Paths to Homophobia

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Abstract: This paper draws on in depth case studies of antigay/lesbian activism as well as on the sociological literature on racial prejudice to develop and operationalize the concepts of *group position* and *stereotypes* as mediating mechanisms which explain homophobia. Based on this analysis, this paper posits the importance of the continued promotion of antigay/lesbian stereotypes as well as a sense of group position that views heterosexuals as more capable than lesbians and gay men for understanding homophobia. This paper then develops scales to measure both group position and stereotypes. Next, drawing on a survey of police department employees, the paper illustrates the explanatory value of these concepts via path analysis. This paper argues that these mediating concepts clarify contradictory findings within the literature on homophobia and concludes with policy implications.

Key words: prejudice; police attitudes; lesbian and gay politics; social movements; discrimination

While sociologists have contributed greatly to the study of lesbian/gay and antilesbian/gay social movements, their insights have not informed the study of homophobia, a field of inquiry that remains largely the province of psychologists (Adam, 1998). In this paper, I rectify the disjuncture between the studies of homophobia and of social movements to illustrate the paths by which homophobia develops and is maintained politically. Drawing on in depth case studies of antigay/lesbian activism as well as on the sociological literature on racial prejudice, I develop and operationalize the concepts of *group position* and *stereotypes* as mediating mechanisms which explain homophobia. Then, utilizing original survey data, I illustrate the explanatory value of these concepts. I argue that these mediating concepts clarify contradictory findings within the literature on homophobia. I conclude with policy implications.

Explaining Homophobia

Psychological research on homophobia focuses predominantly on examining the demographic correlates of negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, including sex, age, education, race, and marital status. These studies have found that those who are older, less educated, single, or male tend to be more homophobic than those who are younger, more educated, married, or female (Britton, 1990, p. 426; Yang, 1998). The few studies that examine race suggest that African Americans are more homophobic than white Americans (Herek & Capitanio, 1996). However, Bernstein, Kostelac, and Gaarder (2003) suggest that however homophobic they may be, African Americans are typically more supportive of civil liberties for lesbians and gay men than are white Americans.

These relationships have been explained in three ways. First, many psychologists argue that homophobia stems from repressed erotic desires, as a reaction-

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formation defense against admitting homosexual tendencies (Herek, 2000). Others argue that fear that one cannot live up to gender role expectations leads to homophobia. Homophobia may also serve an identity-maintenance function for dominant group members afraid of being labeled deviant (see discussions in Britton, 1990 and Kite & Whitley, 1998).This may also be the case when dominant group members belong to organizations or groups that explicitly define themselves in opposition to homosexuality, such as some conservative Christian religions. Herek (2000) sums up these perspectives:

> These different motivations can be understood as deriving from the psychological functions that sexual prejudice serves, which vary from one individual to another. One heterosexual's sexual prejudice, for example, may reduce the anxiety associated with his fears about sexuality and gender, whereas another heterosexual's prejudice might reinforce a positive sense of herself as a member of the social group "good Christians." (p. 21)

In short, lesbians and gay men may threaten one's psychological sense of self in terms of sexuality, masculinity, and group identity.

Feminist psychological studies tend to equate sexism with homophobia and produce similar findings, suggesting that men are more homophobic than women and that heterosexual men will be more hostile toward gay men than women will be toward lesbians. These studies of homophobia find correlations between adherence to traditional sex role norms measured on personality scales and homophobia (Basow & Johnson, 2000; Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000; Polimeni, Hardie, & Buzwell, 2000; Raja & Stokes, 1998). By relying solely on personality factors, these studies ignore the role social movement actors play in the perpetuation of homophobia. These studies also fail to explain why men who are similarly situated may hold disparate attitudes or why women might be homophobic.

Research on homophobia is also guided by contemporary understandings of the *contact hypothesis*, which asserts that more contact between individuals belonging to antagonistic social groups helps to undermine negative stereotypes, thus minimizing prejudice and maximizing intergroup cooperation (Herek & Capitanio, 1996; Herek & Glunk, 1993; Jordan, 1997; Yang, 1998; Young, 1992). Herek & Capitanio (1996) report that more intimate contact with lesbians and gay men, such as with close gay or lesbian relatives, is more likely to decrease homophobia than is more distant or superficial contact with lesbians and gay men.

Businesses are often under increasing pressure to diversify their workforce. Thus on-the-job contact may be a source of conflict rather than concord. This suggests that it is not only contact that matters, but the type of contact as well.

Until recently, many studies used single measures of homophobia that are not necessarily reliable or valid (Britton, 1990). With some exceptions (e.g., Herek, 1988; Herek & Capitanio, 1996), most of these studies also employ convenience samples of college students (Estrada & Weiss, 1999), leaving attitudes in other institutional contexts unexplored.

Lessons From Activists

In this section, I examine the research on antigay/lesbian activism, which has been ignored in previous studies of homophobia, in order to illustrate two paths, which I call stereotypes and group position, which affect levels of homophobia.

