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Running head: ATTITUDES TOWARD GAY MEN AND LESBIAN WOMEN

**Title: Attitudes toward Gay Men and Lesbian Women among
Heterosexual Social Work Faculty**

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Abstract

This study reports results from a national Internet-based survey administered anonymously to a cross-section of social work faculty in the United States. Drawn from a sampling frame of 700 accredited or in candidacy schools, data were collected between November 2010 and March 2011. We investigate the role of gender, sexual orientation, race, religious affiliation and beliefs, religiosity, political ideology, sexism, and interest in sexuality/LGBTQ issues. Race, religiosity,

political ideology, and sexism are associated with sexual prejudice, which was endorsed among a small percent (14%) of the sample ($n=303$). Outcome scores were not statistically different based on the targets' sex. Strategies are recommended to reduce sexual prejudice among social work faculty and to increase institutional support for acceptance in the academy.

Attitudes among Americans toward gay and lesbian people have become increasingly accepting over the past 30 years (Andersen & Fetner, 2008); however, bias against sexual minorities continues to exist (Sadd, 2012). Sexual prejudice, or the negative feelings and intolerant views propelled against gay and lesbian individuals, underlies the social stratification of resources and rights based on sexual orientation (Herek, 2004) and may influence contemporary support for same-sex marriage and other civil or human rights affecting sexual minorities (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2003; Woodford, Chonody, Scherrer, Silverchanz, & Kulick, 2012b). Although at considerably lower levels than the general public, sexual prejudice has been documented among social workers (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Crisp, 2007; Green, 2005; Krieglstein, 2003; Wisniewski & Toomey, 1987), social work students (e.g., Cluse-Tolar, Lambert, Ventura, & Pasupuleti, 2004; Raiz & Saltzburg, 2007; Chonody, Siebert, & Rutledge, 2009; Newman, Dannenfelser, & Benishek, 2002), and social work faculty (Dessel, Woodford, & Gutiérrez, 2012; Einbinder, Fiechter, Sheridan, & Miller, 2012; Fredricksen-Goldsen, Woodford, Luke, & Gutiérrez, 2011; Woodford, Brennan, Gutiérrez, & Luke, 2012a). Some studies find more negatively biased attitudes exist toward gay men than lesbian women (Einbinder et al., 2012, Herek, 1988; Raja & Stokes, 1998).

The social work profession is committed to promoting social justice for marginalized groups, including sexual minorities, and to providing culturally competent services (National Association of Social Work [NASW], 2008). To enhance the capacity of social work students in this regard the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) 2008 Educational Policy and

Accreditation Standards (EPAS) direct social work programs to include content on diversity and difference, including sexual orientation. Studies document problems related to this, ranging from a lack of course content on sexual diversity to heterosexism in classrooms (Hylton, 2005; Martin, Messinger, Kull, Holmes, Bermudez, & Sommer, 2009; McPhail, 2008). Yet, high levels of support for content on sexual orientation (and gender identity and expression) exist among faculty, with faculty's attitudes toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals positively predicting support (Fredricksen-Goldsen et al., 2011). Faculty's attitudes may also influence curriculum decisions, the classroom environment, and school climate with respect to sexual orientation. These factors can affect students' preparedness to work with sexual minority clients (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Studies suggest that the inclusion of experiential exercises and/or coursework regarding gay and lesbian people can decrease students' biases (Bassest & Day, 2003; Chonody et al., 2009; Dongville & Ligon, 2001; Woodford & Bella, 2003). Addressing one's sexual prejudice is an important part of education for culturally competent practice with sexual minorities (Van Den Bergh & Crisp, 2004; Woodford & Bella, 2003). Despite the importance of social work faculty's attitudes toward sexual minorities, relatively little is known about the nature of these attitudes, specifically among heterosexual faculty. Using a national sample of U.S. social work faculty, we identify the covariates of heterosexual faculty's attitudes toward gay men and toward lesbian women.

To locate this study in the existing literature, next we discuss studies investigating sexual prejudice among social work faculty. Thereafter, drawing on research conducted with social work and non-social work samples, we consider various demographic and framing correlates of sexual prejudice.

Literature Review

Social Work Faculty's Attitudes Toward Sexual Minorities

Recent studies have examined the covariates of sexual prejudice among social work faculty in the United States (Einbinder et al., 2012; Dessel et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2012a), with only one study examining sex-specific attitudes (Einbinder et al., 2012). Consistently, regardless of the outcome measures used, low rates of sexual prejudice have been documented. For example, Einbinder and colleagues (2012) found “extremely low” levels of sexual prejudice toward gay men and lesbian women separately, with mean scores being significantly higher for gay men, indicating more prejudice.

