

Gender Gaps in Public Opinion About Lesbians and Gay Men

Gregory M. Herek, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
University of California, Davis

*This is a preprint of a paper that will appear in Public Opinion Quarterly (2002), 66(1).
Please do not quote or cite without the author's explicit permission.*

Abstract

Using data from a 1999 national RDD survey (N = 1,335), this paper examines gender gaps in heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and a variety of topics related to homosexuality. Attitudes toward lesbians differed from attitudes toward gay men in several areas, and significant differences were observed between male and female heterosexual respondents. Survey participants generally were more likely to regard gay men as mentally ill, supported adoption rights for lesbians more than for gay men, and had more negative personal reactions to gay men than to lesbians. Overall, heterosexual women were more supportive than men of employment protection and adoption rights, more willing to extend employee benefits to same-sex couples, and less likely to hold stereotypical beliefs about gay people. Heterosexual men's negative reactions to gay men were at the root of these gender differences. Of all respondent-by-target combinations, heterosexual men were the least supportive of recognition of same-sex relationships and adoption rights for gay men, most likely to believe that gay men are mentally ill and molest children, and most negative in their affective reactions to gay men. Heterosexual men's response patterns were affected by item order, suggesting possible gender differences in the cognitive organization of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. The findings demonstrate the importance of differentiating lesbians from gay men as attitude targets in survey research.¹

¹ The research described here was supported by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health (R01

Public opinion surveys have asked questions about Americans' attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexuality since at least 1965. That year, 70% of the respondents to a Harris poll believed that homosexuals were more harmful than helpful to American life, and another 29% believed that they don't "help or harm things much one way or the other." Of the other groups named in the survey, only Communists and atheists were considered more harmful than homosexuals – by 89% and 72% of respondents, respectively (Harris 1965).²

When the General Social Survey was launched in the early 1970s, it included items about the morality of homosexuality and tolerance for homosexuals. The GSS was unusual, however. Most population-based surveys did not routinely ask about homosexuality until the late 1970s, when

MH55468 and K02 MH01455). I thank John Capitanio for his helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and the staff of the University of California Survey Research Center for their hard work and dedication in completing the study. I am especially grateful to the late Karen Garrett, whose skill and thoughtful professionalism made the study better in innumerable ways, and whose kindness and good humor made the project a joy to complete. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research in Portland, Oregon (May, 2000). Address correspondence to the author at Department of Psychology, University of California, 1 Shields Avenue, Davis CA 95616-8686, USA.

² Like homosexuals, prostitutes were regarded as harmful by 70% of respondents. Following closely behind were "anti-Vietnam war pickets" (68%), "civil rights demonstrators" (68%), "student demonstrators at colleges" (65%), and "women who gossip all the time" (65%).

controversies about gay rights pushed the issue into mainstream media and politics. Since then, hundreds of survey items have tapped attitudes in this area (Yang 1997).

Those surveys have often revealed a gap between the attitudes of female and male respondents. In some domains of attitudes toward gay people, women tend to be more tolerant and less hostile than men. For example, in the Harris (1965) poll mentioned above, 82% of men believed that homosexuals were harmful to the nation, compared to 58% of women. A similar pattern has been noted in many national surveys with probability samples (Haerberle 1999; Lewis and Rogers 1999; Strand 1998), but not in all of them (Scott 1998; Yang 1998).

In a meta-analysis, Kite and Whitley (1996) found that patterns of sex differences in attitudes toward homosexuality varied depending on the type of sample as well as the type of attitude being assessed (see also Herek 1986). Unfortunately, sample type and attitude domain are confounded. National surveys with probability samples have generally focused on opinions about civil liberties and civil rights, whereas laboratory studies with convenience samples of students have focused on affective responses to homosexual behaviors or to gay men and lesbians as people. The most pronounced sex differences in the meta-analysis were observed for undergraduate students and in personal responses to gay people, although items in national polls about gay parenting and military service also evoked pronounced differences between male and female respondents (Kite and Whitley 1996). In one series of national telephone surveys with probability samples of US adults published since Kite and Whitley's review, heterosexual men consistently displayed more negative affective reactions to homosexuality than heterosexual women (Herek and Capitanio 1995, 1996, 1999b).

In addition to differences between male and female respondents, there appears to be a second gender gap in heterosexuals' attitudes toward homosexuality: Attitudes toward gay men tend to be more negative than attitudes toward lesbians. Laboratory and questionnaire

studies with convenience samples suggest that this difference is linked to both the sex of the respondent and the sex of the target. Heterosexuals tend to express more negative attitudes toward gay people of their same sex, with the pattern much more pronounced among men than women. Thus, differences between attitudes toward lesbians and gay men appear to result mainly from heterosexual men's hostility toward gay men (Kite and Whitley 1996).

Unfortunately, analysis of this second gender gap with national polling data has not been possible because researchers have not differentiated between gay men and lesbians. Most survey questions are phrased to assess attitudes toward "homosexuals" or "gays," an approach which implicitly assumes that respondents' answers apply equally to lesbians and gay men. In some surveys, such as the American National Election Studies (ANES), respondents report their feelings toward "gay men and lesbians, or homosexuals." Although the ANES approach makes explicit the fact that the question is meant to tap attitudes toward both men and women, it cannot detect differences in respondents' feelings toward the two groups. Indeed, Yang's (1997) review of 77 different poll items about homosexuality yielded only two that distinguished reactions to lesbians from reactions to gay men.³

The strategy of combining the genders in survey items is defensible if the US public perceives lesbians and gay men mainly in terms of the broader category *homosexuals*. The rhetorics of religious conservatives and the gay rights movement certainly are consistent with such a perception. Religious conservatives oppose gay rights and condemn both male and female homosexuality. The gay movement

³ One item, administered in two Los Angeles Times polls, asked separately about respondents' feeling uncomfortable around homosexual men and lesbian women. Another item, included in three Roper surveys, asked male respondents about their reaction to a son having a homosexual relationship and female respondents their reactions to a daughter having a lesbian relationship.

claims that men and women alike should be free from violence, discrimination, and persecution based on their sexual orientation. These views reflect what might be labeled a minority group politics paradigm, one that regards gay men and lesbians as sharing a common characteristic that makes them members of a distinct quasi-ethnic group with its own culture and political concerns.

By contrast, a conceptual model that focuses on personal constructions of gender and sexuality suggests that attitudes toward lesbians may differ from attitudes toward gay men for at least two interrelated reasons (Herek 2000b). First, attitudes toward homosexuality are understood to be closely linked to gender attitudes and beliefs. Historically, homosexuality has often been equated with gender inversion: Male homosexuals have been presumed to be more like women than men, whereas lesbians have been presumed to be more like men (Chauncey 1982-1983; Minton 1986; Terry 1999), and these assumptions still have widespread currency (e.g., Kite and Deaux 1987). Within this framework, attitudes toward gay men reflect attitudes not only toward homosexuality, but also toward men who violate male gender roles. Similarly, attitudes toward lesbians are understood to reflect attitudes toward women and their social roles as much as attitudes toward homosexuality. To the extent that cultural gender norms are different for men and women, attitudes toward gay men are likely to differ from attitudes toward lesbians.

Second, attitudes toward homosexuality may reflect an individual's attitudes toward her or his own sexuality. Because of homosexuality's stigmatized status, many heterosexuals wish to avoid being labeled gay or lesbian, and this concern is probably stronger among men in U.S. society (Herek 1986; Kimmel 1997). Some individuals may feel a particular need to distance themselves from gay people because they have experienced homosexual desires or engaged in same-sex behaviors which they regard as extremely unacceptable and inconsistent with their self concept (Herek 1986, 1992). Such concerns are especially likely to

translate into negative attitudes toward the group from which the person wishes to distinguish himself or herself, that is, gay people of one's same gender.

Thus, whereas attitudes toward lesbians and gay men might be expected to be highly similar in a minority group politics paradigm, a sexuality/gender paradigm suggests plausible reasons why attitudes toward lesbians might differ from attitudes toward gay men, especially among heterosexual males. Empirically assessing whether such differences occur in U.S. public opinion – and in which domains of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men – will extend knowledge about the nature of heterosexuals' attitudes and improve the measures used in surveys. The present paper uses data from a national RDD survey to address this question.

Method

Data were collected in a national telephone survey between September of 1998 and May of 1999. All interviews were conducted by the staff of the Survey Research Center at the University of California at Berkeley, using their computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. The median duration of the interview was 44 minutes.

