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Beyond the Stereotype of Black Homophobia: Exploring the Potential of Black Allies for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students

Kyle Oldham
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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BEYOND THE STEREOTYPE OF BLACK HOMOPHOBIA:

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF BLACK ALLIES FOR LESBIAN, GAY AND

BISEXUAL STUDENTS

A Dissertation Presented

by

KYLE WENDELL OLDHAM

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University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
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Social Justice Education

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Approved as to style and content by:

_____
Bailey Jackson III, Chair

_____
Elizabeth Williams, Member

_____
Amy Schalet, Member

_____
Christine B. McCormick, Dean
School of Education

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served on my committee but was very influential in terms of the survey methods to my

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ABSTRACT

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EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF BLACK ALLIES FOR LESBIAN, GAY AND

BISEXUAL STUDENTS

MAY 2012

KYLE OLDHAM, B.A., BALDWIN WALLACE COLLEGE

M.S., COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Bailey W. Jackson, III

Strides at the federal and state levels are being made to improve the overall climate
for gay rights and relationships across the country. However, despite greater acceptance,
legislative victories and visibility of gay rights and relationships, homophobia is still
widespread in American society (Fone, 2000; Jenkins, Lambert, & Baker, 2009;
Schroeder, 2004). No matter the environment, homophobic attitudes permeate all aspects
of the US culture, leading to prejudicial attitudes and inequalities that affect everyone in
society. Unfortunately, some of these prejudicial attitudes lead to instituting laws that are
inherently homophobic (HRC, n.d.). Trends illustrate that more people are coming out at
a younger age in society, creating a larger number of 'out' students on college campuses.
However, the increase in 'out' students has also led to an increase of prejudice and
discrimination based on sexual orientation more visible on college campuses (Cannick,
2007; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Jenkins et al., 2009).

Current research indicates Black college students are more likely than other college students to hold negative attitudes toward LGB students. The purpose of this research was to explore and describe perceptions and feelings of Black college students toward LGB students. A qualitative online survey using open and close-ended questions was sent out nationally to a number of college campuses to solicit responses. Major findings include the following: 1) participants have the potential to be allies for and hold positive perceptions of LGB identified students, 2) contact with LGB individuals affects the participants' ability to have more positive perceptions, and 3) participants are receptive to engage in conversations about LGB related issues.

Implications of this study suggest collaboration among multicultural offices and other campus constituents for social and academic related programming. In addition, there is a need to provide a space for potential student allies to feel supported and engage in their own self-reflection and learning on how to create community among individuals that hold multiple social identities.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Strides are being made to improve the overall climate for gay rights and relationships across the country. Most recently, the repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy stands as a first step in long road for equal rights (Foley, 2010). As the federal government continues to provide a more lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) friendly atmosphere in America, states, cities and institutions are also creating safe spaces for LGB people. Iowa, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and the District of Columbia (DC) all issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples (Human Rights Campaign [HRC], n.d.). Delaware, Nebraska, Minnesota, and North Carolina have adopted state laws to give each patient 'the right to designate visitors who shall receive the same visitation privileges as the patient's immediate family members, regardless of whether the visitors are legally related to the patient' (Tapper, 2010), ultimately impacting LGB medical rights. LGB individuals experiencing an increase of community and acceptance in regions (i.e. the South) traditionally known for discrimination. For example, in Jacksonville, Florida a large number of child rearing same-sex couples have found a more accepting community. In this community specifically, there are now eight (8) churches that openly welcome gay worshipers (Tavernise, 2011). In 2005, the number of politicians in elected offices in America was 602 out of roughly 511,000 (Reynolds, 2005), and continues to increase. Today there are more and more politicians, either coming out, being elected as openly gay or being forced 'out of the closet,' which brings issues of gay rights and equality into the media and forefront of political debate.

However, despite greater acceptance, legislative victories and exposure of gay rights and relationships, homophobia (prejudice against lesbians and gay men) is still widespread in American society, leaving homophobia as the last acceptable prejudice in society (Fone, 2000; Jenkins, Lambert, & Baker, 2009; Schroeder, 2004; Whitley, 2001). Anti-gay sentiment continues to gain momentum within institutions, such as religion, government, the military, and the media. Repeal of same-sex marriage legislation in California in 2008 and Maine in 2009 illustrates the presence of homophobia. In California the mere fact that this vote attracted the attention of religious groups and came with a price tag second to the US presidential campaign (Ewers, 2008) reinforces the extent to which homophobia is pervasive in this country. Additionally, homophobia prompted other laws passed in the last two to three years in over 12 states to define marriage as being between a man and woman (Federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), 1997; HRC, n.d.), as well as a lack of protection in schools against hate crimes based on real or perceived sexual identity and expression. Today bullies target a larger number of students in schools across the country, ranging from grade schools to university campuses which has drawn the attention of the Departments of Justice and Education, the White House, a number of celebrities and spurred the nationwide 'It Gets Better' project (It Gets Better Project, n.d.; Picket, 2011).

Statement of Problem

Homophobia is an extreme form of heterosexism, in which the attitudes, morals, and values of people, universally privilege and align with heterosexuality (Bullough, 2007; Rekers, 2008). Whether telling a joke, degrading someone's appearance, mimicking behavior, or making assumptions about someone's lifestyle, each instance

carries with it the ability to create a toxic environment for lesbians, gay men, and bisexual (LGB) people and their allies (Rekers, 2008). Homophobic attitudes of people permeate all aspects of the US culture, no matter the environment, whether it is home, church, school, parks, a mall, or within different forms of media.. Prejudicial attitudes continue to exist as do the inequalities that accompany them, ultimately affecting everyone in society and more specifically become law (HRC, n.d.). The stigma of homophobia excludes rights for all people, whole communities, families, and society, causing individuals to suffer physically, emotionally, mentally, and financially, creating a burden for family and friends who may be dependent upon them.

Lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people-as well as heterosexuals perceived to be gay-routinely experience violence, discrimination, and personal rejection (Herek, 2000). There is a long history of stigmatization associated with one's sexuality, and in 1973 when the American Psychiatric Association dropped homosexuality as a psychiatric diagnosis, the focus of doctors shifted to understand why some heterosexuals harbor strong negative attitudes toward homosexuals. This question warrants re-examination as decades later, there are still instances of prejudice and discrimination based upon sexual orientation (Herek, 2000). For example, HRC reports that over 20 states still have statutes that prohibit unmarried couples or LGB individuals from adopting children. According to a survey conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (2007), more than 30% of homeless youth in America identify as LGB. Reasons for LGB homeless youth ranged from being bullied and told to leave their homes because of their sexual orientation to both physical and sexual abuse. Due to the socially desirable norms of homosexuality being "bad" or a "sin," parents kick their children out of the house, leaving them

homeless. Most of these children are unable to be adopted by LGB individuals who may understand their situation because of state laws restricting the rights of LGB people to adopt; thus children become wards of the state, where an underreported number of youth have attempted or completed suicide (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2007). In addition, as people who are presumed to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual are physically and verbally attacked, homophobia is used to explain or even justify abuse. Evidence includes the attacks of Matthew Shepard, a college student in Wyoming (Matthew Shepard Foundation, n.d.); Sakia Gunn, a 15-year-old African American lesbian who was viciously attacked and murdered while waiting for the bus with her friends by two white men who propositioned them. The women initially shrugged off the advances and informed the men they were lesbians, and the men became aggressive and attacked (Virtel, 2008). Another instance is the story of Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, an 11-year-old boy in Springfield, Massachusetts who was taunted for his perceived homosexuality. Walker-Hoover eventually committed suicide to escape his classmates abuse (Presgraves, 2009). Most recently, Tyler Clementi, a first year student at Rutgers, committed suicide after his roommate and another friend streamed a live webcast of him engaging in same-sex activities (Friedman, 2010). In some of these incidents, all details are not known; however, the presence of homophobia allowed individuals to engage in behaviors that were ultimately supported by others to harass Sheppard, Gunn, Walker-Hoover and Clementi.