Stereotypes

In sociocultural approaches to prejudice, negative cultural views are conceptualized as socially learned and embedded in individual psyches (Allport, 1954). Negative stereotypes of out-group members go unchallenged because of a lack of contact with minority-group members even though the negative stereotypes often have little or no objective basis in reality. This approach predicts that prejudice should be highly correlated with perceived threat. As contact between equal-status minority-majority members increases, anti-minority hostility should decline. Education should also reduce prejudice. Although most of the psychological research on homophobia falls within the sociocultural tradition by positing the importance of education and contact, measures of

stereotypes of gay men and lesbians have not been operationalized empirically.

The antilesbian/gay movement makes both emotional arguments as well as sophisticated legalistic claims against homosexuality. Despite their lack of scientific credibility, gay rights opponents continue to propagate myths (Herek, 1991) that gays molest children and "recruit" them into homosexuality. Lesbians are often ignored altogether in this discourse. During political campaigns, antigay/lesbian activists also expound upon the alleged sexual practices of gay men and lesbians in order to portray homosexuality as depraved or unnatural (Hermann, 1994). Lesbians are portrayed as mannish while gay men are seen as effeminate and thus both groups transgress traditional gender roles. In short, lesbian and gay rights opponents create a hostile cultural climate by preaching what they see as the evils of homosexuality (Hermann, 1994).

In addition to emotional arguments, the Religious Right employs a rhetoric of special or *competing rights* (Gerstman, 1999; Hermann, 1994) to claim that lesbian and gay rights threaten heterosexuals in a variety of ways. The Religious Right contends that lesbian and gay rights ordinances (which provide protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation in areas such as housing, employment, and public accommodations) grant lesbians and gay men a form of "special rights" or protection that could ultimately lead to affirmative action policies based on sexual orientation (Bull & Gallagher, 1996; Fetner, 2001; Gerstmann, 1999; Herman, 1994). The antigay/lesbian movement also invokes competing rights (e.g., Hunt, 1990) claims, counterposing the rights of employers to hire whom they want or of landlords to choose their tenants against lesbian and gay demands for fair treatment. Competing rights arguments become particularly salient when children are involved, as in the cases of lesbian and gay teachers or school curricula. Whether the self-interest is construed as protecting children from abuse or promoting a traditional familialism, antigay/lesbian activists argue that lesbian and gay rights infringe on the rights of parents to control both the material to which and people to whom their children are exposed and become more salient to the extent that negative stereotypes are accepted.

Group Position

Blumer's (1958a, 1958b) group position model pays closer attention to the interplay between the social construction of minorities and the role that organized groups play in fostering those constructions. Gay rights opponents express status concerns when faced with lesbian and gay demands for equality. For example, leaders of both religious institutions and antigay/lesbian social movements claim that allowing same-sex marriage would devalue heterosexual marriage. In this case, opposition to lesbian and gay rights is based on a commitment to a status positioning where rights and privileges accrue to some and not to others. Thus, through marriage, heterosexual couples reap public support for and acknowledgment of their relationships (Lewin, 2001) while also accruing concrete legal and financial benefits (Chambers, 2001) that are denied same-sex couples.

In discussing racial prejudice, Bobo (1999) argues that, "prejudice involves more than negative stereotypes and negative feelings...it involves most centrally a commitment to a relative status positioning of groups in a racialized social order" (p. 447).[1] If we substitute the word "sexualized" for "racialized" in Bobo's analysis, then we can theorize homophobia in historical context as an outcome of contending groups vying for a privileged status.[2] As powerful institutions,

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1. Bobo (1983, 1999) elaborates a more complex "group position model" than the one presented here. His group position model incorporates sociocultural views, economic and political self-interest, perceptions of group competition for scarce resources, and a sense of group position to explain whether or not majority group members view minorities as competitive threats. Because homophobia captures an affective attitude, rather than a public policy preference which could alter competition for rewards between groups, I do not examine perceptions of intergroup competition. Because self-interest is related to the subjective interpretation of threat and because my dependent variable is an affective attitude rather than perception of competition or policy preferences, I do not provide a separate measure of self-interest. Elsewhere (Bernstein, Kostelac, & Gaarder, 2003), I examine the impact of each of these dimensions on policy preferences regarding sexual orientation.

2. I am not arguing that the perceived threat posed by lesbians and gay men comes only from their sexuality, irrespective of race and class. I am only pointing out that the divide between heterosexual and homosexual has

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religious organizations may influence homophobia through the propagation of discourse that situates heterosexuals above lesbians and gay men. Dynamic interactions between diverse groups that have a stake in maintaining homophobia influence a group's sense of its proper position. From the group position perspective, certain religions and social movements based on particular religious interpretations may indicate a commitment to group status based on self-interest as much as on psychological factors. Given the current political climate and complex discursive competition between gay rights opponents and proponents, stereotypes and a sense of group position may provide a more dynamic way to understand homophobia.