Sample

This was the second of two surveys in an ongoing study of AIDS-related stigma in the United States.⁴ Roughly one half of the

⁴ This NIMH-funded project's main focus was to assess stigma associated with HIV and AIDS in two national telephone surveys conducted approximately 24 months apart (for more details about the surveys, see Capitanio and Herek, 1999; Herek and Capitanio 1999a, 1999b; Herek, Capitanio, and Widaman 2002). Both surveys included questions about attitudes toward gay men and lesbians because AIDS stigma has historically been strongly correlated with heterosexuals' attitudes toward homosexuality (e.g., Herek 2000c; Herek and Capitanio 1998). The 1999 survey, from which data in the present paper were obtained, differed from the 1997 survey in several important respects including that it contained more items about lesbians and gay men as well as several

respondents ($n = 666$) had participated in a 1997 survey and consented to be recontacted for a follow-up interview (for details about the 1997 survey, see Capitanio and Herek 1999; Herek 2000c; Herek and Capitanio 1999a, 1999b). The remaining respondents ($n = 669$) were interviewed for the first time in the 1999 survey. For both groups, the sampling frame was the population of English-speaking adults (at least 18 years of age) residing in households with telephones in the 48 contiguous states. The two subsamples are described separately below.

Follow-up sample. Of the 1,309 participants in the original 1997 survey, a total of 1,197 (91%) expressed willingness to be contacted at a later date for a follow-up interview.⁵ For the 1998-99 survey (hereafter referred to as the 1999 survey), those respondents were randomly grouped in replicates of 100 for follow-up calls. Calls were attempted to 876 numbers, of which 22 (3%) were deceased, unable to participate in the interview, or otherwise ineligible. Of the remaining 854 respondents, follow-up interviews were successfully completed with 666 (78%). The remaining respondents were never located ($n = 96$; 11%), were never at home ($n = 21$; 2%), or refused ($n = 76$; 9%). The follow-up sample was 57% female and 81% non-Hispanic White, with a mean age of 47 years (range = 20 - 91), a median educational

experimental manipulations of item wording and order. In the 1999 survey most items about lesbians and gay men followed the items about AIDS stigma. The exception to this pattern was that the feeling thermometers about gay men and lesbians were placed near the beginning of the interview in a series of thermometers targeting various groups. In interpreting the present results, it should be kept in mind that answers to the questions about lesbians and gay men may have been affected in unknown ways by the AIDS-related survey content.

⁵ During the intervening two years, letters were sent to these respondents at approximately six month intervals to remind them that the study was still in progress and that they might be reinterviewed in the future. The response rate in the 1997 study was 65.1% (Herek and Capitanio 1999a, 1999b), using AAPOR Response Rate Formula 2 (AAPOR, 1998).

level of some college, and a median income of \$40-50,000. Comparison of the original and follow-up samples revealed that respondents in the 1997 sample had slightly lower educational and income levels, and were somewhat more likely to be non-White than respondents in the 1999 sample. However, the effect sizes associated with these differences were modest, indicating that any attrition-related biases in the follow-up sample were minor.

New RDD sample. As in the 1997 survey, the new sample was drawn with a list-assisted RDD procedure (Casady and Lepkowski 1993). This method resulted in 1,153 eligible households. Within each household, a respondent was randomly selected from the enumerated list of all eligible household residents. Interviews were fully or substantially completed with 669 individuals, yielding a final response rate of 58% (Response Rate Formula 2, AAPOR 1998). Demographically, the new RDD sample closely resembled the follow-up sample. It was 55% female and 82% non-Hispanic White, with a median educational level of some college and a median income of \$40-50,000. On average, respondents in the new sample were two years younger than the follow-up sample (for the new sample, $M = 45$ years, range = 18 - 89), reflecting the passage of time since the follow-up sample was originally recruited.

Measures

To assess gender gaps in a variety of domains, the interview included items about respondents' attitudes toward civil rights issues, stereotypical beliefs about lesbians and gay men, personal discomfort with lesbians and gay men, and affective reactions to gay people. The exact item wording is provided in the Appendix.

Civil rights attitudes. Prominent among the areas of gay civil rights activism and debate in recent years have been protection from employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, the right to marriage and domestic partner benefits, and the right of same-sex couples to adopt children. Items were included to assess respondents' support for each of these three categories of rights.

Beliefs about homosexuality: Choice. Opinions about the origins of sexual orientation and whether people who are homosexual can or should change their orientation have featured prominently in debates about sexuality in the United States in recent years. Religious conservatives have frequently asserted that homosexuality represents a willful choice of a sinful way of life (Herman 1997). Many gay rights supporters, in contrast, have argued that one's sexual orientation (whether homosexual, heterosexual, or bisexual) is either inborn or established early in life, rather than chosen (e.g., Marcus 1993).⁶ Reflecting this debate, dozens of national surveys over the past quarter century have asked respondents whether or not they believe that being homosexual is a choice (e.g., Yang 1997). Although the wording of those survey items can be criticized for failing to differentiate sexual behavior from same-sex attraction and personal identity, respondents apparently understand them in terms of cultural debates about homosexuality and gay rights. This is indicated by the fact that regarding a homosexual orientation as freely chosen has consistently been associated with more negative attitudes toward gay people and opposition to gay rights (Herek and Capitano 1995; Schneider and Lewis 1984; Whitley 1990).

In the present survey, respondents were asked whether they believed that homosexuality is something that people choose for themselves or something over which they have no control. Those who endorsed the "no control" alternative were asked whether people are born homosexual or become homosexual as a result of upbringing or the environment.

Beliefs about homosexuality: Popular stereotypes. Stereotypical beliefs about gay people are regularly invoked in antigay

discourse (Herek 1991a, 1991b; Herman 1997). Gay people – especially men – are often portrayed as child molesters. Conservative religious campaigns still promote the idea that homosexuality is a treatable pathology even though mainstream mental health professionals have not regarded homosexuality as a mental illness for more than a quarter century. And, as noted earlier, the belief that gay men and lesbians act like the opposite sex is widespread. Respondents were asked about their belief in each of these three stereotypes. The items asked what proportion of gay men and lesbians are likely to molest or abuse children, are mentally ill, and tend to act like the opposite sex. Six response alternatives were offered, ranging from *all of them* to *hardly any of them*.

Personal discomfort. Respondents were asked how comfortable they feel being around a gay man or lesbian. Response alternatives were *very comfortable*, *somewhat comfortable*, *somewhat uncomfortable*, and *very uncomfortable*.

Affective reactions. Two sets of items assessed affective reactions to lesbians and gay men. First, respondents were administered a series of 101-point feeling thermometers. Higher ratings indicate warmer, more favorable feelings toward the target whereas lower ratings indicate colder, more negative feelings (e.g., Sapiro, Rosenstone, Miller, and the National Election Studies 1998). To familiarize them with the format, all respondents first reported their warmth or favorability toward "Protestants," then "Catholics," then "Jews." Respondents next reported their feelings toward "men who are homosexual" and "women who are lesbian, or homosexual."

Second, respondents were administered the short forms of the Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL) and Attitudes Toward Gay Men (ATG) scales, whose psychometric properties are well established (Herek 1994). The short forms of the scales consist of three statements about lesbians and three parallel statements about gay men, to which respondents indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. The gay male items (with lesbian wordings in brackets) are (1) "Sex between two men [women] is just plain

⁶ In addition, at least some lesbians and – to a lesser extent – gay men report that they experienced some degree of choice in their sexual orientation (Golden 1996; Whisman 1996) and argue that the origins of sexual orientation are irrelevant to the question of whether sexual minorities should be protected from prejudice, discrimination, and violence.

wrong” (referred to hereafter as the *WRONG* item); (2) “I think male homosexuals [female homosexuals or lesbians] are disgusting” (*DISGUST*); and (3) “Male [female] homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men [women]” (*NATURAL*). All items were administered with four response alternatives (*agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, disagree strongly*). Scale scores were computed by assigning numerical values to each response alternative (1 = disagree strongly, 4 = agree strongly) and summing across the three items, with responses to the *NATURAL* item reverse-scored ($\alpha = .71$ for both scales). Higher scores indicate higher levels of sexual prejudice, that is, antigay attitudes (Herek 2000a).

Sexual orientation. Respondents’ sexual orientation was assessed with the following item: “Now I’ll read a list of terms people sometimes use to describe themselves: (a) *heterosexual* or *straight*; (b) *homosexual, gay, lesbian* [the last choice was included only for female respondents]; and (c) *bisexual*. As I read the list again, please stop me when I get to the term that best describes how you think of yourself.”⁷

Experimental Manipulations

The survey included a series of experimental manipulations involving target gender, item wording, and item order. Because respondents were randomly assigned to one condition in each manipulation while all other features of the interview were held constant, each manipulation constitutes a true experiment. Consequently, differences in response patterns can be legitimately inferred to result from the manipulation (e.g., Sniderman and Grob 1996). Randomization was independent across experiments. In other words, the condition to which a respondent was assigned for one experiment was completely unrelated to her or his assignment to a condition in the other

⁷ This item was placed approximately midway through the interview. Respondents who described themselves as homosexual, gay, or lesbian were not asked the ATL or ATG items.

experiments.