Though informative, concerns exist about these studies in terms of their outcome measures and samples. Two of these three investigations rely on author-created scales that have not undergone extensive psychometric testing (Dessel et al., 2012, Woodford et al., 2012a), and one of these scales went beyond concern for sexual orientation by also assessing views related to transgender persons (Woodford et al., 2012a). While often grouped together and associated with one another, the nature of attitudes about sexual minorities may differ compared to those concerning transgender people (Nagoshi, Adams, Terrell, Hill, Brzuzy, & Nagoshi, 2008). The third study (Einbinder et al., 2012) used the psychometrically sound sex-specific subscales of the Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men scale (Herek, 1988); however, issues exist with this scale. The ATLG has been described as “anachronistic” in that it assesses “old-fashioned” prejudice that may not capture the nature of contemporary biases toward sexual minorities (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Studies conducted with students (Morrison & Morrison, 2002) and non-students (Morrison & Morrison, 2011; Satcher & Leggett, 2006, 2007) support this premise. Further, the ATLG is intended to assess affective responses to homosexuality (Herek, 1988), yet select items (e.g., “female homosexuality is a threat to many of our basic social

institutions”) center on ideas that are reflected in social structures. Another concern is the use of the word “homosexual” (found in 14 of the 20 items), which is not a contemporary way to reference sexual minorities and could create item reactivity in some sample populations (Chonody, in press). Finally, the item “state laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behavior should be abolished” is no longer relevant for American context since the repeal of sodomy laws by a U.S. Supreme Court decision in June 2003 (Lawrence vs. Texas). Educated, socially conscious participants, such as social work faculty, may be aware of this and be unsure how to answer this question, thereby threatening the scale’s validity.

Regarding the sample, each of these studies included heterosexual and sexual minority faculty, which may impact outcome scores. Two of the studies investigated the influence of sexual minority status and found sexual minority faculty to be significantly less prejudiced than their heterosexual counterparts (Einbinder et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2012a). Moreover, the ATLG (Herek, 1988) used by Einbinder and colleagues was specifically designed to evaluate sexual prejudice among heterosexuals. Although sexual minorities are likely not immune to sexual prejudice, antigay bias may reflect internalized sexual stigma among sexual minorities rather than overt hostility or dislike (Herek, 2000).

Covariates of Sexual Prejudice

Previous research conducted with the general public and college students identifies common demographic and framing covariates of sexual prejudice; however their role among members of the social work community, especially practitioners as well as faculty is less clear. While many general population studies find women to express more positive attitudes toward sexual minorities than men (Herek & Capitanio, 1999; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002; Kite & Whitley, 1996; Schellenberg, Hirt, & Sears, 2009; Whitley, Childs, & Collins, 2011), no

significant differences were found among social workers (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Crisp, 2007; Green, 2005; Wisniewski & Toomey, 1987) and results among faculty have been mixed (Einbinder et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2012a).

Similar to national population studies (Battle & Lemelle, 2002; Herek & Capitanio, 1999; Vincent, Peterson & Parrot, 2009; Rowatt et al., 2009), studies conducted with social work students have produced mixed results concerning race (Black, Oles, Cramer, & Bennett, 1999; Black, Oles, & Moore, 1998; Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004; Logie et al., 2007; Newman et al., 2002; Sun, 2002). Among social work practitioners, race did not significantly predict sexual prejudice (Crisp, 2007), yet faculty of color have been found to report significantly less accepting attitudes compared to White faculty (Einbinder et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2012a).

Religious factors have also been found to be related to biased attitudes toward sexual minorities among the general population (Herek & Capitanio, 1999; Rowatt et al., 2009), social work students (Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004; Logie et al., 2007; Newman et al., 2002; Snively, Kreuger, Stretch, Watt, & Chadha, 2004), and social work practitioners (Berkman & Zinberg, 1997; Crisp, 2007) and faculty (Dessel et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2012a). Though not all studies control for religious affiliation (e.g., Einbinder et al. 2012), findings concerning religious affiliation are often mixed, and when significant, its effect size has been minimal compared to religiosity (i.e., the importance of religion in one's life). Religiosity has been consistently found to be positively related to higher levels of antigay bias with non-social work samples (Herek, 1984, 1988; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002; Kite & Whitley, 1998; Whitley, 2009). Berkman and Zinberg (1997) found religiosity to be positively correlated with heterosexism and homophobia for practicing social workers, but its effect in multivariate analysis was not enduring for heterosexism. Among social work faculty, Dessel et al. (2012) found that compared to seculars,

Christian faculty who report higher levels of religiosity tend to report less accepting attitudes toward lesbian and gay people.