The Study

In order to understand the impact of stereotypes and group position on homophobia, I draw on original survey data to explain homophobia within a particular institution. I analyze the attitudes of sworn officers and civilians employed by a medium-sized police department in the Southwest, which I call by the pseudonym "Saguaro PD." Strategically, restricting the sample to one workplace setting allows me to control for occupational culture and workplace experience in order to better understand variation within groups, such as men or police, that have been traditionally treated as monolithic. Clearly, police department employees are not meant to represent the U.S. population. Instead, this case study allows me to illustrate the paths to homophobia within a concrete historical, institutional, and organizational context.

To date, the few studies that have analyzed antigay attitudes and discrimination in the workplace have relied upon lesbian and gay subjects' self-reports, rather than assessing the attitudes or behavior of nongay employees (Croteau, 1996). Secondly, such studies have employed only convenience or nonrandom samples of lesbians and gay men (Buhrke, 1996; Croteau, 1996; Jordan, 1997; Levine & Leonard, 1984; Miller, Forest, & Jurik, 2004), potentially leading to

fundamentally marked Western society, at least since the end of the 1800s (Epstein, 1994/1996).

biased results by ignoring closeted lesbians and gay men. These studies report substantial fear of discrimination among lesbians and gay men and include accounts and incidence rates of various forms of workplace sexual orientation-based discrimination. Furthermore, lesbian and gay issues are largely absent in literature pertaining to criminal justice (Reasons & Hughson, 2000). To my knowledge, this is the first study to systematically assess the attitudes of heterosexual police officers and civilian employees towards lesbians and gay men.

Policing is a gendered masculinist occupation (Britton, 1990) because of its sanctioned use of force, the historical opposition of the police to lesbian and gay rights, their enforcement of heterosexuality, and the institutional interest of police in maintaining hegemonic masculinity (Bernstein & Kostelac, 2002). Police officers often oppose hiring gays and lesbians (Buhrke, 1996; Marotta, 1981), count lesbians and gay men among their most disliked categories of people (Buhrke, 1996), and often perpetrate violence against lesbians and gay men (Comstock, 1991). Like the military, law enforcement has been hostile to the inclusion of gays (Marotta, 1981) and, in addition, has staunchly resisted outside pressures to integrate women and racial minorities (Christopher Commission, 1991; Kauth & Landis, 1996). Despite evidence that there is no difference between heterosexual applicants' and lesbian and gay applicants' suitability for hire or in performance ratings once on the job (Hiatt & Hargrave, 1994), many heterosexual police officers continue to question the ability of lesbian and gay officers to perform well on the job. Heterosexuals fear that unit cohesiveness, trust, and morale are negatively influenced by the presence of lesbian and gay officers on the job (Leinen, 1993). The perception that lesbians and gays have special privileges or protected class status contributes to anti-gay sentiment on the job, as does fear of the spread of HIV/AIDS (Koegel, 1996). Despite such resistance, several police departments directly recruit gay and lesbian officers (Leinen, 1993, p.11). And more recently, some lesbian and gay officers even feel that being lesbian or gay might be an asset in gaining promotions, given current emphases on diversity (Miller et al., 2004). This distinctive historical relationship between

policing and sexual orientation should influence the kinds of reactions lesbians and gay men face on the job.

Policing is characterized by adherence to a hypermasculine identity. When these norms are threatened, the status and perception of group position is jeopardized. If gay men (who are stereotyped as effeminate) and women (who are seen as weaker and more passive than men) can perform effectively as police officers, then the masculinity of policing becomes dissociated from its identification with heterosexual men. While policing may maintain its masculine status because of its sanctioned use of force, increasing numbers of female and gay officers in policing may sever the close identification between masculinity and heterosexual men. Stereotypes of lesbians may actually work in their favor in policing, as they may be viewed as more capable of performing police duties (at least more capable than heterosexual women). On the other hand, opposition to any women in policing may counterbalance views of lesbians' abilities to perform as officers. Both the group position and stereotypes measures discussed below (also see Table 1) reflect these institutional relations between sexual orientation and policing.

Expectations

I first theorize the direct effects on homophobia and then theorize the indirect influences on homophobia that operate through the intermediate variables of group position and stereotypes.

Direct Effects

Previous studies of homophobia lead to the following expectations: People who are older, single, male, or less educated will be more homophobic than those who are younger, married, female, or more educated. People of color will be more homophobic than whites. Contact with lesbians and gay men should reduce homophobia.

Other studies have found that religiousness increases hostility toward lesbians and gays, and that people with an intrinsic religious orientation are more antigay than those claiming no religious preference. Yet these studies do not carefully distinguish what has been

loosely termed *religiosity* (Fisher, Derison, Cadman, Polley, & Johnston, 1994; Herek, 1987, 1988; Yang, 1998). In recent years, segments of the Religious Right have mobilized in order to deny rights to lesbians and gay men. Diamond (1989) argues that the antigay Religious Right is primarily composed of Protestants who adhere to a literal interpretation of the Bible, including fundamentalists usually associated with Baptist churches as well as Pentecostals (Heatwole, 1978; Wohlenberg, 1980). Baptists, fundamentalists, and self-proclaimed Christians display more antigay/lesbian attitudes than Catholics, Jews, and many Protestant denominations (Fisher et al., 1994). Although the Catholic Church has participated actively in the fight against lesbian and gay rights through institutionalized venues, grassroots involvement of Catholics as Catholics in antigay/lesbian activism has been minimal. Similarly, the constituency of the Christian Right does not include many Catholics (Diamond, 1989) and thus for analytic reasons should be kept distinct. Therefore I expect that religious attendance and membership in Protestant denominations should increase homophobia.