Significance of Study

Socio-cultural trends illustrate that more people are coming out at a younger age in society, creating a larger number of students growing up and going through school

openly as lesbians, gay men, or bisexuals (McCready, 2004; Sanlo, 1998). Meaning, that

the number of LGB students in college continues to increase with each passing year, yet

these same students still experience instances of prejudice and discrimination, for

example, being verbally insulted, threatened, or physically attacked while in school

(Cannick, 2007; D'Augelli, 1989; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Herek, 1988; Jenkins et al.,

2009; Sanlo, 1998). Recent Gallup polls suggest that there is a growing acceptance of

lesbian, gay men, and bisexuals in the US, although other polls reveal that there is still a

large segment of the population who believe otherwise (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008;

Smith & Gordon, 2005). It is evident that there are still cultural cues and beliefs being

internalized that support the inherent system of oppression (heterosexism[1] and

homophobia) present for the LGB community (Kite & Whitley, 1998). Due to fear and

hatred, homophobic individuals continue to commit acts of prejudice, discrimination,

harassment, and violence against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (Bullough, 2007).

The General Social Survey (GSS) suggests that society overall holds more

negative than positive attitudes about gay men and lesbians (Davis & Smith, 2009).

When responses are separated by race, religion, and class, the GSS reports that attitudes

of Blacks[2] are negative toward the acceptance of homosexuality and have remained

constant, while White respondents show a slight decrease in negative attitudes. GSS also

reports that Protestants and Catholics maintain more negative attitudes than other

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[1] Heterosexism is defined as the institutionalization of heteronormativity at the cultural, institutional and individual level (Blumenfeld, 1992). Hence, it promotes the idea that being heterosexual is the norm or standard which establishes and perpetuates the notion that all people are or should be heterosexual, and as result, it privileges the status of heterosexuals and heterosexuality.

[2] For the purpose of this paper the term "Black" will be used as a descriptor to identify the race of all individuals along the entire African Diaspora. This is being done due to the complexity of multiple ethnicities including but not limited to Caribbean, and African cultures (and all associated sub-groups), in addition to African Americans who have been in America for generations and cannot trace their nationality/ethnic lineage. There is no intention by the researcher to negate the differences of the rich histories of each of the nationalities and ethnicities within the African Diaspora.

religions and denominations that were reported, across all races. Individuals in working and lower classes, across all races, also are more likely to hold negative attitudes more than those in middle or upper class. In addition, White and other race respondents indicated positively that homosexuality is something that cannot be changed, while Black respondents were more likely to believe that homosexuality is something people choose to be (Davis & Smith, 2009).

College students come from backgrounds and family values that can teach and support homophobic attitudes. For example, some college students have strong religious affiliations that reinforce beliefs about being gay or lesbian means that individuals automatically do not want a family (because a gay male or lesbian couple cannot readily reproduce exclusively) or gay men and lesbians do not subscribe to the same values, therefore students may view the gay way of life as being threatening (Pharr, 1997; Weinberg, 1972). Another belief college students may have is illustrated when they discover their roommate is a gay man or lesbian. Based on homophobic stereotypical reasons, like the gay male or lesbian may develop a "crush" on them or try to watch them while they change the roommate may no longer wish to room with them.

Researchers have narrowed their attention from the larger LGB experience to focus on the examination of prejudicial attitudes of college students toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, however most of this research has documented a White college student perspective (Aberson, Swan & Emerson, 1999; M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Enberg, Hurtado, & Smith, 2007; Herek, 1988; Herek & Berrill, 1992; Jenkins et al., 2009; Lance, 2002; Mitchell, 2006; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Pettijohn & Walzer, 2008; Reed, 2002; Schellenberg, Hirt & Sears, 1999; Whitley, 2001).

This body of research identifies a few key demographic factors as indicators that influence negative attitudes toward homosexuality; these social and personal demographic factors are sex (man/woman), gender roles, masculinity, socioeconomic class, and race (Battle & Lemelle, 2002; E. Brown, 2005; Enberg et al., 2007; Herek, 2000; Kimmel, 1997; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Schulte, 2002; Sullivan, 2003).

Some studies have begun to explore connections between race and negative attitudes (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Davis & Smith, 2009; Lewis, 2003; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Schellenberg, Hirt & Sears, 1999), a few studies have examined homophobic attitudes among the Black community (Battle & Lemelle, 2002; Cohen, 1996; C. Clarke, 1995, 2005; C. Harris, 1988; W. Harris, 2003; Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Jenkins et al., 2009; Loiacano, 1989, Wall & Washington, 1992). Research presented on attitudes toward homosexuality of individuals in the Black community has been primarily quantitative assessments focused on adult populations related to attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (Herek & Capitanio, 1995; C. Harris, 1988; Loiacano, 1989), differences of gender on attitudes (Battle & Lemelle, 2002), and attitudinal differences and demographic roots of Blacks and Whites (Lewis, 2003). In addition, the research that included perspectives of Black college students frequently contained a small number of Black participants as part of the research study (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Davis & Smith, 2009; Lewis, 2003; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Reed, 2002; Schellenberg et al., 1999; Whitley, 2001). These studies usually suggest that when analyzing for the socio-demographic variable of race, Blacks tend to have negative attitudes about gay men and lesbians and when compared in studies with individuals of different races, are more likely to have a stronger disapproval of homosexuality (Lewis, 2003).

Attention needs to be given to the attitudes of Black college students toward LGB college students. Most of the research conducted has not focused specifically on the needs and experiences of Black college students or even the Black community (Aberson, Swan, & Emerson, 1999; Herek & Berrill, 1992; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Schellenberg et al., 1999). Using analysis of the presented quantitative data that includes a small portion of Black students neglects to take into account the differences and influences that affect the data collected. There is a strong need to conduct research on the attitudes of Black college students, specifically, to account for the ethnic and racial differences that Black students experience in their home communities, churches, and college environments. First, there has not been a study of Black college students that attempted to capture their voices within a study related to attitudes, thoughts and opinions toward LGB individuals. Secondly, there are cultural differences among Black college students based on their nationalities, ethnicities, and regional environments in which they were reared. Lastly, between prior research, religious messages and media portrayals of the Black communities' feelings, attitudes and opinions toward LGB individuals, a study needs to be conducted to inquire whether Blacks tend to hold negative attitudes and why. In addition, a study should explore the potential for Blacks to have more inclusive opinions, feelings and attitudes. I propose that one of the ways to achieve this is to qualitatively explore the attitudes of Black college students in their own words, to begin to explore current attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals.

The Black community must raise questions and expectations in order to truly combat negative attitudes and behaviors and effectively educate Black college students about the effects of homophobia and heterosexism (Clarke, 1995; Cohen, 1996). For

college students the identity development process is already cumbersome (Dube & Savin-Williams, 1999; Pascarella & Terezini, 2005). Therefore, college students exploring their sexual identity deal with extra pressures and stress associated with homophobia and heterosexism while transitioning to the new university environment. A large number of students of color acclimating to a predominantly White college environment must deal with not only their sexual identity but their racial/ethnic identity simultaneously. Typically the racial/ethnic identity may take precedence because of the visibility of the particular social identity (Dube & Savin-Williams, 1999; Pascarella & Terezini, 2005). My intention is to offer knowledge and insight into this area by focusing on the attitudes of Black college students toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. The specific purpose of my research is to add more in-depth knowledge from the perspective of Black students on their attitudes and the potential change of their attitudes toward LGB individuals.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and describe perceptions and feelings of Black college students toward lesbian, gay men, and bisexual students. The study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

What are the perceptions and feelings of Black college students toward lesbian, gay men, and bisexual college students?

Sub-questions:

- To what origins do Black college students attribute their perceptions and feelings about lesbians, gay men and bisexuals?

- Are there specific experiences that influence or have influenced the perceptions and feelings of Black college students toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals?

- How can Black college students be encouraged to have more positive perceptions and feelings about lesbian, gay men and bisexual college students?

Rationale: Personal Background

As a Black gay male, I witness negative attitudes, including epithets and vandalism, as well as language and socially constructed ideas being used to describe and interact with members of the gay community. In addition, I have had the opportunity to have lived experiences in environments where I have also been accepted and supported. Coming into this study I recognize that my own development differs from other heterosexual and LGB students. My social identities, personal upbringing, and internalized messages associated with sexuality and race have played a key role in the development of this study. I have a genuine interest in the topic and recognize the possibility that the data collected could be very painful to review and later categorize.