Even more generally influential than religiosity in understanding sexual prejudice is political ideology. Among the general public, those who hold more conservative views tend to report more prejudice (Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Herek, 2000, 2002; Seltzer, 1992). These findings have also been replicated with social work student samples (Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004; Snively et al., 2004); however this variable has not been investigated among social work faculty as a covariate of sexual prejudice. Given its explanatory power in understanding the nature of sexual prejudice in extant studies, it is important to examine the role of political ideology among social work faculty.

The connection between attitudes related to gender and sexual prejudice is well established (Kite & Whitley, 1998; Neirman, Thompson, Bryan, & Mahaffey, 2007). Some theorists argue that same-sex sexuality, especially among men, violates gender norms (Kitzinger, 2001). Specifically, those who hold sexist beliefs also tend to have higher levels of sexual prejudice in non-social work samples (Davies, 2004; Whitley, 2001). In social work student samples, those who hold sexist beliefs are also more likely to have increased prejudice (Black et al., 1998) as well as those who hold traditional gender beliefs (Swank & Raiz, 2007). Similarly, Green (2005) found a positive correlation between accepting views of gay and lesbian people and gender equity among practitioners. Only one study conducted with social work faculty assessed the relationship between attitudes toward women and sexual prejudice. Using a single-item measure, Woodford et al. (2012a) found a positive relationship between affirming views of working mothers and acceptance of LGBT people. Though an important finding, the use of a single item to assess sexism is problematic. Clearly, inclusion of gender-related attitudes is

important in understanding sexual prejudice among social work faculty. It is possible that such attitudes may play a differential role in explaining attitudes toward gay men and lesbian women; yet, other than Green's (2005) investigation, studies conducted with members of the social work community have not examined this.

Purpose of the Study

Previous studies, including those conducted with social work students and practitioners, offer key insights into the nature of sexual prejudice, but their findings may not necessarily translate to social work faculty given that faculty tend to be very highly educated and teach in programs that are mandated to address diversity, social justice, and critical thinking (CSWE, 2008). Further, among those studies conducted with social work faculty, only one explored the role of the target's sex or how attitudes toward gay men may differ from attitudes toward lesbians (Einbinder et al., 2012). Some methodological concerns exist about this investigation (as well as others conducted with social work faculty) and key covariates (i.e., religiosity, political ideology, and sexism) were not included in the study. The purpose of our study is to determine the level of sexual prejudice separately toward gay men and lesbians amongst heterosexual faculty and explore the covariates based on the target's sex. This study was part of a larger national investigation designed to assess social work faculty's attitudes toward various vulnerable and oppressed groups. In addition to examining the role of demographics and framing variables (political ideology and sexism), we included a variable measuring substantive interest in sexuality/lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues given the potential that this variable may have in explaining sexual prejudice.

Methods

Sample and Data Collection

A cross-sectional design utilizing an anonymous online survey was employed for this study. Data were collected between November 2010 and March 2011 following procedures from Dillman's (2007) tailored design method for anonymous internet-based surveys. The sampling frame was developed from 700 CSWE-accredited or in-candidacy schools within the United States (excluding Puerto Rico and Guam). Systematic random sampling was used to select 20% of schools listed. For each selected school, faculty's email addresses were collected from program websites. In November 2010, 1,382 faculty were invited to participate in the study. Two-hundred and forty-six individuals responded ($RR = 17.8\%$). To increase the sample size, another 20% of schools were randomly selected from those remaining on the list. In late January 2011, 1,987 individuals were invited to participate, and 363 joined the study ($RR = 18.3\%$). The combined response rate is 18.1% ($n = 609$). An incentive was offered for participation during both phases of data collection (a chance to receive one of five \$50 gift cards for each phase).