Following Bernstein, Kostelac, and Gaarder (2003), I expect that organizational location will influence homophobia and employ three measures that position respondents within the workplace structure. First, I expect that more years in law enforcement will directly increase homophobia. Second, because of the historic animosity of police officers to lesbian and gay rights, and because being a civilian employee in a police department does not carry the same status derived from adherence to a hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995), I expect that sworn officers will be more homophobic than civilian employees. In addition, studies of policing suggest that sworn officers' supervisory positions are not considered as "masculine" as officers on the beat because "'real police work' is associated with the outside domain of the street" (Martin, 1994, p. 392). Therefore I expect that supervisors will be less homophobic than line level sworn officers.

Finally, I expect that stereotypes and group position will have the strongest direct effect on homophobia relative to the direct effects of the other independent variables.

Indirect Effects via Stereotypes and Group Position

In contrast to antigay/lesbian movement discourse, which emphasizes homosexuality as a threat to children, prior studies of homophobia typically do not find an individual's number of children to be a significant predictor of homophobia.[3] The variable race may also capture racialized cultural meanings associated with homophobia. Therefore I expect both that the number of children, age, race, education, and contact will have an indirect effect on homophobia through stereotypes[4] and that sex should indirectly influence homophobia through both stereotypes and group position. In addition, I expect that type of religion and attendance at religious services will have indirect effects on homophobia through both stereotypes and group position. In terms of the workplace variables, it is reasonable to assume that police culture may not have the same effect on civilian employees as on sworn officers. So I expect that rank, employee status, and years in law enforcement will indirectly effect homophobia through both stereotypes and group position.

Data and Measures

I base these results on responses from the 393 members of the Saguaro Police Department who voluntarily completed a Workplace Environment Survey designed to assess a number of factors influencing their experiences on the job. The overall response rate was 33%. As police departments generally refuse outside researchers access to their employees when the questions concern sensitive topics (Kraska & Kappeler, 1995), the findings presented here provide a unique opportunity to explore police attitudes toward homosexuality, fall well within the parameters of police surveys on sensitive issues, and are derived from a larger sample size than most similar studies. For further details about the survey and its distribution, see Bernstein and Kostelac (2002).

Although the response rate is low, the respondents who are sworn officers resemble the whole population of sworn officers at Saguaro in terms of sex, race, and rank.[5] Saguaro does not keep similar statistics on civilian employees, although our informants suggest that our civilian respondents resemble the general population of civilian employees at Saguaro.

Homophobia

In order to measure homophobia, as expressed through affective dislike of lesbians and gay men, I employed the short, combined form of Herek's (1988) Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL) and Attitudes Toward Gay Men (ATG) scales, to create the Attitudes Toward Gays and Lesbians (ATGL) scale, which has an alpha reliability of .88. This scale assesses the extent to which the respondent views homosexuality as "wrong," "disgusting," or as a "natural expression of sexuality between (men/women)" separately. The scale is coded so that lower scores mean higher levels of homophobia.

Stereotypes and Group Position

The Workplace Environment Survey includes a variety of items to determine whether or not respondents accept five negative stereotypes (identified as Stereotypes 1-5 in Table 1) about lesbians and gay men. Specifically, the survey asks whether or not homosexual police officers make good role models for the community, belong in law enforcement, or put others at risk for AIDS. The survey also asks whether or not hiring homosexuals means lowering job standards or would undermine department morale. Another series of four questions, identified as Group Position

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3. Elsewhere (Bernstein, Kostelac, & Gaarder, 2003) I note that this lack of significance contradicts the logic of most studies of homophobia which find that those who are older and single—in other words, those who lack the external markers of heterosexuality, such as a spouse—will be most homophobic.

4. It is reasonable to expect that number of children would also influence a sense of group position, but given my measure of group position, which is specific to this workplace, I do not expect to find a relationship with this data. Measured differently, children could affect a sense of group position.

5. I exclude lesbian and gay respondents from this analysis. The questions about sexual orientation were asked at the end of the section that heterosexual respondents were asked to complete to foster a higher response rate.

items 1-4, assess whether or not the respondents think male and female homosexuals could "make it" in law enforcement, and if they are as capable as heterosexuals.