Target gender. Gender gaps might be expected in heterosexuals’ endorsement of stereotypical beliefs about lesbians and gay men and support for gay rights. To identify such gaps, parallel forms of the *civil rights* and *beliefs* items were developed with one version referring to gay men and the other to lesbians. Respondents were randomly assigned to answer either the gay men series or the lesbian series.

Item wording: Employment rights. Historically, Americans have been more willing to endorse the abstract concept of equal treatment for minority groups than to endorse specific actions to ensure it (e.g., Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1985), and researchers have argued that the same pattern applies to attitudes toward employment opportunities for gay men and lesbians (Sherrill and Yang 2000). To directly test this hypothesis and to assess whether the phenomenon differs by gender, respondents were randomly assigned to receive one of two forms of the employment item in the civil rights series. This was in addition to their random assignment to either the lesbian or gay male versions of the series. One version framed the issue in general terms (“In general, do you favor or oppose [gay men/lesbians] having equal rights in terms of job opportunities?”) whereas the other version focused on enacting antidiscrimination legislation (“In general, do you favor or oppose passing a law to make sure that [gay men/lesbians] have equal rights in terms of job opportunities?”).

Issue framing. It was hypothesized that opposition to same-sex marriage might reflect the belief that a relationship between two men or two women is not comparable to a heterosexual relationship. If so, priming respondents to think about same-sex relationships as loving and committed might increase their likelihood of expressing support for same-sex marriage. Such a priming manipulation might affect attitudes toward same-sex marriage for one gender but not the other (e.g., lesbians but not gay men). To test this hypothesis, before receiving the marriage item in the civil rights series, one-half of the respondents (randomly assigned) were asked

“Do you think it is possible for two [gay men/lesbians] to have a long-term, loving and committed relationship, or do you believe that a long-term, loving and committed relationship cannot happen between [men/women]?” The remaining respondents received the question after the same-sex marriage and domestic partner items.

Sex of target and item order. A previous study with a national probability sample found that heterosexual men’s self-reports of attitudes were affected by the order in which items were administered (Herek and Capitanio 1999b). In brief, men’s attitudes toward lesbians were significantly more favorable when lesbian items were presented first than when they followed a parallel set of items about gay men. Order effects for heterosexual women were minimal. In the present study, an attempt was made to replicate and extend those previous findings.

Unlike the civil rights and beliefs questions, all respondents were asked both the gay male and lesbian versions of the feeling thermometers and ATL/ATG items. However, the order was randomized. One half of the sample rated gay men first on the feeling thermometer and then lesbians. The other half rated lesbians first and then gay men. Later in the survey, one half of the sample was randomly selected to receive the ATL items first; the other half received the ATG items first. Randomization of the ATL/ATG scales was independent of randomization of the feeling thermometers.

Data Analyses

Respondents were included in the analyses if they indicated that they were heterosexual. This criterion eliminated 34 respondents who reported that they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and another 22 respondents who did not answer the question about sexual orientation. Responses to the civil rights, beliefs, and discomfort items were categorical and were analyzed with the chi-square statistic. Patterns of statistical significance were the same for the full set of response alternatives and for collapsed categories (e.g., combining “strongly agree” and “somewhat agree”). To simplify presentation of results, the dichotomized responses are reported

below. Scores on the ATL/ATG scales and the thermometers were continuous and were analyzed with repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA), with follow-up univariate ANOVAs as appropriate. Due to the large sample size, minor differences were likely to yield statistically significant ANOVAs. For this reason, group differences were considered substantively significant only when the associated effect size (η^2) was at least 0.01.

In preliminary analyses, the two subsamples (follow-up and new RDD) were compared (men and women separately) on each item and the ATL/ATG scales. These comparisons yielded only three statistically significant differences between the subsamples out of 96 significance tests. Because this was less than the number of significant differences that would be expected simply by chance (i.e., fewer than 5% of the tests), and because there was no theoretical reason to expect the specific differences that emerged, the two samples were combined for the analyses reported below. Differences between weighted and unweighted data were negligible. For simplicity of presentation and analysis, therefore, unweighted data are reported here.

Results

Civil Rights Attitudes

Employment nondiscrimination. As shown in the first section of Table 1, respondents were more willing to support employment nondiscrimination in the abstract than to endorse enactment of an antidiscrimination law. The discrepancy was nearly twice as great among heterosexual male respondents (for whom there was an average difference of roughly 20 percentage points in endorsement of the item’s two versions) compared to female respondents (for whom the average difference was approximately 13 percentage points). Using chi-square, differences in endorsement between the two item versions were statistically significant for the combined data: $\chi^2(1, N = 1263) = 52.62$ ($p < .001$), and for all four combinations of respondent and target sex (all $ps < .001$). In addition, heterosexual women were significantly more supportive of

employment nondiscrimination than men, regardless of item version or target sex (all $ps < .01$). There was not a significant difference in endorsement of employment nondiscrimination for gay men versus lesbians.

Insert Table 1 about here

Marriage and domestic partnership. Most respondents opposed same-sex marriage for gay men and lesbians alike, with no significant differences by gender. When responses to the follow-up question about domestic partner benefits in the workplace were considered in conjunction with attitudes toward marriage, a significant difference emerged. Table 1 (second section) shows that 54% of heterosexual men opposed both types of recognition (i.e., marriage and employment benefits for domestic partners) for gay male couples, compared to 44% of heterosexual women, $C^2(2, n = 625) = 6.06 (p < .05)$. Male and female respondents did not differ significantly in their support for recognition of lesbian couples.

Contrary to expectations, responses to the marriage items were not affected by the question about the possibility of loving and committed same-sex relationships. However, males' responses to the priming question about lesbian relationships revealed an unexpected order effect. Of the men who were asked the priming question first (before the marriage and partnership items), nearly all (92%) believed that lesbian relationships can be loving and committed whereas only 71.7% believed that male-male relationships can be loving and committed (for the difference between lesbian and gay male targets, $C^2[1, n = 264] = 18.59, p < .001$). When the priming question followed the marriage items, the proportion of men characterizing lesbian relationships as loving and committed dropped by nearly ten points to 83.5% (for the order effect, $C^2[1, n = 264] = 4.48, p < .05$), and did not differ significantly from the proportion of men in that condition who believed that male-male relationships could be loving and committed (76.4%). The proportion of women respondents who believed

that same-sex relationships could be loving and committed did not differ significantly by item order or target gender (range = 85% to 88.9%).

Adoption. All respondents – men and women alike – were significantly more likely to endorse adoption rights for lesbians than for gay men, $C^2(1, n = 1243) = 11.24 (p < .001)$. As shown in Table 1 (third section), heterosexual women were more likely than men to support such rights for both lesbians, $C^2(1, n = 613) = 5.2 (p < .05)$, and gay men, $C^2(1, n = 630) = 9.58 (p < .01)$.

Insert Table 2 about here

Beliefs About Homosexuality

Choice. As shown in Table 2, both male and female heterosexuals were more likely to regard lesbianism as a choice than male homosexuality. For all respondents combined, $C^2(1, n = 1252) = 12.55 (p < .001)$. In addition, men were more likely than women to regard homosexuality as a choice for gay men, $C^2(1, n = 639) = 8.00 (p < .01)$, and for lesbians $C^2(1, n = 613) = 5.47 (p < .05)$. Table 2 also shows that respondents who believed homosexuality is *not* a choice overwhelmingly endorsed the idea that it is inborn rather than determined by environmental factors.

Stereotypical beliefs. Gay men were more likely than lesbians to be perceived as child molesters. Table 2 shows that nearly one fifth of male respondents believed that most gay men are likely to molest children, more than twice the proportion that expressed this belief about lesbians, $C^2(1, n = 549) = 12.87 (p < .001)$. Fewer heterosexual women regarded gay people as child molesters, but they also were nearly twice as likely to assign this stereotype to gay men as to lesbians (the difference between women's beliefs about gay men and lesbians, however, was not statistically significant, $p = .07$). Male respondents were significantly more likely than females to regard gay men as child molesters, $C^2(1, n = 634) = 11.94 (p < .001)$.