Given the focus of the study is on attitudes among heterosexual faculty and the long-standing recommendation that predictor variables be examined separately among heterosexual persons and sexual minority individuals (Herek, 1988), the sample was limited to heterosexual respondents. Sexual orientation was measured using a continuum: completely heterosexual, mostly heterosexual, bisexual, mostly homosexual, and completely homosexual, and the additional category of neither heterosexual or homosexual (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948). All sexual minorities, including mostly heterosexual, were removed from the sample. The decision to include mostly heterosexual in the sexual minority group was based on the results of t-tests that indicated that completely heterosexual respondents were significantly more biased than mostly heterosexual respondents on both dependent variables. Removing sexual minority faculty, the sample was reduced to 464. Due to missing data on key variables (scale scores and

demographic information), the analytical sample is 303.

Measures and Covariates

Sexual prejudice toward gay men and lesbian women. For this study the complementary sex-specific affective-valuation subscales of the *Sexual Prejudice Scale* (SPS; Chonody, in press) were used. The SPS assesses heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians along three domains: affective-valuation, stereotyping, and social equality beliefs. Because investigating sexual prejudice was one part of the larger study, only the sex-specific affective-valuation scales were used to minimize respondent burden. Each subscale contains six items designed to measure affective responses toward either gay men or lesbian women (e.g., "It's wrong for men to have sex with men," "Lesbians are confused about their sexuality"). Items are measured using a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree), and items are summed for each sex-specific subscale to create overall scores. Each subscale has a possible range of 6–36, with higher scores indicating a greater degree of sexual prejudice.

The validity and reliability of the SPS and its subscales have been determined through extensive psychometric testing (Chonody, in press). A validation study employing expert panel review established content and face validity. Psychometric properties of the scale were evaluated using a sample of social work students ($N = 851$), and after splitting the sample, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were utilized to determine the final factor structure. Tests for evidence of validity and reliability were then performed with the final scale(s). Evidence of convergent construct validity, predictive validity, and known groups validity were established. Reliability was good for a new instrument, with the Cronbach's alphas for the two affective-valuation subscales indicating excellent reliability (gay men subscale [GMS] $\alpha = .91$, lesbian women subscale [LWS] $\alpha = .93$; Chonody, in press). Reliability for the

current sample was good (GMS $\alpha = .89$, LWS $\alpha = .80$).

Framing variables. Two framing variables were included. One, political ideology (1 = mostly liberal, 5 = mostly conservative) was assessed. Two, sexism was measured using the 8-item Modern Sexism Scale (MSS). This 8-item scale assesses subtle forms of sexism and uses a 6-point Likert Scale (1 = strongly agree, 6 = strongly disagree; Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). Items include statements such as “It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television” and “Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.” Previous research demonstrated the scale’s construct and factorial validity (Swim et al., 1995). After reverse scoring three items, a sexism summary score is determined by summing the items (theoretical range 8–48). Higher scores indicate more sexism. Cronbach’s alpha was .68 in this study, which is low.

Demographic variables and scholarly interest. Demographic covariates included sex, race, religious affiliation/beliefs, and religiosity (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important). *Race* was reported as Asian American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino(a) American, African American/Black, and Caucasian/White. Race was recoded as Caucasian/White and people of color for purposes of analysis due to small numbers for each of the minority racial categories. Religious affiliation included Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Spiritual, none, and other. A dichotomous question determined if sexuality/LGBTQ is a substantive area of interest.

Social desirability. To assess social desirability among the sample, the Impression Management Scale (IMS) was included, which is designed for use in attitude research (Paulhus, 1984). This 12-item scale is scored by assigning one point for each extreme response (theoretical range 0–12); higher scores indicate more social desirability. Reliability ranged from .75 to .86 in

previous studies with samples of religious adults and college students (Paulhus, 1988).

Reliability was good in our study ($\alpha = .75$).

Data Analysis

SPSS 17.0 was used for analysis. Descriptive statistics were conducted for all study variables. Bivariate relationships between the outcomes and covariates were explored using t-tests, ANOVA, with Tukey post-hoc, and correlations. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was performed to identify the factors associated with each outcome in adjusted analysis. All covariates tested at the bivariate level were included in the estimated models because we were interested in their adjusted effect on the outcomes. Multicollinearity was assessed and no concerns were identified.

Results

As displayed in Table 1, the sample was predominately White, female, and lived in urban centers. Though the sample collectively was politically liberal, 17.5% identified as moderate to mostly politically conservative. Almost three fourths of the sample had earned a doctoral degree and, on average, had been teaching for nearly 14 years. Religiosity was moderate and 45% of the sample identified as either spiritual or no religious beliefs. Overall, sexism was low, yet 4.5% of the sample endorsed moderate to high sexist views. The mean IMS score ($M = 1.77$, $SD = 2.13$) indicates low social desirability. Correlational analyses revealed that social desirability was not present in this study (GMS: $r = -.06$, $p = .33$; LWS: $r = -.06$, $p = .35$; MSS: $r = -.03$, $p = .62$).