Table 1. Factor analysis of group position and stereotype variables

Variable Name**	Statement	Stereotypes+	Group Position+
Stereotype1*	Homosexuals do not belong in law enforcement.	**0.690**	0.474
Stereotype2*	Departments that recruit homosexuals must lower their job standards.	**0.709**	0.399
Stereotype3*	Recruiting homosexual officers undermines department morale.	**0.760**	0.321
Stereotype4*	Police officers should be role models to the community. Hiring homosexual officers undermines those values.	**0.833**	0.413
Stereotype5*	The department should not recruit homosexuals because homosexuals put everyone at risk for AIDS.	**0.590**	0.456
Group Position1	A male homosexual can do this job as well as anybody else.	0.383	**0.682**
Group Position2*	Male homosexuals are not cut out for law enforcement.	0.460	**0.774**
Group Position3*	Female homosexuals are not cut out for law enforcement.	0.447	**0.799**
Group Position4	A female homosexual could do this job as well as anybody else.	0.279	**0.637**
Eigenvalues		3.2	3.0
Variance Explained		36%	33%

 * Reverse coded variables
 **All variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale, from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."
 +The factor analysis was done with a varimax rotation using prinicipal axis factor analysis.

I included these nine variables in a principal axis factor analysis, with varimax rotation. The factor analysis produced one factor, initially, but the second eigenvalue was .815, and all others were below .5, so I re-ran the factor analysis and asked for a two factor solution. The eigenvalues for the two rotated factors were 3.2 and 3.0 and together explained 69% of the combined variance, nearly 10% more than the one factor solution. The first factor (see Table 1) consisted of the five items that captured the idea that homosexuals would somehow adversely affect morale, job standards, health, or values, consistent with negative antigay/lesbian stereotypes. The four items that compared heterosexual with homosexual performance expectations loaded on the second factor. A reliability test on the two subsets of items shows that the first scale, which I call "Stereotypes," has a reliability of .91 and the second scale, which I call "Group Position," has a reliability of .89. Both scales are coded so that higher scores mean greater adherence to stereotypes and a stronger sense of heterosexual superiority and thus are coded in the opposite direction as ATGL.

Independent Variables

I employ a series of individual characteristics which include respondent's age (measured as an ordinal variable), sex, number of children, a dummy variable to distinguish single or cohabiting heterosexuals from those who are married, and education. Because of its location, Saguaro has a sizable percentage of Hispanics but very few African Americans, Asian Americans, or "other race" employees. Thus I employ two dummy variables for race. The first variable, "race (nonwhite)," codes African American and "other race" respondents as 1 and everyone else as 0. The second variable, "race (Hispanic)," codes Hispanic respondents as 1 and everyone else as 0. Thus white is the reference category. Taking into account Forbes' (1997) emphasis on the salience of contact type, I examine on- and off-the-job contact separately as dummy variables, using no contact as the reference category.

To measure the impact of religion on homophobia, I include dummy variables, for Protestant, Catholic, and "other" religion, using "no religion" as a reference category. I also include an ordinal measure of attendance at religious services.

In order to measure organizational location, I

Table 2 : Bivariate correlaton matrix (N=295)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1 ATGL	1																		
2 Stereotypes	-0.582 (.01)	1																	
3 Group Position	-0.544 (.01)	0.777 (.01)	1																
4 Traditional Married	-0.211 (.01)	0.19 (.01)	0.169 (.01)	1															
5 Age	-0.167 (.01)	0.131 (.05)	0.121 (.05)	0.144 (.05)	1														
6 Sex	0.056 (ns)	-0.292 (.01)	-0.200 (.01)	-0.316 (.01)	0.089 (ns)	1													
7 Race (Non-White)	0.081 (ns)	-0.142 (.01)	-0.066 (ns)	0.029 (ns)	-0.112 (ns)	-0.007 (ns)	1												
8 Race (Hispanic)	0.011 (ns)	-0.06 (ns)	-0.04 (ns)	0.032 (ns)	-0.076 (ns)	0.012 (ns)	0.787 (.01)	1											
9 Number of Children	-0.288 (.01)	0.257 (.01)	0.171 (.01)	0.383 (.01)	0.149 (.01)	-0.212 (.01)	0.025 (ns)	0.089 (ns)	1										
10 Education	0.037 (ns)	0.058 (ns)	-0.108 (ns)	0.038 (ns)	-0.000 (ns)	0.105 (ns)	-0.082 (ns)	-0.133 (.05)	-0.060 (ns)	1									
11 Job Contact	-0.014 (ns)	-0.097 (ns)	-0.115 (.05)	0.001 (ns)	0.066 (ns)	0.045 (ns)	-0.002 (ns)	-0.045 (ns)	0.123 (.05)	0.114 (ns)	1								
12 Non-Job Contact	0.164 (.01)	-0.192 (.01)	-0.125 (.05)	-0.009 (ns)	-0.004 (ns)	0.043 (ns)	0.131 (.01)	0.107 (ns)	-0.008 (ns)	0.106 (ns)	0.117 (.05)	1							
13 Attendance	-0.412 (.01)	0.252 (.01)	0.228 (.01)	0.329 (.01)	0.056 (ns)	0.148 (.05)	0.086 (ns)	0.153 (.01)	0.36 (.01)	0.021 (ns)	0.04 (ns)	0.082 (ns)	1						
14 Catholic	0.044 (ns)	-0.069 (ns)	-0.039 (ns)	0.017 (ns)	-0.08 (ns)	-0.012 (ns)	0.242 (.01)	0.508 (.01)	0.003 (ns)	-0.128 (.05)	-0.101 (ns)	0.000 (ns)	0.001 (ns)	1					
15 Protestant	-0.178 (.01)	0.22 (.01)	0.223 (.01)	0.074 (ns)	0.101 (ns)	-0.076 (ns)	-0.279 (.01)	-0.275 (.01)	0.065 (ns)	0.130 (.05)	0.073 (ns)	-0.07 (ns)	0.201 (.01)	-0.606 (.01)	1				
16 Other Religion	-0.151 (.01)	0.003 (ns)	-0.043 (ns)	-0.023 (ns)	0.043 (ns)	0.160 (.01)	0.077 (ns)	0.007 (ns)	0.045 (ns)	-0.064 (ns)	0.008 (ns)	0.097 (ns)	0.10 (ns)	-0.248 (.01)	-0.281 (.01)	1			
17 Rank	0.094 (ns)	-0.141 (.05)	-0.131 (.05)	0.127 (.05)	0.214 (.01)	0 (ns)	-0.029 (ns)	-0.063 (ns)	0.056 (ns)	0.231 (.01)	0.187 (.01)	0.051 (ns)	-0.052 (ns)	-0.137 (.05)	0.118 (.05)	0.023 (ns)	1		
18 Years in Law Enforc	-0.001 (ns)	0.095 (ns)	0.064 (ns)	0.247 (.01)	0.544 (.01)	-0.114 (ns)	0.01 (ns)	0.011 (ns)	0.341 (.01)	0.029 (ns)	0.284 (.01)	0.028 (ns)	0.149 (.01)	-0.062 (ns)	0.147 (.01)	-0.093 (ns)	0.346 (.01)	1	
19 Employee Status	-0.069 (ns)	0.170 (.01)	0.091 (ns)	0.230 (.01)	-0.188 (.01)	-0.608 (.01)	-0.014 (ns)	-0.052 (ns)	0.120 (.05)	0.135 (.05)	0.145 (.05)	-0.020 (ns)	0.110 (ns)	0.000 (ns)	0.050 (ns)	-0.109 (ns)	0.068 (ns)	0.134 (.05)	1

