	(2.66)	23%	<b>.47</b>	.39	-.27
Gay men still need to work for equal rights. (M)	(2.72)	22%	-.10	<b>.72</b>	-.21
Lesbians who are "out of the closet" should be admired for their courage. (M)	(2.71)	18%	.03	<b>.69</b>	.22
It is the federal government's responsibility to protect lesbians from discrimination. (M)	(2.52)	18%	.09	<b>.65</b>	.19
Lesbians do NOT have all the rights they need. (M)	(2.62)	17%	.21	<b>.62</b>	.03
State laws prohibiting private sexual behavior between two consenting adult women should be abolished. (OF)	(2.28)	17%	.44	.10	<b>.47</b>
A woman's homosexuality should NOT be a cause for job discrimination in any situation. (M)	(1.70)	5%	.27	.26	<b>.38</b>
Eigenvalue			11.00	1.18	1.02
Total Variance Accounted For			50.03%	5.38%	4.63%

\*Item was reverse-scored.

OF = measuring old-fashioned homonegativity.

M = measuring modern homonegativity.

questionable homonegativity. Finally, those who reported an “agree” or “strongly agree” (coded 1 or 2) to a positive statement about homosexuals or who reported a “disagree” or “strongly disagree” (coded 1 or 2) response to a negative statement about homosexuals were classified as reporting no homonegativity.

Respondents' average item scores on each of the four homonegativity measures were calculated, and respondents whose scores were greater than or equal to 1 and less than 2.5 were classified as reporting no homonegativity. Respondents whose average item scores were in the range of 2.5 to 3.5 were classified as reporting questionable homonegativity, and respondents whose average item scores were greater than 3.5 and less than or equal to 5 were classified as reporting homonegativity. Creating these four trichotomized variables allowed us to determine how degrees of old-fashioned and modern homonegativity were distributed among participants.

### *Behaviors Toward Lesbians and Gay Men*

To measure harassing/hostile and helping behavior, questions were taken from the Behaviors Toward Homosexuals Survey described by Schope and Eliason (2000) along with one additional item (last question, Table 4) created by the authors. Responses to the behavior items were frequencies: never, once, 2 or 3 times, 4 to 10 times, and 11 or more times; and all questions began with the phrase, “In the last year, how often have you . . .” Five questions applied to gay men and four to lesbians, and five questions were about negative behavior and four about helping behavior. Four composite measures were formed from these nine questions: Negative Behavior Toward Gays, Negative Behavior Toward Lesbians, Helping Behavior Toward Gays, and Helping Behavior Toward Lesbians.

### *Procedure*

After obtaining permission from the university's institutional review board, e-mails were sent to instructors in major subject areas to obtain permission to administer the questionnaire in their classes. One of the authors administered the surveys in all classes. Students were

informed that their participation was voluntary, their responses would be anonymous, they could end their participation in the study at any time, and their decision to take the survey would in no way influence their class grade. Completion of the survey took about 15 minutes, after which students put their surveys in a big envelope. There were no objections from students, and it was not possible to determine who did or did not complete the survey. A total of 702 surveys were usable, but only data from the 646 self-identified heterosexuals are used in this study.

### *Analysis*

Three principal components factor analyses with oblimin rotation were performed to investigate the dimensionality of the homonegativity items. One factor analysis used all 22 items, another the 11 items referring to gay men, and the third the 11 items referring to lesbians. To examine patterns of three degrees of homonegativity, cross tabulations for men and women were conducted using pairs of the two types of trichotomized homonegative variables for gay men and lesbians. To determine whether modern homonegativity was endorsed more than old-fashioned homonegativity, we calculated the proportion of respondents who reported a higher degree of modern compared with old-fashioned homonegativity. To determine gender differences in the homonegativity scales, *t*-tests for independent samples were calculated. Pearson correlations were computed to examine relationships between measures of homonegativity and negative and helping behaviors toward gay men and lesbians.