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Sexual Prejudice: Descriptive and Bivariate Findings

The mean score for the GMS was 9.32 ($SD = 6.10$) and the LWS was 9.49 ($SD = 5.37$), indicating an overall low level of sexual prejudice toward each group. Moderately negative

views were expressed by 14.5% of the sample toward gay men and 13.9% toward lesbian women. Outcome scores were not statistically different based on the targets' sex, $t(302) = -.55, p = .58$.

As seen in Table 2, bivariate analyses identified some significant differences in outcomes scores. In terms of sexual prejudice targeting gay men, male respondents and respondents of color were significantly more biased. These variables were not significant in sexual prejudice toward lesbian women. Significant differences were found for religious affiliation for both outcomes. For GMS scores, post-hoc analysis found significant differences between Protestant and Catholic ($p = .03$), Jewish ($p < .001$), none ($p < .001$), and spiritual ($p < .001$); Jewish and other ($p = .02$); and none and other ($p = .02$). With the exception of Protestant and Catholic, significant differences were found between these groups for LWS scores (p values were similar). As reported in Table 3, religiosity, political ideology, and sexism, were all positively correlated with both outcomes. Minimal differences (range .03 - .06) were observed in the strengths of the correlations between these covariates and the two outcomes, with political ideology demonstrating the largest effect size for both.

[INSERT TABLES 2 & 3 HERE]

Sexual Prejudice: Multivariate Results

In understanding attitudes toward gay men, the model explained 36.1% of the variance, and four variables were significant. Among demographic variables, race and religiosity were both positively associated with the outcome as well as both political ideology and sexism. In other words, people of color, and those who rate their religion as important reported greater sexual prejudice as well as those who hold conservative political beliefs and have sexist attitudes. Based on Cohen's (1988) guidelines, all variables had a small effect size, with the exception of political ideology, which was moderate (see Table 4).

Examination of the second model (attitudes toward lesbians) shows that race, political ideology, and sexism were also significant, but religiosity was not. The direction of each relationship, effect sizes, and the level of significance were similar to sexual prejudice targeting gay men. The overall model accounted for 31.4% of the explained variance and the full results are provided in Table 4.

[INSERT TABLE 4 HERE]

Discussion

Consistent with earlier studies (Einbinder et al., 2012; Dessel et al., 2012, Woodford et al., 2012a), the findings suggest that sexual prejudice is low among social work faculty. Contrasting these studies, we purposefully limited the sample to heterosexual faculty. Considering that social work faculty hold graduate degrees and teach in programs mandated to address diversity and social justice (CSWE, 2008), finding low levels of sexual prejudice is not surprising. However, some lingering biases continue to exist in that approximately 14.5% and 13.9% of respondents reported at least moderately negative views toward gay men and lesbian women, respectively. Earlier research found that approximately 10% of social work faculty did not support gay and lesbian relationships (Woodford et al., 2012a). Unlike Einbinder et al.'s (2012) study, we found that faculty's attitudes were not statistically different based on the target's sex. Differences in the outcome measures and the samples of these two studies may account for this disjuncture.

Bivariate and multivariate analyses identified many factors that predicted attitudes toward both target groups; however, some predictors were unique to attitudes about gay men. This implies that although the level of sexual prejudice did not vary by the target's sex, differences exist in the nature of sexual prejudice toward each group. In bivariate analyses, religious

affiliation, religiosity, political ideology, and sexism were associated with both outcomes, while sex and race were significant for sexual prejudice toward gay men. In multivariate analysis, race, political ideology, and sexism were significant for sexual prejudice toward both groups.

Religiosity was also significant for attitudes toward gay men. Finding some variations in the nature of sex-specific sexual prejudice is corroborated by earlier research (Einbinder et al., 2012). The role of key covariates in this study is of particular interest. We now discuss the most noteworthy findings.

Political Ideology and Sexism

Political ideology—a variable not controlled for in earlier studies conducted with social work faculty—had the highest effect size for both outcomes in the unadjusted models. A similar finding was observed in the multivariate models and the effect size of political ideology was slightly more than double that of the next highest predictor in each model, with more conservative faculty exhibiting more prejudice than liberal faculty. Evidence of a more liberal political ideology has been shown to be positively associated with affirming attitudes regarding sexual minorities among the public (Herek, 2000, 2002) and social work students (Cluse-Tolar et al., 2004; Snively et al., 2004).