employ three variables: rank, years in law enforcement, and employee status. Rank is a dummy variable that distinguishes supervisors (coded 1) from line level employees (coded 0). Years in law enforcement is measured as an ordinal level variable and employee status distinguishes civilian employees (coded 0) from sworn officers (coded 1).

Results

Table 2 presents the correlations between homophobia and all the independent variables. It is worth noting that the zero-order correlation between traditionally married and homophobia is in the opposite direction expected by most studies of homophobia. In other words, those who are traditionally married are more homophobic than those who are single, cohabiting, or divorced. The correlation between number of children and homophobia is also significant, suggesting that homophobia may be more related to support for a traditional familialism than to fear of being labeled gay or lesbian. Secondly, both the

stereotypes and group position variables are the most strongly correlated with homophobia, followed by attendance at religious services.

Comparing across the first three columns, it is clear that traditional marriage, age, number of children, non-job contact, attendance, and Protestant are significantly correlated with homophobia as well as with group position and stereotypes. Other factors are only correlated with stereotypes and group position, including sex and race (non-white), as well as job contact and rank.

Table 3 and Figure 1 present the results of the multivariate path analysis. All reported significance tests are two-tailed. Listwise deletion was used to handle missing data. The first three columns show the results of the full models with homophobia, stereotypes, and group position as the dependent variables, respectively. The last three columns are for the reduced models, which include only those independent variables that were significant at the p≤.10 level in the full models as well as the dummy variables as needed. Figure 1 includes all of the significant path coefficients (i.e., the standardized regression coefficients from the path models using the OLS regression results from the reduced models shown in the last three columns of Table 3).

Based on the results in Table 3, non-job contact, religious attendance, and type of religion can all be seen to significantly influence homophobia in the expected direction. Stereotypes has the strongest direct impact on homophobia followed by attendance at religious services, other religion, and group position. While the religion variables have a slightly stronger direct effect on homophobia, running the same analysis without stereotypes and group position explains only 29.7% of the variance in homophobia (results not shown). This variance explained by the variables excluding stereotypes and group position is virtually the same as that found in Herek and Glunt's (1993) national survey. By comparison, my analysis explains 50.8% of the variance when stereotypes and group position are included. Thus, I expect that the intermediate variables, group position and stereotypes, developed in this paper will have relevance for the police more generally and possibly for other populations as well.