## **RESULTS**

### *Dimensions of Homonegativity*

For the factor analysis using all 22 homonegativity items, loadings of the rotated matrix are shown in Table 2. Three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were found. Sixteen items had their highest loading on the first factor, which accounted for 50.03% of the variance. Of these items, 10 assessed old-fashioned and 6 assessed the modern type of homonegativity. The second factor accounting for 5.38% of the variance

consisted of 4 modern items, and the third factor accounting for 4.63% of the variance consisted of 2 items: 1 assessing old-fashioned and the other modern homonegativity for lesbians. Thus, two of the three factors contained items assessing both types of homonegativity. In addition, the communalities of all 22 items for the unrotated matrix were all high—the lowest was .38 and the others above .47. Factor analyses of the gay men items resulted in a one-factor solution with 58% of the variance accounted for by a single factor. Similarly, factor analysis of the lesbian items produced a single factor accounting for 47% of the variance.

### *Old-Fashioned and Modern Homonegativity Comparisons and Patterns*

Men's item mean for old-fashioned homonegativity toward gay men was significantly higher than the corresponding item mean for women (2.48 vs. 2.06,  $t[538] = 5.745$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The item means for old-fashioned homonegativity toward lesbians did not differ significantly for men and women (2.11 vs. 2.01,  $t[637] = 1.418$ ,  $p = .156$ ). Men's modern homonegativity item means were significantly higher than the corresponding item means of women for both gays (2.69 vs. 2.29,  $t[633] = 6.122$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and lesbians (2.50 vs. 2.20,  $t[638] = 5.655$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 3 contains the results of the frequencies and cross tabulations for the four trichotomized variables. Compared with men, women reported higher proportions of "no modern homonegativity" toward both lesbians (68% for women vs. 51% for men) and gay men (63% for women vs. 44% for men). Women also reported higher proportions of "no old-fashioned homonegativity" with respect to gay men (70% for women vs. 51% for men), but the difference was small with respect to lesbians (69% for women vs. 64% for men). In addition, a greater proportion of women (61% toward lesbians and 60% toward gay men) compared with men (45% toward lesbians and 40% toward gay men) reported both "no old-fashioned and no modern homonegativity." For men, most of the differences in the higher endorsement of modern compared with old-fashioned homonegativity applied to lesbians and for questionable (43% for modern vs. 31% for old-fashioned) rather than obvious homonegativity (6% vs. 5%). For men, differences in reporting of proportions of modern and old-fashioned homonegativity toward gay men were less than 8%. For women, responses to the three levels of old-fashioned and modern homonegativity were nearly identical for lesbians and differed by less than 8% for gay men.

As Table 3 shows, of the nine homonegativity level pairings, the most common pattern for both men and women was the no

TABLE 3. Percent of men and women reporting levels of old-fashioned (OF) and modern (MD) homonegativity toward lesbians (gay men) by sex

Type and Level of Homonegativity	Men	Women
No OF Homonegativity	64% (51%)	69% (70%)
Questionable OF Homonegativity	31% (36%)	28% (23%)
OF Homonegativity	5% (13%)	3% (7%)
No MD Homonegativity	51% (44%)	68% (63%)
Questionable MD Homonegativity	43% (38%)	29% (28%)
MD Homonegativity	6% (18%)	3% (9%)
No OF and No MD	45% (40%)	61% (60%)
No OF and Questionable MD	18% (11%)	8% (10%)
No OF and MD	1% (1%)	0% (1%)
Questionable OF and No MD	6% (5%)	7% (3%)
Questionable OF and Questionable MD	22% (23%)	19% (16%)
Questionable OF and MD	3% (7%)	2% (3%)
OF and No MD	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
OF and Questionable MD	3% (4%)	2% (2%)
OF and MD	2% (9%)	1% (5%)

old-fashioned/no modern homonegativity combination. The second most common pattern for both men and women was the questionable old-fashioned/questionable modern homonegativity combination. The third most common pattern for both men and women was the no old-fashioned/questionable modern homonegativity combination. Less than 10% of men and women endorsed any of the other six patterns. A finding that demonstrates the strong relationship between old-fashioned and modern homonegativity is that more than two-thirds of the men and 81% of the women reported similar levels of these two types of homonegativity toward both lesbians and gay men.