As a student affairs professional, I often wonder how Black college students would interact with me differently if my sexual orientation were perceived or known by them more readily. I have the privilege of presenting more masculine if I choose to, and often find myself surprising individuals if I reveal my sexual orientation. While some individuals may be able to discern my sexual orientation, many cannot, and instead of taking a chance in an interview of revealing my orientation, the design of this study was done to protect myself, the participants, and the integrity of the study.

As a part of the college community, there are instances of negative attitudes that permeate Black communities at different levels (administration, faculty/staff, and

student). I listened to stories recounting events, rumors, and speculations about individuals being shared among Black college students (by students and administrators) about someone's sexual orientation/identity, creating an unwelcoming and uncomfortable environment for LGB students, including myself. As an educator and researcher, I would like to explore ways to inform Black college students of their roles that influence the ways in which members of the Black college community interact with one another, particularly with respect to sexual orientation on campus. It is only through recognizing our shared social identities and negotiating our differences that the Black community can begin to build a movement toward equality (Cohen, 1996).

Research suggests that attitudes are typically negative about gay men and lesbians and a higher disapproval of homosexuality exist among Black participants when compared in studies with other races (Lewis, 2003). Some studies suggest that Blacks are more tolerant of homosexuality than Whites, which contradicts a majority of the research available (Jenkins et al., 2009) and suggests a need for research that focuses on broadening our understanding of attitudes, perceptions and feelings of Black college students. Therefore it is crucial that more research be conducted on exploring the attitudes of Black college students about LGB individuals, from multiple regions and various institutions across the country.

The literature reviewed informs the rationale for my interest in this topic and I identify some of the gaps in the current research that I intend my study to address. The following sections will begin with defining key terms from the literature and provide theoretical frameworks for looking at prejudice and prejudice reduction. In addition, I will use key research findings and sociological perspectives to explain how this study

could attend to gaps of knowledge concerning this underrepresented and understudied population.

Definition of Key Terms

In this section, I define terms that will be used throughout this paper to help clarify and articulate a common understanding . I begin with defining the term "ally," as defined by the literature and the intended use for this research study. Next, I define terms that are often synonymous with prejudice or contribute to the social construction of prejudicial attitudes and beliefs. The terms I will define are "attitude," "prejudice," "sexual prejudice," "homophobia," "sexual stigma," and "heterosexism." These terms are often used interchangeably to explain beliefs and feelings associated with lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. For the purpose of this paper, I define and discuss these terms to help clarify distinctions and possible overlaps as well as to substantiate my use of terminology in this paper. I will begin reviewing terms that are more psychological (and individually based) and end with terms that are more sociological (societal or system based). I will start by clarifying the difference between attitude and prejudice, then I will examine three overlapping but distinct terms associated with individual attitudes and behaviors: sexual prejudice, homophobia, and sexual stigma and end with heterosexism.

Ally

Broido (2000) defines allies as 'members of dominant social groups (i.e. men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on that social membership. I will utilize the term ally in the paper to identify the participants of this study as individuals who have the potential

to recognize their privilege and work toward the ending of oppression at systematic and individual levels.

Attitude

An attitude is defined in psychological literature as a psychological tendency (internal state of mind) that is expressed either positively or negatively by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Attitudes can be expressed overtly or covertly in response to certain stimuli, resulting in an acquired reaction to specific objects. Some theorists believe that attitudes are learned throughout peoples' life experiences rather than acquired inherently through birth, suggesting that attitudes can also be unlearned. According to social scientists, attitudes toward social groups, usually disadvantaged, are often called prejudice. In addition to attitudes, there are clear connections between how attitudes are held and may present themselves in the form of specific behaviors. Some behaviors, such as acts of physical violence, stem from negative attitudes toward a particular group of people. For the purpose of this paper, negative attitudes will remain the focus of inquiry with an understanding that behaviors are shaped and influenced by specific attitudes that are held about certain groups of people, practices, and ideals.

Prejudice

Prejudice is defined in psychology and social psychology literature as an attitude, generally described as a negative one, toward a social group (Allport, 1979; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, Fishbein, 1996; Stephan & Stephan, 2001). Typically, many of these attitudes and negative feelings have, in past decades, been researched as flawed character structures of people based upon race, ethnicity, and cultural difference (Allport, 1979).

Prejudice has more recently encompassed attitudes and negative feelings about a wider range of social identities, such as gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, and nationality, adding to the original list of race and ethnicity only. Lastly, with this expansion, prejudice continues to be defined as an attitude of favor or disfavor related to a number of overgeneralized (often erroneously) and religious beliefs (Allport, 1979). This definition provides a conceptual foundation for examining prejudice toward LGB individuals.

Sexual Prejudice

Sexual prejudice is a broadly conceived term that refers to all negative attitudes based on sexual orientation whether the target is homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual (Herek, 2000). However, given the privileges and socialization associated with heterosexuality, this term is almost always directed at those who engage in same-sex behaviors or label themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Much like homophobia and heterosexism, sexual prejudice has three principal features: it is an attitude; it is directed at a social group and its members; and it is negative, often involving dislike or hostility (Herek, 2000). The term sexual prejudice offers an academic and research connection to social psychological research on prejudice to broaden the scope in which people examine negative attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. Utilizing this new terminology may lead to eliminating some of the negative assumptions that have been presented about the motivations behind negative attitudes when using the term "homophobia," which is clearly linked to the fear and hatred of people with same-sex attractions and affections.

Research on the psychology of sexual prejudice is in its early stages; however, the empirical research to date correlates with data provided from studies on homophobia and sexual stigma (Herek, 2000). Research on sexual prejudice suggests some of the same outcomes that prior studies on attitudes toward gay men and lesbians have found relating to prejudice. Higher levels of sexual prejudice are usually found among individuals who are older, live in rural areas, and are less educated (Herek, 2004). In addition, heterosexual men generally display higher levels of sexual prejudice than heterosexual women (Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Kite & Whitley, 1998; Yang, 1997). Furthermore, religious denominations and service attendance, conservative politics, and issues of authoritarianism all play roles in affecting higher levels of sexual prejudice. Each of these factors can be inextricably linked to the theoretical approaches of prejudice that have historical, psychodynamic, and phenomenological emphasis as suggested by Allport's work on prejudice (Herek, 2000). In this paper, sexual prejudice will be used interchangeably with homophobia.

Homophobia

Homophobia is the hatred, fear, and negative feelings and behaviors of heterosexual individuals toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. Weinberg (1972) suggests that homophobia in operation is a prejudice. This prejudice has led to the misconception in the general public around issues of seducing young children, being untrustworthy and hating women/men, resulting in the general public holding disdain for individuals who choose to identify publicly as a gay man or lesbian. In addition, homophobia works in tandem with heterosexism and creates attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in society that all individuals perpetuate. "Othering" individuals allows people

to prove their own heterosexuality and reinforce ideas of patriarchal power and the nuclear family (Pharr, 1997). Today, homophobia has been mainly interpreted as the fear or hatred of LGB people or anything different from the group "norms" that have been established around accepted practices of sexual intimacy (Herek, 2009).

Sexual Stigma

Stigma is often referred to as a socially constructed meaning associated with an inferior status that society collectively assigns to a characteristic or a particular group or category (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Inherent in this definition is that society creates a shared knowledge about which attributes and categories are valued and most desired. Using this definition to evaluate sexual stigma is to assign negative value to any and all non-heterosexual behavior, identity, relationship, or community, thus presenting a shared knowledge in society that homosexuality has a devalued status relative to heterosexuality (Herek, 2009). Society's institutions and ideological systems affirm and perpetuate sexual stigma differentials in status and power in the form of structural or institutional stigma, which is also known as heterosexism (Herek, 2004). By building sexual stigma into societal institutions, including religion, law, and medicine, heterosexism ensures that sexual minority individuals have less power than heterosexuals. To reinforce this idea, an unquestioned heterosexual assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and those who are not, or refuse to align with heterosexual behaviors and actions are considered inferior, unnatural, and abnormal (Hegarty & Pratto, 2004). Though the term "sexual stigma" will not be used in this paper directly, the concepts associated with sexual stigma will be included when discussing heterosexism and homophobia.