Figure 1: Path diagram explaining homophobia (ATGL): Only significant paths shown
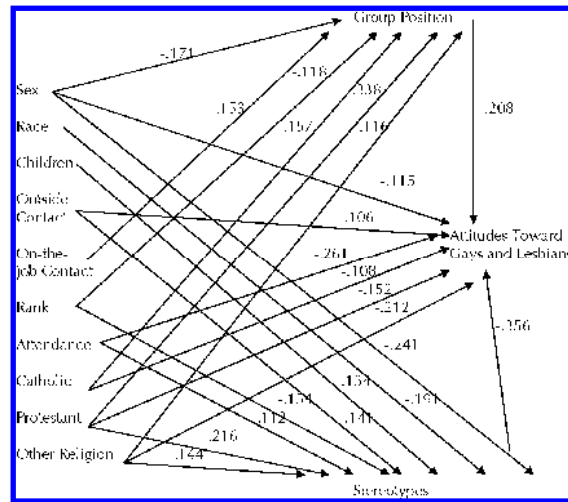
The only apparently counterintuitive finding is for sex. Because the coefficient for sex is negative, it suggests that women are significantly more homophobic than men. However as Kite and Whitley (1998) point out in their meta-analysis of research on homophobia, the expectation that men are more homophobic derives from convenience samples of college students. Samples of nonprofessional adults show the smallest sex differences in attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Furthermore, when one takes into account the paths to homophobia discussed below, the net effect of sex becomes virtually non-existent, consistent with the non-significant zero-order correlation between sex and homophobia. Separating the raw means for men and women in terms of the ATL and ATG components which comprise the ATGL scale (see Table 4) shows that men are more homophobic toward gay men than women are, and that there is no significant difference between men's and women's attitudes toward lesbians, replicating the findings of previous studies. But most importantly, the multivariate findings suggest that sex differences in homophobia are an artifact of feelings of group superiority and acceptance of stereotypes. While sex differences may also reflect personality factors, as is commonly assumed, the results shown here direct attention to more sociological processes of attitude formation.

Table 3. Standardized coefficients, path analysis (using OLS regression): All variables (N=294)

Independent Measures	Homophobia	Stereotypes	Group Position	Homophobia^	Stereotypes^	Group Position^
			Dependent Variables			
Traditional Married	-.027	-.233	.043			
	(-.552)	(-3.400)	(.681)			
Age	-.076	.088	.096			
	(-1.346)	(1.285)	(1.331)			
Sex (Female)	-.153***	-.233***	-.158**	-.115***	-.241***	-.171***
	(-2.650)	(-3.400)	(-2.197)	(-2.680)	(-4.510)	(-3.245)
Race (Non-White)	-.092	-.199**	-.080		-.191**	
	(-1.295)	(-2.358)	(-.901)		(-2.338)	
Race (Hispanic)	.067	.101	.032		.096	
	(.942)	(1.178)	(.357)		(1.154)	
Number of Children	-.065	.116*	.030		.134**	
	(-1.240)	(1.850)	(.446)		(2.434)	
Education	-.017	-.038	-.090			
	(-.367)	(-.692)	(-1.570)			
Job Contact	-.064	-.080	-.117**			-.153***
	(-1.362)	(-1.432)	(-1.991)			(-2.894)
Non-Job Contact	.102**	-.136**	-.063	.106***	-.141***	
	(2.298)	(-2.566)	(-1.135)	(2.578)	(-2.708)	
Attendance	-.242***	.111*	.103	-.261***	.112*	
	(-4.731)	(1.811)	(1.591)	(-5.951)	(1.905)	
Catholic	-.121*	.081	.148*	-.108*	.065	.157**
	(-1.778)	(.993)	(1.731)	(-1.738)	(.800)	(2.074)
Protestant	-.129*	.245***	.312***	-.152***	.216***	.338***
	(-1.815)	(2.931)	(3.545)	(-2.334)	(2.596)	(4.430)
Other Religion	-.200***	.155**	.118*	-.212***	.144**	.116*
	(-3.570)	(2.324)	(1.671)	(-4.182)	(2.207)	(1.814)
Rank	-.047	-.163***	-.141**		-.154***	-.118**
	(-.978)	(-2.838)	(-2.333)		(-2.963)	(-2.234)
Years In Law Enforc	.093	.027	.038			
	(1.597)	(.381)	(.517)			
Employee Status	-.065	.039	.010			
	(-1.151)	(.572)	(.145)			
Stereotypes	-.346***			-.356***		
	(-4.749)			(-5.356)		
Group Position	-.221***			-.208***		
	(-3.188)			(-3.239)		
R²	.508***	.278***	.199***	.488***	.237***	.131***
F-statistic	15.814	6.692	4.329	37.928	9.065	8.113

Note: Numbers in parentheses are t-values. *p≤.10 **p≤.05 ***p≤.01 (two-tailed tests)
^ Reduced model

Table 4. Means by sex of ATL and ATG

	Men	**Women**	N=352
ATL	9.11	9.20	
ATG	8.00	9.49	

When examining the indirect effects, sex, rank, Protestant, and other religion influence homophobia through both group position and stereotypes. Sex is significant, showing that women are less likely to accept stereotypes about lesbians and gay men and are less likely to view heterosexuals as superior in ability to lesbians and gay men. Together, the indirect effects of sex increase levels of tolerance (i.e., lower levels of homophobia) by (-.171) (-.208) + (-.241) (-.356) = .122 while the direct effect of sex decreases levels of tolerance (i.e., raises levels of homophobia) by -.115, producing a net effect of .006, consistent with the non-significant zero-order correlation between sex and homophobia. In terms of the workplace variables, only rank is significant, showing that supervisors are less accepting of negative stereotypes and are less likely to have a strong sense of group position than line-level employees, although rank does not have a direct effect on homophobia. This may be partly a function of pressure at the Saguaro Police Department to increase diversity within the workforce.