When the entire sample was combined, we found that less than one-fifth endorsed a higher proportion of modern rather than old-fashioned homonegativity (15% for lesbians and 17% for gay men), and less than 10% endorsed a higher proportion of old-fashioned rather than modern homonegativity (9% for lesbians and 7% for gay men).

### *Homophobic and Helping Behavior*

For reporting, we dichotomized the frequency categories of negative and positive behavior to never and one or more times. As shown in

Table 4, reports of physically attacking a lesbian (1%) and verbally or physically harassing a gay man (4%) were low, but reports of negative verbal comments were high. In the last year, 22% of respondents reported making fun of a woman for being a lesbian, 67% reported laughing at an antigay joke, and 79% had used a phrase such as, "That's so gay," or "That's gay," in a negative way. On the other hand, there were also common incidents of helping behavior such as inviting a gay man to socialize (51%), acknowledging being offended by terms like "fag" or "queer" (37%), defending a woman who was being harassed for being a lesbian (25%), and challenging an antilesbian joke or remark (30%). Compared with men, women reported lower proportions of hostile behavior and higher proportions of helping behavior; these differences were significant for five of the nine behaviors.

### *Correlations Among Homonegativity Measures*

Table 5 displays the correlations between homosexual attitudinal and behavioral measures for women and men. The pattern of significant correlations is similar for women and men. Correlations are highly significant ( $p < .001$ ) between the two types of homonegativity for

TABLE 4. Percent reporting hostile or helping behavior toward homosexuals with chi-square

Behavior	Percent			Chi-Square
	Total	Women	Men	
<b>Hostile</b>				
Made fun of a women for being a lesbian	22	21	23	2.71
Physically attacked a woman because she was a lesbian	1	1	1	3.25
Laughed at antigay jokes	67	55	79	85.82*
Verbally or physically harassed a man because he was gay	4	3	5	7.19
Used the phrase "that's so gay," "that's gay," or a similar phrase to refer to something negative or undesirable	79	76	82	20.69*
<b>Helping</b>				
Invited a gay man to hang out (e.g., for coffee, dinner, a bar, a show, a party)	51	60	43	26.55*
Told someone you were offended by their use of terms like "fag," "faggot," "queer," etc.	37	48	26	34.41*
Defended a woman who was being harassed for being a lesbian	25	30	21	7.70
Challenged an antilesbian joke or remark	30	38	22	22.88*

\* $p < .001$ .

TABLE 5. Correlations between homosexual attitudinal and behavioral measures for women (men)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Old-fashioned homonegative attitudes toward gay men							
2. Modern homonegative attitudes toward gay men	.83*** (.81***)						
3. Old-fashioned homonegative attitudes toward lesbians	.87*** (.84***)	.79*** (.71***)					
4. Modern homonegative attitudes toward lesbians	.82*** (.75***)	.84*** (.78***)	.80*** (.69***)				
5. Harmful behavior toward gay men	.15* (.15**)	.13* (.17**)	.11 (.00)	.14* (.17**)			
6. Harmful behavior toward lesbians	.15** (.14*)	.14* (.12*)	.15** (.12*)	.16** (.11)	.37*** (.31*)		
7. Positive behavior toward gay men	-.50*** (-.41***)	-.44*** (-.39***)	-.44*** (-.34***)	-.38*** (-.35***)	-.06 (-.04)	-.05 (.06)	
8. Positive behavior toward lesbians	-.35*** (-.20**)	-.30*** (-.20**)	-.33*** (-.24**)	-.28*** (-.19**)	-.02 (.01)	.00 (-.04)	.54*** (.47***)

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Note. For women,  $n$  varied from 298 to 310, and for men,  $n$  varied from 323 to 328 due to missing values.