Supported by previous research (Green, 2005; Woodford et al., 2012a), modern sexism was found to positively predict less accepting attitudes toward both sexes. This suggests that faculty who endorse sexist views tend to also endorse sexual prejudice toward both gay men and lesbian women. Across the two outcomes, effect sizes for sexism varied only slightly at both levels of analysis, but were larger for attitudes toward lesbian women. Green (2005) found a similar result among social workers in regard to sex-specific sexual prejudice and endorsement for gender equity; however, his analysis was limited to bivariate relationships. It is possible that

although sexism is linked to sexual prejudice generally, it offers more explanatory value in understanding attitudes toward lesbian women because both variables are concerned with women. While understanding the role between sexism and sex-specific sexual prejudice is important, future research with faculty should examine views about gender roles as such measures would address both male and female roles. Earlier research has found that individuals who adhere to beliefs reinforcing traditional gender roles tend to express more biases against same-sex sexuality (Alden & Parker, 2005; Black et al., 1998; Swank & Raiz, 2007).

Religion

Religion is frequently found to be an influential factor in understanding heterosexuals' attitudes toward sexual minorities (Whitley, 2009). Across both outcome variables, religious affiliation and religiosity were significant predictors at the bivariate level; however, in multivariate analysis only religiosity had sufficient explanatory power to maintain statistical significance, and this was only observed for attitudes toward gay men. It is not surprising that religious affiliation failed to maintain significance when other factors were included (Walls, 2010; Whitley, 2009). Seminal work concerning the nature of prejudice posits that religiosity is more important than one's actual religious affiliation (Allport & Ross, 1967). Recent studies have verified this assumption (Woodford, Levy, & Walls, 2012), including among social work faculty (Dessel et al., 2012). It is intriguing that although religiosity was a significant bivariate predictor of attitudes toward lesbian women, this variable lost significance when controlling for other factors. It is possible that highly religious faculty, especially those affiliated with fundamentalist religious traditions that preach homophobic messages, may experience that those messages predominantly focus on gay men. Many religious traditions construct male homosexuality as sinful and essentially ignore lesbian sexuality (Helminiak, 2000; Bridge,

Matthew, & Selvidge, 2003; McNeil, 1993; Murray, 1997; Parks, 2010). For example, sex between women is almost completely invisible in the Christian bible and other texts (Helminiak, 2000; McNeil, 1993). The same applies to the Islamic Qur'an (Murray, 1997). Faculty who belong to fundamentalist religious traditions or denominations may have integrated these messages into their worldviews. To verify this assertion, it will be important to control for religious teachings about gay men and about lesbian women. Recent studies found religious teachings about same-sex sexuality to be a predictor of sexual prejudice among Christian college students (Woodford et al., 2012c) and Christian social work students (Chonody, Woodford, Silverschanz, & Smith, in review).

Race

Corroborated by earlier studies (Einbinder et al., 2012; Woodford et al., 2012a), across both multivariate models we found faculty of color to be less affirming than White faculty. Interestingly, at the bivariate level, race was only significant for attitudes toward gay men. The inclusion of other predictors, especially religious factors, may help to explain why race became significant in the adjusted model for sexual prejudice toward lesbian women. Though acceptance of sexual minorities has increased among some racial minorities in the United States (Glick & Golden, 2010), many racial minority communities have customarily reinforced collective identity, traditional gender norms, procreation, and opposition to same-sex sexuality (Akerlund & Cheung, 2000; Herek & Gonzalez-Rivera, 2006; Parks, 2010), which may help to explain the role of race in this study.

Religion may also be playing a role here, especially in explaining attitudes toward gay men given that religiosity was only significant in this adjusted model and the effect size of race was slightly lower in this model compared to attitudes toward lesbian women. Racial minorities

often rely on religion to cope with racism and discrimination; however, many denominations teach that same-sex sexuality is unacceptable (Parks, 2010; Rhue & Rhue, 1997). It is possible that religious teachings may be particularly powerful in shaping faculty of color's attitudes toward sexual minorities, thus making them less accepting of both lesbians and gay men than their White counterparts. In fact, religiosity was significantly higher among faculty of color ($M = 4.55$, $SD = .89$) in this study than White faculty ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.42$), $t(266) = 5.16$, $p < .001$. Future research should examine the intersection of race and religiosity and other potential factors influencing faculty of color's perceptions of gay men and lesbian women. Perhaps qualitative exploration in this area could highlight the nuances of this association.