Table 2 also shows that gay men were more likely than lesbians to be regarded as mentally

ill; this difference resulted mainly from heterosexual males' significantly greater attribution of pathology to gay men than to lesbians, $C^2(1, n = 550) = 4.63 (p < .05)$. Male and female respondents were each somewhat more likely to believe that homosexuals of their own sex acted like the other gender, compared to their beliefs about homosexuals of the other sex. The difference, however, was not statistically significant.

Personal Discomfort

Response distributions for the personal discomfort items differed significantly between male and female respondents (Figure 1). Men expressed significantly greater discomfort than women around gay men, $C^2(3, N = 1272) = 62.49 (p < .001)$; women expressed significantly greater discomfort than men around lesbians, $C^2(3, N = 1270) = 9.9 (p < .05)$. The discrepancy was greater for gay men. As shown in Figure 1, 48.4% of males felt discomfort around gay men compared to 28.8% of females, a difference of nearly 20 percentage points. For lesbians, the difference was approximately 7 points – 42.7% of women felt discomfort compared to 35.6% of men. Only 24% of the men were “very comfortable” around gay men, compared to 42% of women (not shown in Figure 1). By contrast, nearly identical proportions (36% of men, 34% of women) felt “very comfortable” around lesbians.

Insert Figure 1 about here

This pattern is further illuminated by comparing individual responses across the two items. Most respondents expressed the same level of comfort toward both genders. For example, respondents who were “somewhat comfortable” around lesbians also tended to be “somewhat comfortable” around gay men. However, most of those who differed in their comfort levels felt less comfortable around a homosexual person of their same sex. Of the women, 29% were less comfortable to some degree around lesbians than gay men, whereas only 12% were less comfortable around gay men than lesbians. Of the men, 33% were less

comfortable around gay men, compared to 12% who were less comfortable around lesbians. In summary, women expressed more comfort overall, but both men and women were less comfortable around a homosexual person of their same sex.

Affective Reactions

Feeling thermometers. Women's mean thermometer scores were 50.7 for gay men and 49.7 for lesbians (for both, $SE = 1.0$); men's mean scores were 40.2 for gay men and 44.6 for lesbians (for both, $SE = 1.1$). Overall, gay men were rated significantly more negatively than lesbians, $F(1, 1273) = 35.2 (p < .001, \eta^2 = .027)$; heterosexual women gave significantly warmer thermometer ratings than did heterosexual men, $F(1, 1273) = 29.22 (p < .001, \eta^2 = .022)$; and male respondents' ratings of gay men were significantly lower than all others, $F(1, 1273) = 85.9 (p < .001, \eta^2 = .063)$.

Insert Table 3 about here

Even more interesting are the effects of item order. The final column of Table 3 reports differences between gay male and lesbian mean thermometer scores for each item sequence. For all respondents combined, scores on the lesbian thermometer differed significantly from scores on the gay male thermometer when the lesbian thermometer was presented first (mean difference = 2.5), but not when the gay male thermometer came first (mean difference = 0.3). For the 2-way interaction of Thermometer target \times Thermometer order, $F(1, 1271) = 16.34 (p < .001, \eta^2 = .013)$.

This is not exactly the same pattern observed in a previous study (Herek and Capitanio 1999b), when heterosexual men (but not women) regarded lesbians with significantly more warmth when the lesbian thermometer was presented first than when it followed the gay male thermometer. The pattern common to both surveys, however, is that respondents who received the lesbian thermometer first (i.e., not primed by previous presentation of the gay male thermometer) responded differently to lesbians than when the gay male thermometer came first.

This effect was stronger for men. Although the 3-way interaction term for Sex-of-respondent \times Thermometer order \times Thermometer target was not statistically significant, the final column of Table 4 shows that the men's thermometer scores differed by an average of 5.6 points when the lesbian thermometer came first, whereas women's scores in that condition barely differed (difference = 0.2).

ATL/ATG items. Overall ATG and ATL scores revealed that heterosexual men's attitudes toward gay men were more negative (i.e., higher scores) than their attitudes toward lesbians or women's attitudes toward either target group. Men's ATG scores ($M = 8.9$, $SE = .12$) were significantly higher than their ATL scores ($M = 8.0$, $SE = .11$), women's ATL scores ($M = 8.0$, $SE = .10$), and women's ATG scores ($M = 8.1$, $SE = .10$). For the Target Sex \times Respondent Sex interaction, $F(1, 1239) = 76.30$ ($p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .058$).

The order manipulation had a significant effect for men but not women (for the Respondent Sex \times Order interaction, $F[1, 1239] = 3.61$, $p < .06$, $\eta^2 = .003$). Among men, it mainly affected ATL scores. As shown in Figure 2, women's ATL and ATG scores did not differ significantly as a function of item order. The same was true of men's ATG scores. However, men's ATL scores (the last pair of vertical bars) were significantly lower when the lesbian items were presented first compared to when the ATG items came first (for the Target Sex \times Order interaction, $F[1, 1239] = 49.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .039$). ATL scores among men who received the lesbian items first were the lowest of all scores, although the 3-way interaction term was not statistically significant.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The effect of item order is especially evident when men's responses to the individual ATL items are examined. Among men who received the lesbian items first only 42% agreed that sex between women is wrong, compared to 59% of the men who received the lesbian items after the gay male items (a difference of 17 percentage

points), $C^2(1, n = 561) = 16.81$ ($p < .001$).⁸ For the DISGUST item, the percentages agreeing were 39% when the ATL items came first versus 44% when they followed the ATG items (a difference of 5 points, but not statistically significant). For the NATURAL item, on which agreement indicated favorable attitudes, the percentages were 36% versus 24%, respectively (a difference of 12 points), $C^2(1, n = 555) = 9.96$ ($p < .01$).

After finding a similar order effect in a previous study, Herek and Capitanio (1999b) suggested that heterosexual men's attitudes toward lesbians might be subject to influence by contextual variables because they are less well developed than men's attitudes toward gay men. The latter, by contrast, tend to be well-formed and generally negative. Thus, if a survey item about lesbians is preceded by an identical question about gay men, male respondents would be expected to evaluate lesbians in a manner consistent with their evaluation of gay men. If the question about lesbians is asked first, however, male respondents may be less certain about their attitude.

If correct, this hypothesis predicts that heterosexual men can call to mind their attitudes toward gay men more easily than their attitudes toward lesbians. During a survey interview, therefore, it should take them longer to recall their attitudes toward lesbians than their attitudes toward gay men. This difference should be especially pronounced among heterosexual males with strongly negative attitudes toward gay men.

Such a pattern can be observed by measuring response latency, that is, the time delay before a respondent answers a question (Bassili 1996). Attitudes that can be easily called to mind (in this case, highly prejudiced men's attitudes toward gay men) are likely to be associated with shorter latencies, whereas less

⁸ On this item, female respondents showed a similar albeit less pronounced difference of 7 percentage points in the same direction (for the item order effect, $p < .05$).

accessible attitudes (the same men's attitudes toward lesbians) should show longer latencies (Powell and Fazio 1984).

To test this hypothesis, the ATL/ATG items in the current survey were accompanied by response timers. Interviewers pressed a key the moment they finished reading the last word of the question, and again at the moment when the respondent began to answer. Figure 3 graphically displays the response latencies associated with the first ATL/ATG item (*WRONG*) for the men who were high and low in sexual prejudice (operationalized with a median split of ATG scores). As shown in Panel 1 of Figure 3, the men low in sexual prejudice took significantly longer to answer whichever version of the *WRONG* item came first. The latency for responding to the lesbian item was longer for those who received the ATL series first, whereas those who received the ATG items first had a longer latency for the gay male item. This can be interpreted as a normal practice effect (e.g., Fazio 1990).

Insert Figure 3 about here

By contrast, as shown in Panel 2 of Figure 3, highly prejudiced men had significantly longer response latencies for the lesbian *WRONG* item regardless of whether the ATL or ATG came first. For the two-way interaction between prejudice level (high versus low) and item version (gay man versus lesbian), $F(1, 550) = 11.89$ ($p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .021$).⁹ This pattern is consistent with the hypothesis that highly prejudiced men's attitudes toward lesbians are less accessible than their attitudes toward gay men and, consequently, require more cognitive effort to recall. A comparable pattern was not observed for the subsequent items in the series (i.e., *DISGUST* and *NATURAL*), suggesting that the highly prejudiced men's ease of recall

⁹ Because distributions for latency measures tend to be highly skewed, log transformations were used to normalize the distribution for statistical analysis (Fazio 1990).

did not differ between lesbians and gay men after an initial response was evoked. Comparable differences were not observed for heterosexual women's response latencies on any of the ATL/ATG items.