Heterosexism

Heterosexism is defined as the institutionalization of heteronormativity at the cultural, institutional, and individual level (Blumenfeld, 1992). Hence, it promotes the idea that being heterosexual is the norm or standard, which establishes and perpetuates the notion that all people are or should be heterosexual, and as result, it privileges the status of heterosexuals and heterosexuality. For example, the recent elections that took place at the state level nationwide concerning the definition of marriage as one man and one woman and other national efforts that strived to repeal state laws already granting marriage rights to same-sex couples is evidence of *heterosexism* because they exclude the needs, concerns, cultures, and life experiences of LGB people. Heterosexism and homophobia share similar results when they play out in society, such as the exclusion of individuals who have same-sex affections and attractions. Because of this shared effect, these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Even with their similarities, the differences remain that while one (homophobia) focuses on fear and hatred of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals the other (heterosexism) puts the focus on heterosexuals and "normalcy" in sex practices. Heterosexism results in systemic attitudes and behaviors that include laws and cultural beliefs, and extends the reach of individual attitudes associated with homophobia. In this paper, heterosexism is used in tandem with homophobia where relevant, but homophobia will be used more frequently as it is more commonly seen in literature and research.

Summary

For the purpose of this paper, the term "homophobia" will be used to encompass all definitions of sexual orientation based prejudice related to lesbian, gay men and bisexuals. This decision was influenced by the amount of literature available on and the

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accessibility of understanding the concepts involved with homophobia. As the term "sexual prejudice" continues to gain acceptance and understanding among social psychologists, a natural shift may be made in future literature and research to begin using said term in place of or in conjunction with homophobia.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aims to explore and describe perceptions and feelings of Black college students toward lesbian, gay men, and bisexual students. For the purpose of providing a foundation for this study, the literature reviewed in this chapter will be situated in theoretical socio-psychology frameworks of prejudicial attitudes. The frameworks explored include the formation and expression of prejudicial attitudes, specifically related to homosexuality, as well as the reduction of such attitudes. The latter is examined through theories of prejudice reduction. In addition, another relevant body of literature in this chapter will be current research on college student attitudes toward lesbian, gay men, and bisexuals, specifically from a social and demographic factor viewpoint of Black college students that will highlight the impact of such factors on attitudes toward LGB individuals. The next section of the literature review will be situated in a sociological perspective of structures and influences impact on attitudes toward lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. I will conclude this chapter with a critique of the literature presented and identifying the potential needs and gaps in the research for this under-researched population and topic.

Prior Research on Attitudes toward Homosexuality
Empirical research on attitudes toward homosexuality spans over 30 years and mainly has been limited to studies with a quantitative design. Strengths of this research conversation include how researchers have studied attitudes in different contexts, including educational, community, and religious venues. Studies that have focused on college student attitudes toward homosexuality, including attitude research on sex-role

characteristics are of particular interest.. Research findings show trends of acceptance and positive responses in the last decade from college students specifically toward homosexuality.

One of the earlier research studies based on the 1970 national survey by the Institute for Sex Research by Levitt and Klassen (1974), shows that "bias against homosexuals extended beyond mere moral disapproval" (p. 30); respondents reported denying employment and limiting their [LGB peoples] engagement to positions in occupations related to arts or positions without authority or influence. Furthermore, 66% of the adult population found homosexuality to be obscene and vulgar and different from "the rest of us." Lastly, 62% said half of the homosexual population could be "cured," implying that homosexuality is a sickness. These results illustrate the prevalence of attitudes and perceptions of homosexuality. While these results are specific to the data set in 1970, it is important to recognize the amount of change that has occurred in attitudes toward LGB individuals since this initial study.

In 1984, Herek analyzed attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, where differences were found between males and females and their attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. This particular study relied on a 20-item, 9-point, Likert-type scale that included 10 items regarding attitudes toward lesbians and another 10 toward gay men. This study became known as the "Attitude toward Lesbians and Gay Scale" (ATLGS), which would later be used as a basis for a number of research studies conducted about this particular population (Schroeder, 2004). Schieman (1998) conducted a study that reported men having significantly higher levels of homophobia and social distance. Social distance is defined as perceptions about the level of dissimilarity between self and others, from a

broad range of behavior of psychological, cultural, and social characteristics. Other social identity descriptors that studies reported on that influenced levels of homophobia included race, education, class, religion and political views (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Lewis, 2003; Loiaciano, 1989; Schulte, 2002; Steffens, 2005; Whitley, 2001). Results of many of these studies were similar: Whites held less homophobic attitudes than communities of color, with reference to the factor of class, middle- to lower-class participants held more homophobic views, and those with more conservative political and/or religious beliefs held attitudes that were more negative toward lesbians and gay men.

The absence of interconnectedness of social identities is apparent in the data analysis of past studies. Many studies have little to no diversity of race among participants (Jenkins et al., 2009; Lewis, 2003). Women are present on more college campuses today, and there is a larger stratification of class backgrounds among students in higher education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). I feel there is a need to begin conducting studies from a multiple social identity perspective, as the psychological, sociological and demographic factors influence the experiences, attitudes, perceptions and feelings of individuals specifically, when considering the lesbian, gay and bisexual community.

Theoretical Socio-psychology Frameworks of Prejudice

Implicit vs. Explicit Attitude

Attitudes are either involuntary or controlled reactions to a situation or an individual depending upon the circumstance at that moment. Many of these reactions are often learned responses to a particular stimulus that is either favorable or unfavorable (Ajzen, 2002). Furthermore, when attitudes are characterized as a learned response, space

for an attitude to be shaped, changed, or influenced by others or an environment is created, resulting in implicit and explicit attitudes. Implicit attitude reactions are automatic, spontaneous feelings and thoughts that are usually classified as the initial true internal opinion that an individual holds about a person, idea, or group of people (Steffens, 2005). Knowledge obtained throughout life experiences, as well as learned behaviors and ideals typically leads to the suppression of implicit attitude reactions when an opinion does not align with the majority viewpoint. Implicit attitudes can be influenced when new information is presented that contradicts the narrative a person may already hold as true (Ajzen, 2002). Contrarily, when new information creates dissonance by challenging a person's beliefs, the new information can be written off as insufficient. Thus, individuals are able to make a decision as to what type of attitude they are going to maintain about the topic in question and if they will allow the narrative that they have always believed in to remain in place.

Explicit attitude reactions are more controlled and often present a logical decision that has been made. In the case of explicit reactions, an individual normally has time to present an answer, response, or attitude that is more favorable or desired by family, friends, and even society (Ajzen, 2002). There are also situations in which explicit reactions do not align with one's implicit reaction. For example, an individual who is a lesbian and may pass for heterosexual may implicitly want to stand up and defend someone being picked on for their sexual orientation, but explicitly will join in the negative behaviors toward the person being targeted. In this example, the lesbian's explicit reaction does not align with her implicit reaction. Furthermore, her decision allows her to maintain a perceived heterosexual status by joining in on the bullying.

Another example where implicit and explicit attitude reactions could be misaligned is often illustrated in aversive racism theory. Aversive racism theory argues that the contradiction is between values and feelings when it comes to prejudice (Stephan & Stephan, 2001). For example, implicitly an individual may have negative attitudes toward LGB individuals but explicitly struggles to avoid having these feelings reflected in their behavior because they consider themselves a non-prejudiced person. In addition, an individual may want to present himself as being more accepting and open minded than he really is, and he might make the decision to share an opinion that more or less lines up with the majority view or with the person asking a question. As mentioned earlier, this behavior is what social psychologists refer to as socially desirable reactions. Individuals will default to the socially desired responses and answers in order to be more liked and sometimes respected, even if it is not what they truly think about a subject (Ajzen, 2002). This is often the case with situations regarding homophobia. The presence of homophobic sentiments in society cause many to conform to the negative attitudes and behaviors toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals because they feel it is the socially desired answer that is wanted, based on dominant heteronormative context, rather than their true feelings or beliefs (Ajzen, 2002).

Implicit and explicit attitudes play their own intimate roles in the perpetuation of oppressive attitudes, opinions, and ideas. It is important to remember that each prejudice theory is grounded within some type of dissonance happening either consciously or unconsciously. This dissonance often causes individuals to decide whether they will follow the cultural stereotypes outlined before them or allow their personal beliefs and values to prevail, ultimately resulting in non-prejudiced standard behavior (Fiske, 1998;

Steffens, 2005). Furthermore, there are situations in which an external factor or false

pretense may influence the individual attitude. Implicit and explicit prejudice attitudes

take root within these attitudinal situations. For example, if a White person were asked

what he thinks about his Black neighbors, the White person may implicitly respond that

he does not like his neighbors because they are Black. Explicitly, he may think about how

he is being judged by his answer and the fact that it is socially desirable not to be racist,

thus may respond positively because he does not want the interviewer or anyone else to

think he is racist.