lesbians ( $r = .80$  and  $r = .69$  for women and men, respectively) and for gay men ( $r = .83$  and  $r = .81$  for women and men, respectively). For both women and men, there are significant relationships between less homonegative attitudes toward gays (lesbians) and helping behavior toward gays (lesbians). The relationships between negative attitudes toward gays (lesbians) and harmful actions taken against gays (lesbians) are also generally significant but not nearly as strong as the relationship between less negative attitudes and helping behavior (range .11–.17 vs. range .19–.50). In addition, those who act in helpful ways toward gays also tend to act in helpful ways toward lesbians for both women ( $r = .54, p < .001$ ) and men ( $r = .47, p < .001$ ). Similarly, those who engage in harmful behavior toward gays also tend to engage in harmful behavior toward lesbians (women:  $r = .37, p < .001$ ; men:  $r = .31, p < .001$ ).

## DISCUSSION

Overall, findings of this study did not support the propositions of M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002) about homonegativity. A factor analysis did not support the factorial validity of old-fashioned and modern homonegativity;

two of the factors included items assessing both types of homonegativity. In addition, the findings did not support M. A. Morrison and Morrison's claim that university students tend to support modern rather than old-fashioned homonegativity. Most students reported similar levels of the two types of homonegativity; only about one-sixth of the sample reported higher levels of modern compared with old-fashioned homonegativity.

Support for both old-fashioned and modern domains of homonegativity was low; all item means were below the neutral point except for one: "I would NOT be upset if I learned that my son was a homosexual." Upon reflection, although this item was included in our old-fashioned homonegativity scale, disagreement to this statement may arise from multiple concerns including the fear that such a son would be subjected to harmful, discriminatory, and hostile situations, as well as dislike or disgust for gay men. Therefore, this item likely taps both homonegativity and typical concerns parents have for their children's well-being. Future researchers should consider asking respondents to give explanations for their response to this statement.

A finding from this study consistent with past research is that substantial proportions of students reported engaging in hostile verbal

behaviors, such as making fun of lesbians, laughing at antigay jokes, and using negative words to refer to gays. Consistent with previous studies, we also found that reported incidences of violent behavior were low. Due to social desirability influences, it is likely that reports of both verbal and physical hostility were underreported. In addition, this social desirability factor likely contributed to the low correlations between antihomosexual attitudes and behaviors. The limited number of questions and restricted range of the antihomosexual behavior measures may have also contributed to the low correlations. Adding more items to the antihomosexual behavior measures and including measures of social conformity and social desirability have the potential to provide more adequate interpretations of the attitude and behavior relationship.

This study supports the premise of M. A. Morrison and Morrison (2002) that homonegative behaviors on college campuses are common despite low reports of homonegative attitudes. Whereas M. A. Morrison and Morrison emphasized the low support of old-fashioned homonegativity, in this study, support for both types of homonegativity was low. Part of this apparent contradiction found in our research and highlighted by the Morrises—namely low degrees of homonegativity and high incidence of antihomosexuality behavior—may be explained by research indicating that an increasing number of students acknowledge having homosexual friends and acquaintances, which in turn is due to more gays and lesbians being open about their sexual orientation. However, the greater number of homosexuals who do not hide their sexual orientation also makes them more visible and available as recipients of harassing remarks and actions.

This view is consistent with research by Alden and Parker (2005). In their study, “city” was the unit of analysis, and they found that rates of antigay and lesbian hate crimes were *higher* in cities where support for homosexual civil rights issues was also *higher*. They explained their finding by noting that the likely variable influencing both was density of population—cities with high population density are also ones with a greater number and visibility of gays and lesbians. In densely populated urban areas, attitudes toward homo-

sexuals are more favorable than in less populated areas.

We were pleased that substantial proportions of students reported helping behavior toward both gay men and lesbians. This is likely due to the increasing visibility of homosexuals in campus activities and thus contributes to more students knowing gays and lesbians. Thus, as Altemeyer (2001, p. 73) emphasizes, while the increasing out status of homosexuals may have led to “rejection and pain for many of them, it has seemingly reduced prejudice.” Here it is important to stress the findings of Herek (2007), whose studies document the more favorable views of homosexuals by heterosexuals who have personal contact with them, especially when the contacts involve emotionally close relationships and discussions of sexual minority life.