Discussion

In the present survey, heterosexuals' reactions to lesbians differed in important respects from their reactions to gay men, consistent with past research using convenience samples. Moreover, as in previous national surveys, male and female respondents' attitudes differed in several domains. Although the contours of the two gender gaps varied somewhat across the different items, three general patterns are discernible.

First, to the extent that male and female heterosexuals differ in their attitudes, women generally hold more favorable and less condemning attitudes toward gay people. Compared to heterosexual men, women were more supportive of employment protection and adoption rights, and were more willing to extend some form of recognition (though not necessarily marriage) to same-sex couples. They also were less likely to hold stereotypical beliefs about gay people and displayed less negative affective reactions to them.

Second, aggregate attitudes tend to be more hostile toward gay men than lesbians. Affective reactions to gay men were significantly more negative than reactions to lesbians, as measured by the feeling thermometers and the ATG and ATL scales. In addition, gay men were more likely than lesbians to be regarded as mentally ill and to be perceived as child molesters. Adoption rights were more widely supported for lesbians than for gay men.

Third, whereas heterosexuals tend to express more negative attitudes toward gay people of their same sex, this pattern occurs mainly among men. Heterosexual men responded significantly more negatively to gay men than to lesbians in questions about recognition of same-sex relationships and adoption rights. They were more likely to believe that gay men are mentally ill, molest children, and are unable to have loving and committed relationships, compared

to lesbians.¹⁰ They were somewhat more likely than heterosexual women to be uncomfortable around homosexuals of their same sex. And their affective reactions to gay men were significantly more negative compared to their reactions to lesbians and heterosexual women's reactions to either group. Thus, the main source for both gender gaps – between heterosexual men and women, and between attitudes toward lesbians and toward gay men – was heterosexual men's negative reactions to gay men.

Not only were heterosexual men less hostile to lesbians than to gay men, in some cases their attitudes toward lesbians were at least as favorable as those of heterosexual women. This occurred when questions about lesbians were posed first in a series and thus were presented in a way that did not cast them in the context of attitudes toward gay men. The order effects observed in this study, which are consistent with findings from previous research (Herek and Capitano 1999b), suggest that heterosexual men's attitudes toward lesbians are cognitively organized in a way that is different from their attitudes toward gay men. For heterosexual males, answering questions about gay men may activate associations with negatively-charged feelings and memories, which then carry over to subsequent responses to items about lesbians. Answering questions about lesbians without prior reference to gay men apparently does not activate the same associations. Indeed, the response latency data suggest that highly-prejudiced heterosexual men's attitudes toward lesbians are less accessible – and perhaps less fully formed – than their attitudes toward gay men. By contrast, heterosexual women's self-reports of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men apparently are relatively unaffected by

¹⁰ The last difference was significant only when the question about relationships preceded the marriage question. Perhaps men who answered the marriage item first (most of whom expressed opposition to same-sex marriage) subsequently felt it necessary to give a logically consistent response to the relationship question.

contextual variables in an interview situation.

The gender-linked patterns observed here cannot be explained simply in terms of demographic differences between male and female respondents. Examination of a large number of potentially relevant variables revealed that women were significantly ($p < .05$) more likely than men to report lower annual income, to report not being employed, to attend religious services frequently, and to say that religion guides their life a great deal. They were also significantly (albeit slightly) older than men ($M = 46.5$ vs. 44.7). All of these characteristics are typically associated with negative – not positive – attitudes toward homosexuality (Herek 1994).¹¹

The present data are mainly descriptive and do not explain the origins of the gender gaps. One way of understanding those gaps, however, is in terms of social constructions of homosexuality. As noted earlier, a prominent contemporary construction of homosexuality focuses on gender and sexuality. Theoretical frameworks reflecting this paradigm posit that homosexuals are stigmatized mainly because they violate gender roles, with homosexual men the targets of particularly intense dislike because they are perceived as abdicating the advantaged status of being male (Kite and Whitley 1998). Moreover, compared to heterosexual females, heterosexual males are hypothesized to express more negative attitudes toward gay men because cultural norms of masculinity continually require them to prove they are not homosexual. One way to do so is to attack gay men. Males need not attack lesbians with the same intensity because lesbians are not directly implicated in their own heterosexual masculine identity (Herek 1986; Kimmel 1997; Kite and Whitley 1998). This account fits well with the significant differences observed here between heterosexual men's and women's attitudes, especially toward gay men. It is also consistent with the

¹¹ However, men were significantly more likely to be married (62% were married, vs. 56% of women), which is a characteristic typically associated with higher levels of sexual prejudice (Herek 1994).

hypothesis that the cognitive organization of heterosexual men's attitudes differs between lesbians and gay men.

By contrast, heterosexual women's attitudes did not differ substantially between lesbians and gay men, and were not greatly affected by contextual manipulations that made homosexuals of one gender more salient. These patterns suggest that women's attitudes may reflect social constructions of homosexuality other than (or perhaps in addition to) the gender and sexuality paradigm. Returning to the minority politics paradigm discussed earlier, for example, heterosexual women may regard lesbians and gay men alike as sharing a common characteristic that makes them members of a single group. Women with favorable attitudes may think of gay people mainly as an oppressed minority, a quasi-ethnic group with its own culture and political concerns. Women with hostile attitudes may think of gay people mainly as sinners who threaten the traditional family. In either case, their attitudes would not be expected to differ substantially between lesbians and gay men.

At the individual level, attitudes based on a gender/sexuality paradigm may serve psychological functions different from those based on a minority group politics paradigm (see generally Herek 2000c; Katz 1960). For example, to the extent that heterosexual women's attitudes reflect the perception that gay people are a collection of sinners or an oppressed minority group, they may function to affirm a sense of personal identity based on strongly-held values concerning sexual morality or society's treatment of minority groups. Such values presumably apply equally to attitudes toward gay men and lesbians (e.g., Herek 2000b). To the extent that heterosexual men's attitudes toward gay men reflect their fear of being perceived as homosexual and their concerns about being the target of attraction for a gay man (Herek 1986; Kimmel 1997; Kite and Whitley 1998; Louderback and Whitley 1997), they are likely to function as psychological defenses against feelings of anxiety and threat. Such defenses might not play a role in heterosexual men's attitudes toward lesbians.

Instead, the latter may be shaped mainly by men's attitudes toward women generally and their interest in lesbian sexuality (Kite and Whitley 1998; Louderback and Whitley 1997).

The present study is the first to systematically assess the gender gaps in sexual orientation attitudes with a national probability sample. Not surprisingly, it raises at least as many questions as it answers. In future research, it will be important to further examine the antecedents and correlates of attitudes toward gay men and toward lesbians, as well as whether (and how) they differ for heterosexual men and women. Future research should also attempt to assess the interrelationships among different domains of attitudes and beliefs (e.g., negative affective reactions, endorsement of cultural stereotypes, opposition to civil rights). Of particular interest will be the extent to which these different constructs are correlated and whether the patterns of association differ between male and female respondents or between attitudes toward gay men versus lesbians. These issues cannot be adequately addressed with the present data because of the survey's multiple experimental manipulations, each within an independent randomization of the sample. Previous research, however, suggests that beliefs, feelings, attitudes toward civil rights, and other constructs might well represent distinct components of sexual prejudice (e.g., Haddock, Zanna, and Esses 1993). If so, it will be valuable to study the relationships among these components and the extent to which some might be causally related to others.

Another question for future research is how gender attitudes and sexual orientation attitudes interact in shaping differential reactions to lesbians and gay men. As noted earlier, heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians are based on their attitudes toward both homosexuality and female gender roles, and their reactions to gay men reflect their attitudes toward both homosexuality and male roles. We cannot assume, however, that attitudes toward gay women and men are simply an additive combination of reactions to gender roles and sexual orientation. Lesbians may be responded

to uniquely because they are both homosexuals *and* women, while gay men may be responded to uniquely because they are both homosexuals *and* men. This is not to suggest that heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians are completely independent phenomena (see Herek 2000b). However, the ways in which attitudes toward lesbians are distinct from both attitudes toward women and attitudes toward gay men is an important topic for future investigation. The same is true for differences between heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men, on the one hand, and their attitudes toward men and toward lesbians, on the other.