Prejudice and stereotypes are often learned and socially constructed fundamental

beliefs and ideas about people upon which we place significance, and as such, social

psychologists have suggested methods based on explicit and implicit techniques as a way

to assess the attitudinal reactions in these situations (Ajzen, 2002). Within any

interaction, attitudes toward another person can be persuaded based upon a number of

factors at the moment that are in play. Whether it is the environment, a specific

relationship between the two individuals, socially constructed ideas, or who is observing

the interaction taking place, one's initial reaction is to respond in a socially desirable

manner (Ajzen, 2002). This is the case when dealing with socially sensitive issues, such

as racism, sexism, and other personal topics. One may feel she must conform to the

majority perspective. In any case, efforts of an individual to maintain a socially desirable

appearance can mask her true attitudes and behaviors toward a particular topic, situation,

or group of people (Fiske, 1998).

Socially desired answers are often influenced by a number of factors, such as

what type of information is being gathered and how. If information is gathered in favor of

an opinion that is not the most popular stance (i.e., California's same-sex marriage initiative, Proposition 8, which was in favor of defining marriage between a man and woman thus repealing same-sex marriage), then some people may answer in favor of Prop 8 because the environment they live in or their social, professional network group has the same perspective. In addition, if a question is being asked in face-to-face interviews when the respondent feels identifiable, her answer may also be influenced to conform to what she believes is the appropriate desired answer. This can be related to the integrated threat theory in that the individual does not wish to be associated with certain identity groups for fear of being labeled as part of a certain out-group (Stephan & Stephan, 2001). The danger of implicit and explicit attitude reactions is directly connected with people making assumptions about what information is more acceptable to society in general or those individuals conducting research and collecting data. Another danger is that individuals allow their own perceived truths, what is accepted as the 'norm' in society, to dictate their behavior and attitudes, rather than utilizing their own personal beliefs to decide how they will respond, react, and behave toward those with out-group membership.

It is imperative that individuals examine their own implicit and explicit attitude reactions and act accordingly without fear of being labeled as an out-group member in order to lead to the dismantling of heteronormative narratives in society (Ajzen, 2002). Through expressing attitudes implicitly or explicitly, attitudes and behaviors are linked to socially constructed ideas, legislation, and the perpetuation of a socially desired mindset surrounding sensitive social identity issues. I believe that implicit and explicit reactions are partially to blame for some of the legislative issues that have been placed on the ballot

in the last 4-5 years. The climate being created where LGB individuals are being targeted and ostracized has made it difficult for anyone to stand up in the face adversity against injustices being done. The socially desired and constructed society that has been created makes it difficult for people, even those personally connected to someone who identifies as LGB to speak up and ask for acceptance. Such formidable walls have caused people subconsciously to act out their attitudes both implicitly and explicitly to protect themselves from ridicule publicly, but be supportive in private or in safe environments. Theories of implicit and explicit attitude reactions offer one explanation of the current climate surrounding issues related to the LGB community. Many people who may be supportive of LGB issues are more likely to provide a more explicit reaction in line with society and the community they live in so they feel more protected and accepted within their lived experiences, and suppress their implicit reactions of support for LGB individuals out of fear of rejection. To further explore attitude reactions and the formation of prejudicial attitudes I will review two foundational frameworks. One framework is Allport's Social Psychological Approaches to Prejudice that preceded the second framework to be reviewed, Herek's Functional Approach Theory. Each theory examines the formation of prejudicial attitudes in relation to in- and out-group membership, values and norms that continue to be the central component to understanding the current climate of homophobia and related acts of discrimination, oppression and even violence.

Allport's Social Psychological Approaches to Prejudice

Allport's (1979) work on prejudice is often cited as a foundational understanding to prejudice, specifically related to race/ethnicity group membership. Allport's work suggests that there are six approaches to understanding the causes of prejudice. Each

approach examines prejudice separately, however many of these approaches act in

tandem with one another to provide a more well-rounded, in-depth understanding to the

complexities that are known and yet to be known about prejudice (Allport, 1979). In this

section, I explain the first three approaches (historical, socio-cultural, situational)

separately, followed by the final three approaches (phenomenological, stimulus object,

and psychodynamic) together. The last three are combined because these approaches

interact intimately based on how stereotypes, generalizations, and assumptions shape an

individual's belief system about a particular group, which in turn, then influences the

individual's prejudicial actions and behaviors. I will end this section connecting Allport's

work to other theorists who have built upon these approaches to examine other social

identities, such as sexuality.

The first approach emphasizes the role of historical events on the development of

prejudicial attitudes. This approach is sometimes referred to as the exploitation theory of

prejudice. Attitudes develop out of a broader social context that reinforces pre-conceived

notions of inferiority, which leads to the exploitation of groups based on class, race, or

gender. In this view, specific historical events, such as slavery and the failure of

reconstruction in the South post-civil war, can negatively impact attitudes toward a

particular social group. Many outcomes related to this approach reinforce historical

notions where groups were segregated and "otherized" based upon their physical

characteristics, caste status, and even location. Categorizing by class and other socially

constructed ideas, creates further stratification of exploited groups when discriminated

occurs based on visual cues (i.e., sexual orientation). This practice also laid foundational

groundwork for the group in power to create a "normative" behavior that would remain in

practice and be perpetuated through acceptable actions and sending messages to the 'Others' about their inferiority and outsider status.

The second of Allport's (1979) approaches emphasizes the use of socio-cultural factors to help explain group conflict and prejudice. For example, in our society we are ruled by an intricate system of business, government, and the need to live up to an ideal lifestyle that is constantly expressed as the way one needs to be in order to be considered successful. While we strive to have more material goods and to obtain status, the standards that are laid out as the "norm" create a standard of beliefs and attitudes that some individuals/groups will not be able to reach. This creation of the "norm" results in individuals manifesting behaviors and attitudes involving rejecting and looking down upon groups who are financially strapped and economically challenged for not "keeping up with trends." This is evident with regard to racial disparities, where Whites are typically viewed as having more access to resources and power in a range of situations over their Black counterparts. The socio-cultural approach combined with the historical approach, give rise to another theory, the "community pattern: theory of prejudice." Allport (1979, p. 212) suggests that this pattern emphasizes the development of ethnocentrism of one's group that can lead to the development of attitudes and beliefs about other groups based upon interactions and situations that each generation later adopts as a tradition or cultural truth.

The third approach to understanding the development of prejudice has a situational emphasis. Past patterns of interaction among groups of people and their community environment influence the attitude an individual develops (Allport, 1979). For example, a young girl who grew up in an all-White neighborhood listening to stories

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and attitudes of friends and family about people of color may end up reflecting all of those attitudes. This happens because she feels compelled to conform to the attitude norms that have been learned from her observations of her environment. Another example of how prejudice development takes place from a situational emphasis is in terms of competition for resources. Groups of people will create their own narratives about other groups in their community when faced with a shortage of resources. These learned attitudes of prejudice are mirror images and replications of what is seen and imitated in life. This can be seen in practice today in some expressed prejudicial attitudes and feelings about illegal immigrants in the United States. The situational emphasis is often found to interact with historical and socio-cultural approaches when attitudes of prejudice are developed based on this approach (Allport, 1979).

Allport (1979) suggests that with the last three approaches, members of out-groups are attacked because they are perceived as threatening, repulsive, or annoying. The phenomenological emphasis approach is the belief about a particular group that can be informed by a number of factors, including previous interactions or thoughts learned from the surrounding environment. For example, heterosexual men could have a "picture" of what gay men are like which informs their attitudes and beliefs. This "picture" could have been informed by previous conversations with other men, media influences, or messages that they have been reared to believe. Each factor plays a role in influencing the specific picture that informs an attitude. For the phenomenological approach there is often a combination with other approaches to provide full context to create a particular viewpoint. The stimulus object approach has a focus on an "earned reputation" (p. 217) that a group is assigned, based upon the generalizations and

stereotypes thrust upon them. For example, many groups of color have been assigned the reputation of being lazy and poor. This reputation has roots throughout the history of this country based upon specific events and legislation, such as red lining and slavery. These events contributed to the creation of unequal access to resources, resulting in generalizations and stereotypes about communities of color's abilities and potential to be successful. With the psychodynamic lens, there is an emphasis on the three types of principle causes of quarrel in the nature of man, these being: (1) economic advantage, (2) fear and defensiveness, and (3) desire for status (Allport, 1979). From this perspective, the in-group holds the majority of resources and power. This results in out-groups maintaining smaller portions of resources, thus looking for equality. According to the psychodynamic lens principles of the nature of man, this dynamic creates a situation where in-group members feel that when out-groups ask for equality, it is a threat and infringement upon in-group resources thus creating negative attitudes and behaviors between the two groups.