Although not directly stated, much of the literature review seemed to imply that modern homonegativity is less harmful than old-fashioned homonegativity. The view seemed to be that the modern form was less blatantly negative and more subtle and indirect. However, we want to stress that those accepting modern homonegativity cause considerable harm to gays and lesbians. Cowan et al. (2005) found that modern heterosexism, defined similarly to modern homonegativity (see Table 1), was significantly and positively correlated with approval of hate crimes against gays and lesbians and strongly and negatively associated with perceived harm of hate speech directed toward gays and lesbians. In addition, numerous studies have documented the suffering of homosexuals due to their lack of rights and ability to fully function as citizens in society (e.g., Donovan, Heaphy, & Weeks, 1999; Herek, 2007; Kosciw & Diaz, 2006; Richardson, 1998; Savin-Williams & Cohen, 1996).

### **CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study adds to the growing view that the younger generation of educated adults has much more tolerant views about sexual minorities than older Americans. The detailed examination of the trichotomized variables provides additional

information that could not be gleaned from the more typical analysis, which generally involves only a comparison of means, and we suggest that other researchers consider similar analyses that can examine how domains of homonegativity are patterned among participants. When several domains are considered, cluster analysis may be the appropriate statistical procedure.

To understand attitudes toward gays and lesbians, it is necessary to acknowledge their multiple domains. Old-fashioned and modern homonegativity are two of these important domains. Thus, despite their high correlation, we believe they are useful constructs. Knowing that one domain of homonegativity is supported more than another may facilitate an understanding of how domains of homonegativity change. In addition, knowledge of endorsement of different domains for different populations provides valuable information for those who design antihomonegative educational curricula and programs.

Limitations of this study suggest the need for future research. Due to the need to obtain permission from a variety of disciplines to survey students, we made our questionnaire short. Future studies that include measures of more domains of negative and positive attitudes and beliefs about and behaviors related to homosexuals would add to our understanding. The lack of generalizability of this study also highlights the need to examine domains of homonegative views and actions among non-college student samples. The more detailed analysis using three levels of homonegativity also suggests further research questions. Why do respondents give a neutral or “don’t know” answer to a positive or negative statement about lesbians and gay men? Should “don’t know” responses to statements such as, “Gay men should not be allowed to teach in schools,” or “The federal government should protect lesbians from discrimination,” be interpreted as endorsement of some degree of homonegativity? Perhaps some who give “don’t know” responses are actually homonegative but feel pressure to respond in a more socially desirable manner. Some of these respondents may be in conflict about their attitudes toward gays and lesbians. It is important to understand the motivations and bases for these ambivalent respon-

ders and what might change their views to clearly positive views of homosexuals. Those whom we classified as reporting questionable levels of homonegativity appear to be neglected in studies of attitudes toward gays and lesbians, but some in this group may be precisely the ones who are most susceptible to change to more favorable views. To more fully understand this middle group requires asking questions about the justifications for giving neutral and “don’t know” responses. Such questions would, of course, also be valuable to ask for all levels of homonegativity responses.

We hope that this study has reinforced the need for researchers to carefully define antihomosexual constructs and to also clearly specify how constructs are measured. In this regard, we recommend two emerging theoretical perspectives for future researchers. First, Herek (2000, 2007, 2009) has provided a framework for conceptualizing sexual stigma and related terminology. Herek’s introduction of the term sexual prejudice has the advantage of implying inequality and allows for the application of the large body of theory and research on other forms of prejudice. Second, we find the human rights/sexual rights frameworks defined by Lottes and Adkins (2003, 2006) and Richardson (1998, 2000) informative and useful approaches for identifying domains of antihomosexuality. Human rights theory, with its principles of universality, egalitarianism, self-determination, and dignity, can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple domains of antihomosexuality attitudes and actions. Both of these perspectives can provide valuable frameworks for future investigations of the conceptualization and assessment of homonegativity.

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RECEIVED: 19/09/2009  
 REVISED: 10/12/2009  
 ACCEPTED: 23/04/2010