The combination of predictors examined in this study accounted for a considerable proportion of the variance in each outcome (gay men 36.1%, lesbian women 31.4%), proportions much larger than found in Einbinder et al.'s (2012) study. These researchers did not control for religious affiliation, religiosity, and political and social attitudes, which likely explains this difference. Our study, alongside others (Woodford et al., 2012a) highlights the value of studying an array of variables, especially non-sexuality attitudinal constructs.

Limitations

The results should be considered in the context of the study's limitations. Causation cannot be determined with a cross-sectional study. The response rate was low, but reasonable (18.1%) for this type of survey in comparison to similar studies (e.g., 17.0%, Crisp, 2007; 17.9% CSWE, 2006); our anonymous design prevents comparison of non-respondents with respondents. Additionally, a large number of heterosexual respondents were excluded from the study due to missing data. The length of the survey (investigating views about an array of groups and topics) likely contributed to early drop out from the study. The survey response rate and the drop-out

rate raise concerns about sampling bias, thus the extent to which sexual prejudice bias is present among social work faculty may be underestimated. Nonetheless, the demographic characteristics of our sample were comparable to overall faculty as reported by CSWE (2010); however it should be noted that CSWE statistics do not account for sexual orientation.

Though the analytical sample was large enough to permit the specified analyses, a larger sample would allow for additional analyses (e.g., race x religiosity) and possibly enable separate minority racial/ethnic groups to be examined. This is important for further understanding attitudes amongst faculty of color because attitude differences may exist among these racial/ethnic groups. The outcome scales we used to assess sexual prejudice were recently validated among heterosexual social work students (Chonody, in press). Using a contemporary scale is a methodological strength, yet, it is possible that the scale may not capture the prejudices of social work faculty. Future research may benefit from scales that are specifically designed for this population. Similarly, although we used a standardized scale to assess modern sexism, the scale's low alpha in this study suggests that these results should be interpreted with caution in that the low reliability suggests this scale may not be accurately estimating the degree of sexism present in social work faculty. Additionally, future study may benefit from measures that examine other aspects of religion, such as religious conservatism, and other known predictors of sexual prejudice, such as contact with sexual minorities.

Implications and Conclusions

This study represents the first national study among heterosexual social work faculty in the United States to examine differences in attitudes toward gay men and lesbian women. Unlike previous studies conducted with social work faculty, this investigation examined political ideology and sexism as predictors of sexual prejudice, finding both to be significant. Though

biases against gay and lesbian individuals were low in the sample, some faculty members continue to endorse sexual prejudice. Research in higher education highlights the critical role that faculty generally play in shaping students' perceptions and values (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). If faculty intentionally or unintentionally communicate their sexual prejudices in the classroom this could negatively impact students' competencies to work with sexual minority clients and communities. Future research is needed to assess these dynamics and how they may intersect with students' experiences, values, and development.

The results suggest that in order to foster even greater understanding and acceptance of gay and lesbian people among social work faculty, targeted interventions may be most beneficial. Specifically, the findings suggest that it will be important to engage politically conservative faculty, faculty of color, and highly religious faculty. Learning from faculty who are both members of these communities and allies to the gay and lesbian community will be important. Such faculty members are encouraged to share their experiences both informally with colleagues, and formally through publications and presentations. Additionally, given the often subtle, unquestioned nature of sexual prejudice, it will be important that faculty also engage in experiential processes that allow them to critically reflect on their attitudes (Woodford & Bella, 2003). Intergroup dialogue may be a useful tool in this regard. This pedagogical model has been shown to promote understanding and attitudinal change among groups regarding a number of issues including sexual prejudice (Dessel, 2010) and sexism (Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga, 2009). The current findings also suggest that by addressing sexism among faculty, there may be a positive effect on views about sexual minorities. Intergroup dialogues may be beneficial in addressing attitudes and beliefs about sexual minorities as well as women among social work faculty. This approach may also be helpful in exploring intersecting identities, including religion

and race, and how they connect to sexual prejudice. CSWE requires an understanding of “the intersectionality of multiple factors including... gender identity and expression... sex and sexual orientation” as a core competency (CSWE, 2008, EP 2.1.4). Social workers’ ability to “gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups” (CSWE, 2008, EP 2.1.4) follows as one of the conditions for meeting this competency. Social work faculty who hold prejudicial attitudes are ill prepared to help students achieve these competencies. Even silence on an issue can be a powerful communication about a particular issue or group.