Research on understanding the many manifestations of social identity prejudice is imperative. Each of the approaches outlined by Allport (1979) is influential in understanding instances of prejudice about out-groups. In the 1980s, Herek adapted the work of Allport, mainly the ideas of the psychodynamic and stimulus object approaches, while drawing on the other approaches to begin his work on attitudes toward lesbians and gays through quantitative explorations of a Likert scale survey. Within his work, Herek continues to investigate the attitudes and behaviors toward lesbians and gays, leading to the outlining of a functional approach theory to posit a better understanding of attitudes toward lesbians and gays (Herek & Berrill, 1992). By focusing specifically on the

psychological functions related to prejudicial attitudes, specifically dealing with heterosexism, Herek explores the many ways in which prejudice manifests related to sexuality differences. While his focus may be classified as a psychological functions approach, it is evident through his theory that emphases of all six of Allport's approaches are tied to his theory of understanding prejudice of heterosexism. This is evident in that historical events, such as the Stonewall Riots and religious movements related to Christianity, play important roles in the way people may express their attitudes and behaviors about lesbians and gay men.

Herek's Functional Approach Theory

As of 2008, public opinion polls conducted by the Gallup (2010) organization approximate that 57% of the American population (up over the past years) believe homosexuality to be an acceptable lifestyle. However, instances of reported hate crimes against individuals with a non-heteronormative orientation have also continued to increase (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2008). Despite the continual increase of reported hate crimes, evidence of widespread understanding and acceptance for equal treatment of individuals with differing sexual orientations remains constant. Some of the increase in reported hate crimes is attributed to the more widespread acceptance as individuals feel more supported and validated by law enforcement. Respondents are more willing to show support when asked their opinion anonymously toward LGB people. Due to increasing fears of association and assumptions of perceived homosexuality, outward public support of respondents remains more invisible (Herek & Berrill, 1992). Furthermore, research continues to show that trends of support for LGB people vary

depending on region of the country, religious affiliation, career and workplace, and culture, all of which can influence feelings and attitudes.

Much like how racism and sexism manifest in societal customs and institutions and affect issues of race and sex nationwide, cultural heterosexism has rendered homosexuality invisible, and when it becomes visible, is then condemned by society (Herek & Berrill, 1992). As displayed in current polls (Gallup, 2010), Americans show a wide range of attitudes toward lesbians and gay men individually, socially, and institutionally. While 89% of the polled population in 2008 believes that LGB people should be given equal treatment in their jobs and at work, 57% of the polled population in 2008 believes that marriage and other institutional rights should remain exclusive to heterosexuals (Gallup, 2010). With such differing opinions, evaluating how situational and psychological factors affect attitudes and behaviors of heterosexual individuals may lead to understanding how different psychological functions are affected for different people. In his empirical research, Herek (1988) used a perspective previously employed by researchers looking at Whites' attitudes toward Blacks. His functional approach to attitudes began with the question: "Why do some heterosexuals feel strongly hostile toward gay people while others are tolerant or accepting in their attitudes?" In this approach, the major assumption is that people hold and express particular attitudes because they get some sort of psychological benefit from doing so. According to this approach, two people can have very different motivations for expressing what appears to be the same attitude. Herek (1988) studied 205 heterosexual college students and found a few principle psychological functions underlying the students' attitudes using this approach.

The first psychological function is *experiential*. Attitudes serving this function allowed students to make sense of their previous interactions with LGB people. From this stand point, individuals who had a pleasant first encounter with a LGB person generalized subsequent interactions and experiences to be the same. While others who reported negative first experiences, would generalize their attitudes to be the same with future encounters (Herek & Berrill, 1992). Whether positive or negative, experiential attitudes provide the opportunity for individuals to make sense of past events and fit them into a larger perspective, based upon their own personal interest.

According to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, the estimates are 8.8 million (4.1%) gay, lesbian and bisexual persons in the US based on the 2005-2006 American Community Survey (Gates, 2006). This number is subjective due to a number of factors related to the study, from fear of identifying with a particular orientation or how a participant may define what is 'gay' (Gates, 2006). Gallup polls (Morales, 2009) suggests that more people based upon ideology of liberal, moderate or conservative know someone who is gay or lesbian (71%, 58%, and 55% respectively). These numbers may be impacted by the reality that some individuals perceive the sexuality of others, rather than actually being told by someone who self-identifies, based upon social clues and assumptions, thus the figures may be a misrepresentation.

Because the number of LGB people who are out fluctuates from region to region, most attitudes that heterosexual people formulate about them are based on non-human interactions. Media and second hand stories play a role in creating attitudes about LGB people or individuals who subscribe to the *anticipatory* function. In this second function, much like the experiential function, individuals try to understand their greater

community, and even their world, and by developing their own coping mechanisms to protect themselves from negative experiences (Herek & Berrill, 1992). The one main difference between these two functions is that the anticipatory function is not based on a past experience with LGB people, but rather on a future interaction. People try to raise their own self-esteem by expressing themselves in ways that help others see what type of person they are and distancing themselves from people they are not or who they do not want to be associated with. This type of behavior is prevalent particularly among instances of violent outbursts toward LGB people by individuals who are trying to prove themselves to their acquaintances that they are "good, moral" people defined by cultural heterosexism.

The *social identity* function is made up of two interrelated components and is identified as the third function. The first component is the *value-expressive* function. In this function, individuals affirm their belief in and adherence to important values that are closely related to their self-concepts (Herek & Berrill, 1992). Within this function it is important for people to continually follow their values and fundamental perceptions about themselves. When a person feels that they are open-minded, and that everyone is "entitled" to their own personal lives so long as they do not harm or oppress others, they are more apt within the value expressive function to support LGB or others who align with their values. This function also encompasses individuals who hold positive or negative attitudes about homosexuality based upon religious beliefs. Partially because their religious faith is important to them and upholds their values, they tend to agree with and portray attitudes and behaviors expressed by their religion.

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The second component of the social identity function is the *social expression* function. With this function, expressing an attitude strengthens one's sense of belonging to a particular group and helps an individual to gain acceptance, approval, or love from other people whom they consider important (Herek & Berrill, 1992). For example, if attitudes toward gays and lesbians are negative, an individual will display hostile attitudes to cement their place as a member of the in-group, who can be trusted and should be accepted, and vice versa, when attitudes are positive by the group, individuals will display positive and accepting attitudes to remain in good favor with the in-group. Either way, the attitudes being expressed are done so for the sole purpose of feeling "better" about themselves and increasing their self-esteem, thus their need to seek approval and acceptance by the in-group (Herek & Berrill, 1992).

The fourth and last attitude function, *ego-defensive*, is characterized by treating lesbians and gays as symbols. Defensive attitudes lower a person's anxiety resulting from their unconscious psychological conflicts. For example, a heterosexual who expresses anti-gay prejudice may do so out of fear that they themselves are latently a gay male or lesbian (Herek & Berrill, 1992). This has become a more widely used explanation for prejudice in recent years, as men and women who may express more effeminate or masculine traits respectively, feel that by rejecting gay people externally substitutes for their internal sexuality conflict (Herek & Berrill, 1992). Thus, when attitudes and behaviors rejecting gay men and lesbians are exhibited in front of peers and families, not only are individuals proving their sexuality but also their own personal victory over their own gender and sexuality confusion (Herek & Berrill, 1992).

Value expressive, social expressive, and ego-defensive functions all share the idea that anti-gay prejudice helps individuals define who they are by directing hostility toward gay people as a symbol of what they are not (Herek & Berrill, 1992). The experiential and anticipatory functions are more indicative of how prior interaction or the absence of interaction will inform their future interaction with lesbians and gay men. Each function serves its own purpose; however, the outcomes of each function can be categorized into two larger attitude function areas (See Appendix A).