For example, the stereotype of gay men as child molesters probably reflects in part a unique belief about male homosexuals that is not reducible to a simple additive combination of cultural beliefs about men and about homosexuals in general. About one fifth of male respondents in the present survey believed that at least half of gay men are child molesters – twice the proportion that held the same belief about lesbians. Female respondents also were more likely to regard gay men as child molesters, but in considerably smaller numbers. It seems inadequate to explain this difference in perceptions simply as a reflection of popular beliefs that men are more likely than women to perpetrate sexual violence (e.g., Hetherington 1999). This becomes evident if one considers how a parallel question about child molestation by heterosexuals might be constructed (e.g., “What proportion of heterosexual men are likely to molest or abuse children – all of them, most of them, about half of them,” etc.). The respondents who endorsed the stereotype for gay men in the present study probably would have found it difficult to answer such a question. The child molester stereotype has unique potency when applied to gay men, perhaps because antigay rhetoric in the United States has routinely equated male homosexuality with child molestation (Herek 1991a; Herman 1997; Newton 1992).

Similarly, respondents' greater reluctance to support adoption rights for gay men than for lesbians probably partly reflects society's widespread assumption that women are more

capable parents than men. However, it also may result from attitudes and beliefs that are uniquely associated with gay men (perhaps also related to the child molestation stereotype), with lesbians, or both. Here again, it would be difficult to develop a parallel item to assess attitudes toward adoption by heterosexual men versus women. A question might be posed about adoption rights for a single, unmarried individual whose sex and sexual orientation could be experimentally manipulated. This approach would permit comparison of support for adoption rights according to the hypothetical target's gender and sexual orientation, but it would not tap attitudes toward adoption by couples in a committed relationship, which is probably the more common scenario. And respondents understandably would find it difficult to answer a question about joint adoption by two unrelated heterosexual men or two unrelated heterosexual women. Thus, teasing apart the influence of gender attitudes and sexual prejudice on issues such as same-sex adoption will not necessarily be an easy task. Exploration of questions such as these represents a promising area for future research.

The current data show that the two gender gaps exist and are manifested across a variety of attitude domains. Understanding their sources and their implications for public policy will require a better understanding of the similarities and differences in how heterosexuals perceive gay men and lesbians, both in relation to their own gender and sexuality and as a cultural minority group. To gain such an understanding, survey researchers must ask the right questions. The present study indicates that an important starting point for this endeavor is to distinguish between lesbians and gay men in our questions about homosexuality and gay rights.

Appendix: Item Wording

Civil Rights

Employment

General version: In general, do you favor or oppose [gay men/lesbians] having equal rights in terms of job opportunities?

Law version: In general, do you favor or oppose

passing a law to make sure that [gay men/lesbians] have equal rights in terms of job opportunities?

Marriage

Do you think marriages between [gay men/lesbians] should be recognized as legal throughout the United States, or do you think they should not be recognized as legal? How strongly do you feel about that (that marriages between [gay men/lesbians] [should/should not] not be recognized as legal throughout the United States) – very strongly, somewhat strongly, a little strongly, or not strongly at all?

[If opposed to marriage:] Do you favor or oppose [gay male/lesbian] couples getting the same job benefits as are now given to married couples, such as insurance and pension benefits?

Adoption

Do you think that [male homosexual/lesbian] couples should be legally permitted to adopt children, or do you think that [male homosexual/lesbian] couples should be legally prevented from adopting children? *[IF DEPENDS: Assume that they are otherwise qualified to adopt children according to the laws of the state where they live.]*

How strongly do you feel about that (that [male homosexual/lesbian] couples should be legally [permitted to adopt/prevented from adopting] children) – very strongly, somewhat strongly, a little strongly, or not strongly at all?

Beliefs

Choice

Some people think that [male homosexuality/lesbianism] is something that men choose for themselves, while others feel it is something over which [men/women] do not have any control. How do you feel? Would you say being [homosexual/lesbian] is something [men/women] choose for themselves, or is it something over which they have no control?

If “do not have any control”] Do you believe that [men/women] are born [homosexual/lesbian], or that [male/female] homosexuality develops as a result of upbringing or the environment?

Stereotypical Beliefs

Now I’ll read a few statements that people sometimes use to describe [men/women] who are homosexual, that is [gay men/ lesbians]. As I read each one, please tell me for how many [gay men/lesbians] you think each statement is true – whether you think it is true for all of them, most of them, about half of them, less than half of them, or hardly any of them.

1. How about “They are mentally ill?”
2. (How about) “They tend to act like [women/men]?”
3. (How about) “They are likely to molest or abuse children?”

Personal Discomfort

In general, how comfortable do you feel around a man who is homosexual [a woman who is a lesbian] – very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable, or very uncomfortable? *[IF NECESSARY: Even though you haven’t been around a homosexual man [lesbian], how do you think you would feel – very comfortable, somewhat comfortable, somewhat uncomfortable, or very uncomfortable?]*

Affective Reactions

Feeling Thermometers

These next questions are about some of the different groups in the United States. I’ll read the name of a group and ask you to rate the group on a thermometer that runs from zero (0) to one hundred (100). The higher the number, the warmer or more favorable you feel toward that group. The lower the number, the colder or less favorable you feel. If you feel neither warm nor cold toward them, rate that group a fifty.

1. (How about) Men who are homosexual?
2. (How about) Women who are lesbian or homosexual?

ATL/ATG Series

Now I’m going to read a list of statements different people have made about men who are gay [women who are lesbian] or homosexual. As I read each one, please tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

1. Sex between two men [women] is just plain wrong?
2. I think male homosexuals [female homosexuals or lesbians] are disgusting?
3. Male [Female] homosexuality is a natural expression of sexuality in men [women]?

References

- American Association for Public Opinion Research. 1998. *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for RDD Telephone Surveys and in-Person Household Surveys*. Ann Arbor, MI: Author.
- Bassili, John N. 1996. “The How and Why of

- Response Latency Measurement in Telephone Surveys." Pp. 319-46 in *Answering Questions: Methodology for Determining Cognitive and Communicative Processes in Survey Research*, Eds. Norbert Schwarz and Seymour Sudman. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Capitanio, John P. and Gregory M. Herek. 1999. "AIDS-Related Stigma and Attitudes Toward Injecting Drug Users Among Black and White Americans." *American Behavioral Scientist* 42(7):1148-61.
- Casady, Robert J. and James M. Lepkowski. 1993. "Stratified Telephone Survey Designs." *Survey Methodology* 19:103-13.
- Chauncey, George, Jr. 1982-1983. "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance." *Salmagundi* 58-59:114-46.
- Fazio, Russell H. 1990. "A Practical Guide to the Use of Response Latency in Social Psychological Research." Pp. 74-97 in *Research Methods in Personality and Social Psychology*, Eds. Clyde Hendrick and Margaret S. Clark. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Golden, Carla. 1996. "What's in a Name? Sexual Self-Identification Among Women." Pp. 229-49 in *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals: Children to Adults*, Eds. Ritch C. Savin-Williams and Kenneth M. Cohen. Ft Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Haddock, Geoffrey, Mark P. Zanna, and Victoria M. Esses. 1993. "Assessing the Structure of Prejudicial Attitudes: The Case of Attitudes Toward Homosexuals." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 65(6):1105-18.
- Haeberle, Steven H. 1999. "Gay and Lesbian Rights: Emerging Trends in Public Opinion and Voting Behavior." Pp. 146-69 in *Gays and Lesbians in the Democratic Process: Public Policy, Public Opinion, and Political Representation*, Eds. Ellen D. B. Riggle and Barry L. Tadlock. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Harris, Louis. 27 Sep 1965. "Public Registers Strong Disapproval of Nonconformity." *Washington Post*, A, p. A2.
- Herek, Gregory M. 1986. "On Heterosexual Masculinity: Some Psychical Consequences of the Social Construction of Gender and Sexuality." *American Behavioral Scientist* 29:563-77.
- . 1991a. "Myths About Sexual Orientation: A Lawyer's Guide to Social Science Research." *Law and Sexuality* 1:133-72.
- . 1991b. "Stigma, Prejudice, and Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men." Pp. 60-80 in *Homosexuality: Research Implications for Public Policy*, Eds. John C. Gonsiorek and James D. Weinrich. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- . 1992. "Psychological Heterosexism and Anti-Gay Violence: The Social Psychology of Bigotry and Bashing." Pp. 149-69 in *Hate Crimes: Confronting Violence Against Lesbians and Gay Men*, Eds. Gregory M. Herek and Kevin T. Berrill. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- . 1994. "Assessing Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men: A Review of Empirical Research With the ATLG Scale." Pp. 206-28 in *Lesbian and Gay Psychology: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications*, Eds. Beverly Greene and Gregory M. Herek. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- . 2000a. "The Psychology of Sexual Prejudice." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 9:19-22.
- . 2000b. "Sexual Prejudice and Gender: Do Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Differ?" *Journal of Social Issues* 56(2):251-66.
- . 2000c. "The Social Construction of Attitudes: Functional Consensus and Divergence in the US Public's Reactions to AIDS." Pp. 325-64 in *Why We Evaluate: Functions of Attitudes*, Eds. Gregory R. Maio and James M. Olson. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Herek, Gregory M. and John P. Capitanio. 1995. "Black Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men in the United States." *Journal of Sex Research* 32:95-105.
- . 1996. "'Some of My Best Friends': Intergroup Contact, Concealable Stigma, and Heterosexuals' Attitudes Toward Gay Men and Lesbians." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 22:412-24.
- . 1998. "Symbolic Prejudice or Fear of Infection? A Functional Analysis of AIDS-Related Stigma Among Heterosexual Adults." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 20:230-241.
- . 1999a. "AIDS Stigma and Sexual Prejudice." *American Behavioral Scientist* 42(7):1130-1147.
- . 1999b. "Sex Differences in How Heterosexuals Think About Lesbians and Gay Men: Evidence From Survey Context Effects." *Journal of Sex Research* 36:348-60.
- Herek, Gregory M., John P. Capitanio, and Keith F. Widaman. 2002. "HIV-Related Stigma and Knowledge in the United States: Prevalence and Trends, 1991-1999." *American Journal of Public*