Both race (non-Hispanic, non-White) and number of children have indirect effects on ATGL via stereotypes but no direct effects. This suggests that people with children are more willing to accept negative portrayals of lesbians and gay men. Similarly, Whites and Hispanics are more likely to accept stereotypes than African Americans and other race respondents. This suggests that more attention must be paid to the specific ways in which race and culture influence homophobia through stereotypes and group position. Finally, religious attendance has both a direct impact on homophobia and an indirect impact through stereotypes suggesting that the discourse promulgated by conservative religious institutions has the desired effect of promoting homophobia.

Examining the contact variables helps to explain exactly how contact with lesbians and gay men influences homophobia. The less intimate contact that occurs on the job indirectly influences homophobia through group position, while the more personal and most likely voluntary contact that may occur off the job influences homophobia both directly and indirectly through stereotypes. Consistent with research which finds Catholics not to be a primary constituency of antigay/lesbian social movements that promulgate the most pernicious myths about lesbians and gay men (e.g., Herman, 1994), Catholic influences homophobia directly and indirectly through its impact on group position, but does not influence acceptance of stereotypes.

Comparing the direct and indirect effects, we see that the effect of Protestant on homophobia virtually doubles from -.152 to -.301 when its indirect effects (.338) (-.208) + (.216) (-.356) = -.147 are taken into account. Other religion increases its impact on homophobia by one third, while outside contact increases by one half.

Conclusion

Drawing on the sociological research on gay and lesbian social movements and their opponents as well as on sociological research on racial prejudice, this article has developed and operationalized the concepts of group position and stereotypes as intermediate variables that influence homophobia. I have shown that the primary antigay/lesbian arguments center around promoting negative stereotypes and asserting heterosexual superiority or a sense of group position. Employing survey data, I have shown that incorporating stereotypes and group position scales into a multivariate analysis increases the explained variance in levels of homophobia from 29.7% to 50.8%. The significance of the group position scale suggests a sociological dimension to homophobia. In other words, homophobia may be a function of affective dislike and acceptance of stereotypes, but it is also rooted in dynamic interactions between concrete groups vying for a privileged status. This finding also suggests the possibility for social change as contending groups change in size and influence and constructions of self-

interest are reformulated.

In addition, this research illustrates the paths by which several independent variables affect homophobia. In particular, I have shown that the impact of the religion variables on homophobia is magnified substantially when these alternative paths are taken into account. My findings regarding the impact of contact replicate earlier findings that suggest that more intimate contact is likely to have a greater influence on homophobia than less personal contact. But these findings also illustrate that contact influences homophobia through its impact on group position and stereotypes and that non-job contact has five times more effect on homophobia than does on-the-job contact. Finally, this study suggests that location within a workplace—in this case, rank—can influence levels of homophobia.

The findings presented here suggest that in addition to religious institutions, workplaces may also be important places that affect attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Although rank does not have a direct effect on ATGL, it does have an indirect impact on homophobia, suggesting the importance of workplace structure for facilitating a climate that increases tolerance. Workplaces that encourage and promote diversity through giving incentives to managers may foster more tolerant work environments. While job contact only has a slight indirect effect on homophobia, it is nonetheless significant and suggests that facilitating workplace structures that give everyone a stake in diversity and provide a secure environment for out lesbians and gay men can be effective. While the survey data presented here are derived from respondents in one police department, the results are likely to be generalizable to other male-dominated masculinist workplaces, such as the military, as well. Future research will have to explore the extent to which these findings can be generalized to other types of workplaces.

The continued influence of conservative religious institutions that are intertwined with antilesbian/gay social movements on homophobia cannot be denied. They not only directly affect homophobia, but their promotion of negative stereotypes and a sense of group position magnifies their impact. These findings suggest that more public information that seeks to dispel stereotypes and illustrates the ability of lesbians and gay men to perform effectively in a variety of institutional locations, particularly those related to policing and the armed services, will significantly reduce homophobia. It is likely that in other areas where heterosexuals are (falsely) assumed to be superior to lesbians and gay men, as in parenting (Stacey & Biblarz, 2001), there is a continued need to dispel pernicious myths which claim, for example, that gays and lesbians "recruit" children into homosexuality and molest children (Herek, 1991). As a political strategy, "coming out" continues to be effective in reducing homophobia, but may be less effective in influencing more distant relationships. Nonetheless, coming out at work may be one of the more important ways to reduce heterosexuals' sense of group position. Finally, this research suggests the importance of paying closer attention to the indirect as well as the direct influences on homophobia. ◆

Acknowledgments

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