Herek's (Herek & Berrill, 1992) work as a foundational framework based on his research with college students, offers a starting point to begin understanding heterosexism from a psychological perspective. Furthermore, Herek's research has been situated in the college environment. While many studies have broken the barrier into research on homosexuality, often researchers have focused on adults and general members of society, rather than focusing on the college student population. It is for this reason and the connections to Allport's initial prejudice work that Herek's functional approach theory is reviewed as a theoretical framework for this study. Combining an understanding of social psychological literature on attitudes and behaviors with a focus on college students offers the opportunity to examine, compare, and analyze prejudice and heterosexism from different social identity lens.

Herek's (Herek & Berrill, 1992) exploration of prejudice and heterosexism among undergraduate students presents an opportunity for future educators and researchers to continue looking at ways in which attitudes are shaped and developed in this population. By confronting such complex attitudes and presenting diversity through education, college students are more likely than their same-age counterparts not in college, to think

actively and make informed decisions about their future commitments (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). By offering the chance to explore diversity in such an environment where interactions with diverse peers take place and the opportunities to engage about difference occur, there is a chance that attitudes toward a particular out-group may be affected positively (Enberg et al., 2007). This concept has been researched more recently and is referred to as prejudice reduction. In the next section, I will briefly explore prejudice reduction and its influence on attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals.

Prejudice Reduction

Prejudice reduction is a multifaceted process through which an individual identifies, evaluates, and shifts his learned attitudes about a particular item, person, or group of people (Stephan & Stephan, 2001). This process involves identifying and exploring ways in which prejudice can be reduced and discovering factors that are associated with such a transition in attitude based upon Allport's work. Theories of prejudice reduction are not simple, nor can they be regulated to a specified amount of time to be accomplished. An individual's attitudes have such a sordid, deep-rooted history that prejudice reduction work takes an extended period of time to untangle (Stephan & Stephan, 2001). When a person wishes to change her personal prejudicial attitudes, there are a number of processes through which she can begin to make meaning of her attitudes and shift them to more positive perspectives. Some of these processes involve making value-behavior discrepancies explicit, reducing threat, increasing perceptions of similarities among groups, creating subordinate groups, decategorizing by emphasizing multiple identities, reinforcing and modeling positive behaviors, modifying

associations between cognition and affect, using dissonance to create attitude change, creating empathy, and correcting misattributions (Stephan & Stephan, 2001). Brewer (2000), Dovidio, Kawakami & Gaertner (2000), Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002), Oskamp (2000), Stephan and Stephan (2001), and many other theorists have spent years researching how each process works toward combating prejudicial attitudes. In addition, it is suggested that each of these processes be viewed as working in tandem with one another.

Each of the processes involved in prejudice reduction has its basis in Allport's 1954 contact hypothesis theory, which stated in order for intergroup contact to lead to reduced prejudice, four conditions must be present: (1) hold equal status between the groups, (2) share common goals, (3) be no competition between groups, and (4) authorize sanction for the contact. Since 1954, other factors have been proposed—some situational, such as intimacy, and some individual, such as low authoritarianism—which serve to complicate the theory by adding to the number of specifications that must be followed (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, p. 94). If too many specifications are added, it becomes increasingly unlikely that any situations can meet the conditions in order for prejudice reduction to be successful (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). Pettigrew and Tropp conducted a meta-analysis that consisted of 203 individual studies with over 700 separate tests, involving a total of 90,000 subjects. Previous reviews of literature on the contact hypothesis have reached sharply conflicting conclusions—either in support of the hypothesis or mixed or contrary to the hypothesis. Through this vast meta-analysis spanning several disciplines, Pettigrew and Tropp intended to present a more thorough evaluative perspective on research about intergroup contact. Their analysis found that

based on the relationship between contact and prejudice, participants' contact had a positive impact on their attitudes. In this analysis, intergroup contact was defined as actual face-to-face interaction between members of clearly distinguishable and defined groups based along social identities such as race and gender. Furthermore, their meta-analysis found that prejudice-reducing effects can be generalized across situations and to different out-groups than the one they initially came into contact with. This outcome means that successful contact with members of one out-group can extend to a greater tolerance of and willingness to interact with other groups (Oskamp, 2000).

Work continues to be done on reducing prejudice based on group membership; one of these theories has been identified as social categorization and identity. Social categorization is similar to other concepts of prejudice reduction, such as common in-group identity and cross categorization (Brewer, 2000). Members of out- and in-groups interact with one another and as a result become aware of multiple, cross-cutting group memberships. This is done in order to produce more intimate relationships and understanding of other people, ultimately breaking down the "myths" that separate people based on generalizations (Brewer, 2000; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2000). For example, lesbian, gay men, and bisexual college students may be asked to interact with a group of heteronormative college students with negative attitudes, where both groups of students share personal information about their families, details of their lives, dealing with college finance issues, maybe even general family problems, or specifics related to their other social identities they may share with others in the room. By divulging this information, college students may discover how much they have in common and realize that there are fewer differences among them, thus leading to a possible change in attitude.

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Research on prejudice reduction has remained focused on college-aged students because college environments create an atmosphere where opportunities for interaction and learning takes place on a daily basis (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999). Putting together a group of people that have a number of differences creates unique situations that provide the chance to learn about different experiences from multiple social identities lenses. In addition to intergroup contact, colleges and universities also offer a number of diversity initiatives for students to learn and understand about differences in the form of speakers, programs, and classes. Educational interventions are another way to reduce bias and develop positive intergroup attitudes (Engberg et al., 2007). Based on the conceptual model for studying LGB attitude change, Dovido addresses the cognitive and affective process involved in linking educational intervention to the reduction of bias (Engberg et al., 2007). In general, cognitive processes influence how students conceive, know about, and interpret their relations with others. While affective processes relate to the extent to which different interventions help students develop empathic connections with diverse others while reducing their level of anxiety (an identified dominant factor in intergroup bias). Thus, as students are able to think more about multiple social identities and reduce discomfort about difference, an increase in openness and cooperation among diverse groups and appraisal of others will offer opportunities for reduction of prejudice.

Two longitudinal studies are of note. Kardia (1996) conducted a triangulated study that consisted of both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the survey and interview data respectively. The context of her research was part of a larger university project of student attitudes and experiences known as The Michigan Study. For the

survey sample there were a total of 1,041 respondents and 7 participants for the interview, all from the same cohort of the longitudinal study. This research included five major findings about the impact of college on attitudes toward sexual diversity. First, college provides new opportunities for students to understand and appreciate diversity. Through these opportunities, a majority of students become significantly more accepting of sexual diversity by their fourth year. In addition, women enter with and increase their acceptance more than their male counterparts. Second, contact with lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals is pivotal for attitude change of students. Through casual acquaintances and classmates, a reexamination of prior stereotypes and assumptions often takes place. Third, students' capacity for tolerance and openness to difference is increased based upon their own learning and development through their college experiences. Fourth, classroom and campus programs with attention to sexual diversity establish norms of respect and thoughtful consideration. These opportunities often provide the chance for students to gain positive visibility and accurate information regarding LGB individuals. Lastly, fraternities and student religious groups were most notable on campuses for discouraging acceptance of sexual diversity and less likely to have positive attitudes. Each of these findings outlines possible factors that either influence negative attitudes to persist or to encourage the process of prejudice reduction related to sexual diversity.

The other study, conducted by Engberg et al. (2007), is a quantitative study that reported attitudes of students toward LGB students entering college and again two years into college. Enberg et al. (2007) reported that for entry level attitudes, female (rather than male) students held positive attitudes, and those from higher socio-economic status

backgrounds and higher standardized test scores also had higher levels of acceptance for LGB people. On the other hand, students with religious participation had negative attitudes toward LGB individuals, and racial identification in this study, had no direct effect on attitudes. Evaluating students' attitudes after two years of college, Engberg et al. (2007) found that attitudes remained unchanged when religious and gender factors remained constant. In addition, those students who had interactions with LGB students produced positive attitudinal changes (including diversity courses and informal interactions).