While sexual prejudice was low among this sample, it is important that schools of social work, alongside CSWE and other professional associations continue to address issues related to sexual prejudice if the social work mission is to be realized with sexual minorities. We hope this study prompts critical reflection and discussion among social work faculty, educational initiatives designed to reduce sexual prejudice and sexism, and additional research in this area.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Sample and Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	%	<i>N</i>^a
Sexual prejudice				
Gay men	10.30	6.84		303
Lesbian women	10.40	6.01		303
Age (range 26-81)	53.73	10.26		291
Sex				
Male			27.1	81
Female			72.9	218
Race/Ethnicity				
Caucasian/White			75.3	222
African American/Black			16.6	49
Asian American			2.7	8
Hispanic/Latino(a) American			2.7	8
Highest level of education				
MSW			28.1	84
PhD in Social Work			49.2	147
DSW			4.0	12
Other PhD			16.7	50
Years teaching (range 0-38)	14.36	9.33		295
Geographic region				
Rural/Suburban			27.3	81
Midsize city			31.6	94
Urban			41.1	122
Religious affiliation/beliefs				
Catholic			11.7	35
Jewish			7.0	21
Protestant			26.3	79
Spiritual			32.0	96
None			10.7	32
Other			9.3	28
Religiosity	3.68	1.38		299
Political ideology	1.48	.93		299
Modern sexism	16.07	5.73		296
Has a substantive interest in sexuality/LGBTQ			9.9	30

Note. ^aSample sizes are different on each variable due to missing data.

Table 2

Bivariate Results for Attitudes Toward Gay Men and Attitudes Toward Lesbian Women by Independent Variables

Independent Variables	Gay Men		Lesbian Women	
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>F or t score</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>F or t score</i>
Sex				
Male	11.54 (7.72)	1.96*	11.46 (6.50)	1.86
Female	9.81 (6.49)		10.03 (5.77)	
Race				
White	9.58 (6.39)	-3.14**	9.80 (5.68)	-2.94
People of color	12.94 (8.13)		12.52(6.43)	
Religious affiliation				
Catholic	10.03 (5.51)	9.92***	9.89 (4.65)	7.36***
Jewish	6.59 (1.50)		7.59 (2.22)	
Protestant	13.96 (8.25)		13.03 (6.75)	
Spiritual	8.86 (5.44)		9.52 (5.05)	
None	7.21 (3.23)		7.79 (3.61)	
Other	12.12 (9.16)		12.38 (8.76)	
Substantive interest in sexuality/LGBTQ				
No	10.38 (6.90)	.64	10.48 (6.00)	.65
Yes	9.55 (6.57)		9.73 (5.98)	

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

Table 3

Correlational Analysis Between Outcome Variables and Covariates

	GMS	LWS	Religiosity	Political ideology
GMS				
LWS	.88***			
Religiosity	.34**	.28***		
Political ideology	.46***	.43***	.19**	
Modern sexism	.19**	.22***	-.05	.21***

Note. GMS = Gay Men Scale. LWS = Lesbian Women Scale.

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

Table 4

OLS Regression for Sexual Prejudice Toward Gay Men and Lesbian Women

Variable	Gay Men (<i>n</i> = 279)			Lesbian Women (<i>n</i> = 279)		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Demographic						
Sex (ref. female)	.89	.76	.06	.71	.69	.05
Race (ref. White)	2.03	.82	.13**	2.25	.75	.16**
Religious affiliation (ref. none)						
Catholic	-.36	1.63	-.02	-.19	1.48	-.01
Jewish	-2.26	1.70	-.09	-1.35	1.55	-.06
Protestant	2.19	1.56	.14	1.99	1.42	.15
Spiritual	-.74	1.39	-.05	.09	1.26	.01
Other	.84	1.61	.04	1.35	1.47	.08
Religiosity	.83	.34	.17**	.44	.31	.10
Framing variables						
Political ideology	2.79	.38	.38***	2.35	.35	.36***
Modern sexism	.18	.06	.15**	.18	.06	.17**
Substantive interest						
Sexuality/LGBTQ (ref. no)	-.70	1.14	-.03	-.37	1.04	-.02
R ²			.361			.314
F			13.74***			11.13***

Note. ref = reference category.

p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. * *p* < .001.