- Health*: in press.
- Herman, Didi. 1997. *The Antigay Agenda: Orthodox Vision and the Christian Right*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hetherington, Jacquie. 1999. "The Idealization of Women: Its Role in the Minimization of Child Sexual Abuse by Females." *Child Abuse and Neglect* 23(2):161-74.
- Katz, Daniel. 1960. "The Functional Approach to the Study of Attitudes." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 24:163-204.
- Kimmel, Michael S. 1997. "Masculinity As Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity." Pp. 223-42 in *Toward a New Psychology of Gender*, Eds. Mary M. Gergen and Sara N. Davis. New York: Routledge.
- Kite, Mary E. and Kay Deaux. 1987. "Gender Belief Systems: Homosexuality and the Implicit Inversion Theory." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 11:83-96.
- Kite, Mary E. and Bernard E. Whitley, Jr. 1996. "Sex Differences in Attitudes Toward Homosexual Persons, Behaviors, and Civil Rights: A Meta-Analysis." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 22:336-53.
- . 1998. "Do Heterosexual Women and Men Differ in Their Attitudes Toward Homosexuality? A Conceptual and Methodological Analysis." Pp. 39-61 in *Stigma and Sexual Orientation: Understanding Prejudice Against Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals*, Ed. Gregory M. Herek. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lewis, Gregory B. and Marc A. Rogers. 1999. "Does the Public Support Equal Employment Rights for Gays and Lesbians?" Pp. 118-45 in *Gays and Lesbians in the Democratic Process: Public Policy, Public Opinion, and Political Representation*, Eds. Ellen D. B. Riggle and Barry L. Tadlock. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Louderback, Laura A. and Bernard E. Whitley, Jr. 1997. "Perceived Erotic Value of Homosexuality and Sex-Role Attitudes As Mediators of Sex Differences in Heterosexual College Students' Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men." *Journal of Sex Research* 34:175-82.
- Marcus, Eric. 1993. *Is It a Choice? Answers to 300 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions About Gays and Lesbians*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.
- Minton, Henry L. 1986. "Femininity in Men and Masculinity in Women: American Psychiatry and Psychology Portray Homosexuality in the 1930's." *Journal of Homosexuality* 13(1):1-21.
- Newton, David E. 1992. "Homosexuality and Child Sexual Abuse." Pp. 329-58 in *The Sexual Abuse of Children*, Eds. William O'Donohue and James H. Geer. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Powell, Martha C. and Russell H. Fazio. 1984. "Attitude Accessibility As a Function of Repeated Attitudinal Expression." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 10(1):139-48.
- Sapiro, Virginia, Steven J. Rosenstone, Warren E. Miller, and the National Election Studies. 1998. *American National Election Studies, 1948-1997 (CD-ROM)*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (producer and distributor).
- Schneider, William and Lewis, I. A. 1984, February/March. "The straight story on homosexuality and gay rights." *Public Opinion*, Pp. 16-20, 59-60.
- Schuman, Howard, Charlotte Steeh, and Lawrence Bobo. 1985. *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Scott, Jacqueline. 1998. "Changing Attitudes to Sexual Morality: A Cross-National Comparison." *Sociology* 32:815-45.
- Sherrill, Kenneth and Alan Yang. 2000. "From Outlaws to In-Laws: Anti-Gay Attitudes Thaw." *The Public Perspective* 11(1):20-23.
- Sniderman, Paul M. and Douglas B. Grob. 1996. "Innovations in Experimental Design in Attitude Surveys." *Annual Review of Sociology* 22:377-99.
- Strand, Douglas A. 1998. "Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, and Stigma: Voter Attitudes and Behavior in the Politics of Homosexuality." Pp. 108-37 in *Stigma and Sexual Orientation: Understanding Prejudice Against Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals*, Ed. Gregory M. Herek. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Terry, Jennifer. 1999. *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Whisman, Vera. 1996. *Queer by Choice: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Politics of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Whitley, Bernard E., Jr. 1990. "The Relationship of Heterosexuals' Attributions for the Causes of Homosexuality to Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men." *Personality and Social Psychology*

Bulletin 16(2):369-77.

Yang, Alan S. 1997. "Trends: Attitudes Toward Homosexuality." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61:477-507.

———. 1998. *From Wrongs to Rights: Public Opinion on Gay and Lesbian Americans Moves Toward Equality*. Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute.

Pre-Publication Draft

Table 1

Percentage Agreement With Civil Rights Items By Respondent Gender and Target Gender

	Male Respondents		Female Respondents	
	Lesbians	Gay Men	Lesbians	Gay Men
Employment Discrimination				
Support Equal Rights	86.6	82.7	95.1	92.2
Support Passing Law	65.2	64.2	81.1	80.7
Same-Sex Relationships				
Support Marriage	31.9	26.2	33.8	31.8
Support Domestic Partners Only	20.4	19.7	21.0	24.0
Oppose Both	47.8	54.1	45.2	44.2
Permit Adoption	38.5	27.7	47.6	39.5

Table 2

Percentage Endorsing Beliefs By Respondent Gender and Target Gender

	Male Respondents		Female Respondents	
	Lesbians	Gay Men	Lesbians	Gay Men
Origin of Homosexuality				
Chosen	62.6	53.8	53.2	42.5
Not Chosen:				
Born That Way	23.1	30.1	34.4	41.9
Upbringing, Environment	9.2	8.6	6.5	8.3
Don't Know	5.1	7.5	5.9	7.2
Molest or Abuse Children*	8.5	19.1	5.8	9.6
Mentally Ill*	14.8	21.9	11.7	13.4
Act Like Other Gender*	48.2	53.9	53.0	49.2

*Percentages are proportions responding that the characteristic is true for “all of them,” “most of them,” or “about half of them.”

Table 3

Mean Thermometer Scores By Order of Presentation, Respondent Gender, and Target Gender

Order	Thermometer Target		
	Lesbians	Gay Men	Difference
Lesbian Thermometer Presented First			
All Respondents ($n = 639$)	48.1 (1.0)	45.6 (1.1)	2.5
Male Respondents ($n = 274$)	45.5 (1.5)	39.9 (1.6)	5.6
Female Respondents ($n = 365$)	50.1 (1.4)	49.9 (1.4)	0.2
Gay Male Thermometer Presented First			
All Respondents ($n = 636$)	46.9 (1.1)	46.6 (1.1)	0.3
Male Respondents ($n = 285$)	43.8 (1.6)	40.5 (1.5)	3.3
Female Respondents ($n = 351$)	49.4 (1.4)	51.5 (1.4)	-2.1

Table reports mean thermometer scores, with standard errors in parentheses.

Figures

Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents Reporting That They Feel “Somewhat” or “Very” Uncomfortable Being Around “A Man Who Is Homosexual” or “A Woman Who Is a Lesbian”

Pre-Publication Draft

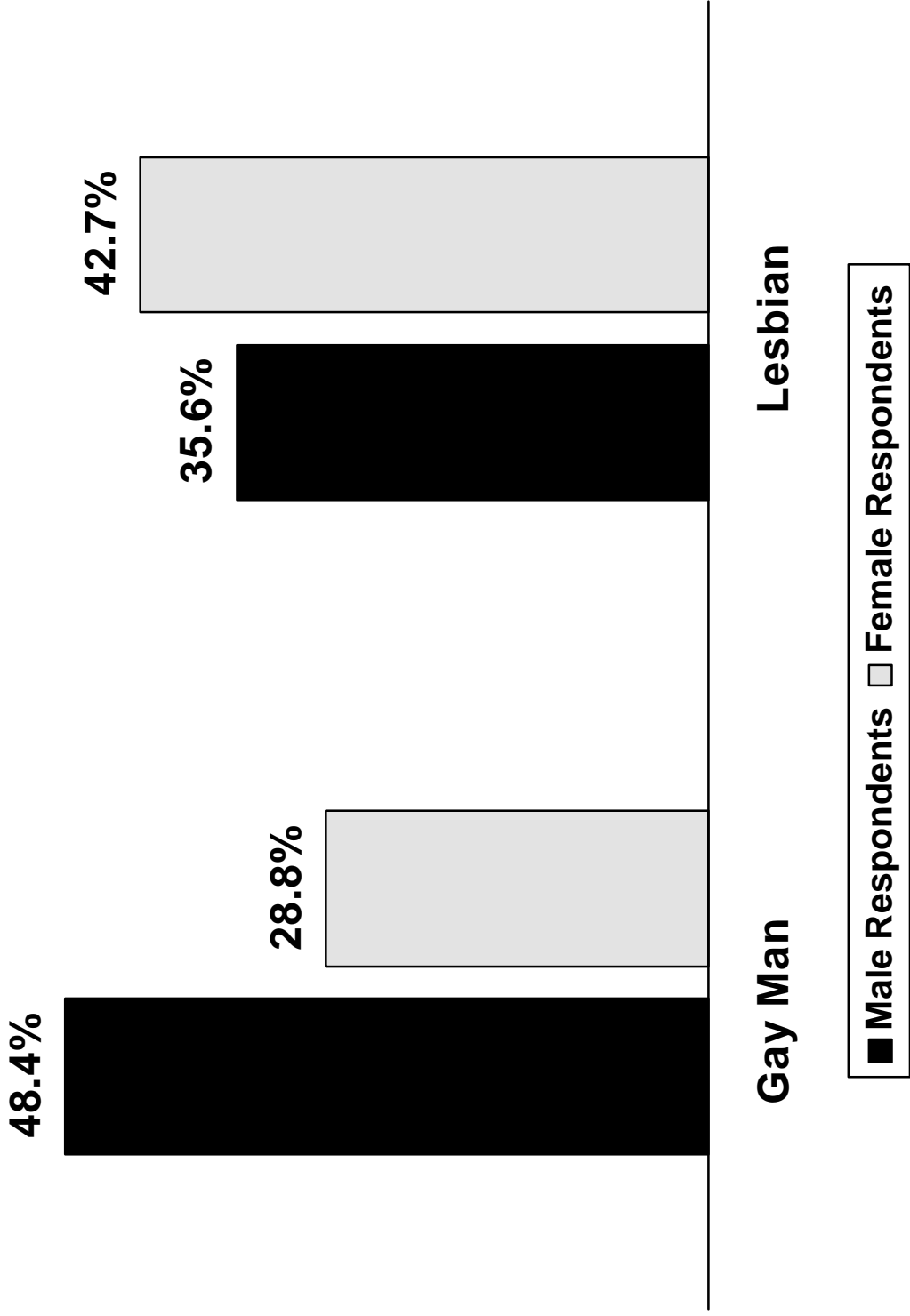


Figure 2. Attitudes Toward Gay Men (ATG) and Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL) Scale Scores By Respondent Sex and Item Order

Pre-Publication Draft

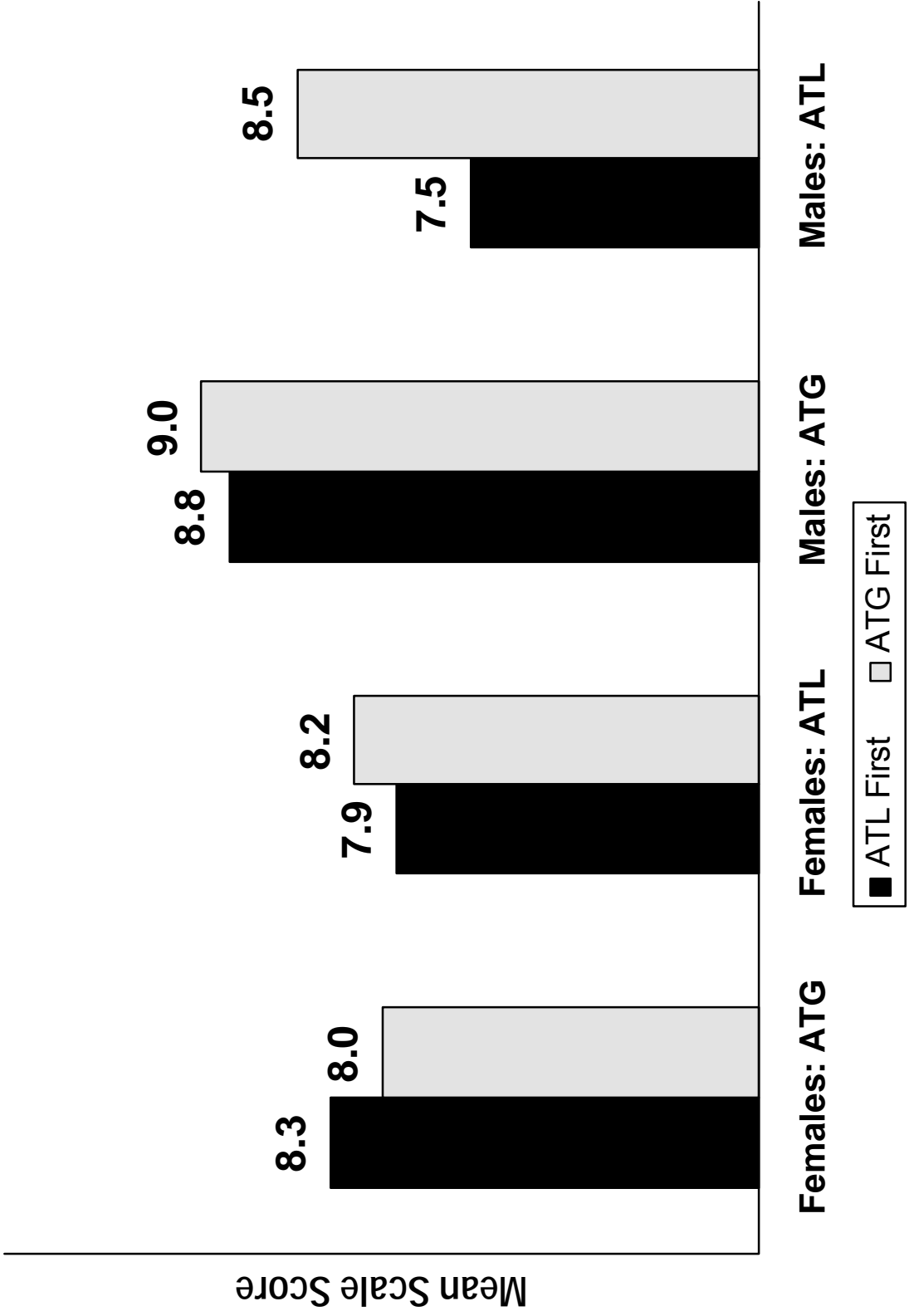
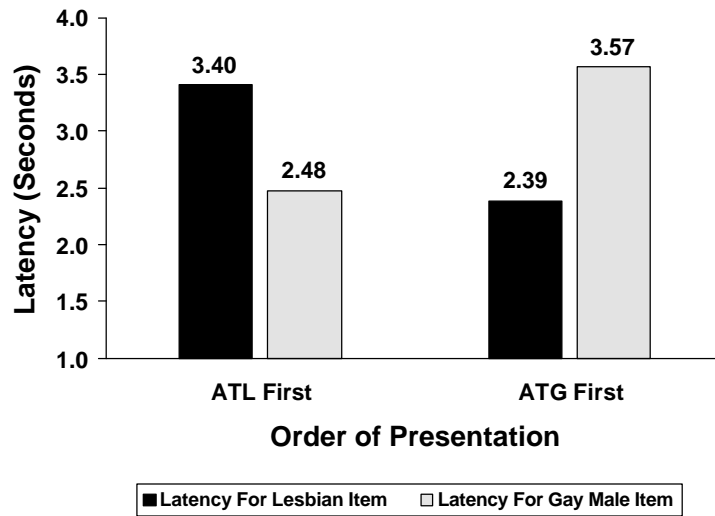


Figure 3. Latency (In Seconds) of Men's Responses to Lesbian and Gay Male "Wrong" Items By Item Order and Level of Sexual Prejudice

Pre-Publication Draft

1. Men With Low Sexual Prejudice Scores



2. Men With High Sexual Prejudice Scores