Prejudice reduction requires an individual to identify and understand their negative attitudes about other social groups (Oskamp, 2000). By establishing what the initial attitudes are, researchers are able to identify what course of action may be the most beneficial in reducing the prejudice present in the situation. Assessing such attitudes can be problematic, as not everyone manifests attitudes in the same way, nor do they present the same attitudes in every similar situation. For example, an individual faced with expressing his attitudes about lesbians, gay men, or bisexuals may have more positive feelings in one environment, but when confronted in unfamiliar territory or surrounded by others may present another type of attitude. This shift in attitude illustrates how varied our attitudes are and how they are influenced by situation and environment.

Discussion and Summary

One theme that stands out from reviewing the literature on prejudice is that its causes are varied and complex. This is illustrated when looking solely at the effects of implicit and explicit attitude reactions. When reviewing prejudice, it is clear that the implicit attitude reaction may be a prejudicial negative representation about another

group based on a particular out-group quality. Implicit attitude reaction recognition provides individuals an opportunity to identify this attitude and engage in conversations with others about such beliefs and attitudes. However, the need to understand explicit attitude reactions remains ever present as explicit reactions can pose conflict with implicit attitudes. A larger problem becomes present, because one is never sure of the true intentions behind the attitudes of another individual, potentially obstructing someone's ability to recognize and identify a particular attitude to engage in conversation that will be socially acceptable. On the other hand, the complexity of studying prejudice presents another issue. This issue relates to the socio-cultural factors and influence of socially constructed ideas about in- and out-group behaviors and attitudes. The attitudes of the in-group become normalized in society, creating a "standard" that people internalize and perpetuate.

     As illustrated by this brief review of Allport's (1979) and Herek's (Herek & Berrill, 1992) theories of prejudice, the main focus and also a limitation is on race/ethnicity binary of Black and White, and has yet to explore the impact that intersections of multiple social identities poses. However, using Allport's contact theory to begin exploring prejudice from a LGB identity perspective, it is apparent that an "earned reputation" has been assigned to this community from a societal perspective that allows legislative, social/cultural, and individual oppression to persist and be socially acceptable. The earned reputation assigned to LGB people includes, but is not limited to, ideas about promiscuous behaviors, societal threats to the defined nuclear family, religious perspectives of sin, and in some communities a propensity to commit crimes against children (Cohen, 1996; Herek & Berrill, 1992). This is evident through incidents

of violent attacks, assassinations, police brutality, and laws that limit access to certain civil rights that result from a fear of feeling threatened by those who identify with the LGB community. Herek, on the other hand, explicitly explores attitudes toward gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals built upon the initial work of Allport, offering a more detailed insight into the manifestations and perpetuation of prejudicial attitudes toward this specific out-group population. Using college students as a basis for his research, Herek was able to identify factors and functional approaches that influenced the negative attitudes that are present for college students when it came to the LGB community.

College communities are one place in which the attitudes explored by Herek may be impacted and changed. Theoretically, certain conditions have been identified by Allport and others that lead to reduced intergroup prejudice. While these conditions cannot always be met, the ultimate goal is to create an opportunity for contact and interaction between members of out- and in-groups where a sharing of ideas may occur. Research has indicated that college experiences with a focus on diversity tend to have a chance for students to gain exposure to diverse groups as well as opportunities for intergroup contact that could lead to attitude change (Enberg et al., 2007). Education remains an integral part of combating issues of injustice and is included at all levels of prejudice reduction. Due to the influence of such education and my own personal interest, in the next section, I provide a review of some of the literature on negative attitudes of college students and the factors that influence them.

Attitudes of College Students toward Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals

Recent Gallup polls suggest there is a growing acceptance of lesbian, gay men, and bisexuals in the US, though other polls reveal that there is a large segment of the

population who do not hold such beliefs (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Smith & Gordon, 2005). It is evident through the data gathered that there are still cultural cues and beliefs being internalized that continue to support the inherent system of oppression (heterosexism; homophobia) present for the LGB community (Kite & Whitley, 1998). For this reason a sizeable number of researchers have expanded their attention from the LGB experience to include the examination of prejudicial attitudes of heterosexual identified individuals toward lesbian, gay male, and bisexual college students (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Engberg et al., 2007; Jenkins et al., 2009; Kardia, 1996; Lance, 2002; Mitchell, 2006; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Pettijohn & Walzer, 2008; Reed, 2002; Schellenberg et al., 1999; Whitley, 2001).

Homophobia, the fear and hatred of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, continues to influence behaviors, beliefs and actions of prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and violence in all aspects of society from small communities to nationwide policy and 'norming' (Bullough, 2007). As Weinberg (1972) suggested, there are five motives behind the practices of homophobia: 1) religious affiliation, 2) secret fear of being discovered, 3) repressed envy of heterosexuals who may have to live up to ideas of what it means to be a man or woman, 4) threat to values held by society that could become obsolete if people decided they wanted a different set of values, and 5) lack of understanding between people not having children and leaving a legacy thus going against purpose, principle, and value "norms." Motives suggested by Weinberg in 1972 are still applicable today, 40 years later, to justify how people explain their ability to accept homophobic practices. Weinberg's study also remains relevant when explaining why certain practices of verbal and physical abuse of LGB individuals and laws altering

state and federal constitutions have become more socially acceptable. Within each of these motives behind homophobia there are factors that support homophobic attitudes and leads to the perpetuation of sexism, heterosexism, and ideas of masculinity and femininity or what it means to be a man or woman in society.

College students come from backgrounds and family values that may not align with supporting the idea of homosexuality (Bullough, 2007). For example, they have strong religious affiliations, or they were indoctrinated to believe that if you are gay or lesbian, you automatically do not want a family (because you cannot reproduce with a same sex partner) or gay men and lesbians do not subscribe to the same values, therefore students may feel their way of life being threatened. This is seen when college students discover they have a roommate who is a gay man or lesbian and they no longer want to room with them for homophobic stereotypical reasons, like the gay male or lesbian may develop a "crush" on them, or try to watch them while they change, to name a few. These are some of the homophobic attitudes and misperceptions of college students (and the general population) that serves to reinforce and support the efforts of researchers to explore this phenomenon. Later in the chapter, I will introduce themes that will include but are not limited to sex, gender roles, masculinity, and race. These themes are not exclusive of other factors and influences that may also be responsible for influencing attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. Furthermore, breaking these influences down individually does not account for the intersections that are present and play out among these factors.

Though the amount of research conducted on Black college students is nowhere near as extensive as that on their White counterparts and does not always include a focus

on college students specifically, a foundation has been created that begins to explore the attitudes of Black college students toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (Clarke, 1995; Cohen, 1996; Collins, 2005; C. Harris, 1988; W. Harris, 2003; Jenkins et al., 2009; Lemelle & Battle, 2004; Wall & Washington, 1992). Current research suggests that Blacks generally have a greater number of negative attitudes than positive attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Davis & Smith, 2009; Green & Boyd-Franklin, 1996; Jenkins et al., 2009; Lewis, 2003; Lociacano, 1989; Loftus, 2001; Schulte & Battle, 2004). Studies focusing on other factors (i.e. gender, class, etc.) that are held constant in relationship to racial identity will be addressed separately and in more detail later. Many members of the Black community (including college students) continue to believe the myth that homosexuality is solely an issue for White communities and individuals who may not fit the traditional roles of sexuality and gender expression (Collins, 2005; Mitchell, 2000; Patron, 2000; Reid-Pharr & Rogers-Cooper, 2006).

Furthermore, heterosexual Black people think that Black people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual are turning their backs on the Black community because they actively make the decision to embrace their feelings of homosexuality (Collins, 2005; Mitchell, 2000). Much like in larger society, anti-gay sentiment has become part of the Black community foundation specifically in religion, media, parental influence, family structure, and more, resulting in many gay men engaging in unsafe practices. Some men go so far as to lead double lives[3], which is prevalent among college-aged men trying to mask their same sex attractions (Boykin, 1996, 2005; E. Brown, 2005; W. Harris 2003;

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[3] Double life is a term associated with men who present themselves as heterosexual publicly but engage with other men sexually in private. This behavior has in the last decade been brought to public attention by the phrase "being on the Down Low (DL)" (Boykin, 2005; W. Harris, 2003; King, 2004).

Herek & Capitanio, 1995; King 2004; Lewis, 2003; Ward, 2005). Students enter college

with the knowledge that they have acquired in their previous environments, flocking to

communities where they feel comfortable and replicating attitudes and behaviors they are

familiar with (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Therefore, homophobic attitudes learned

from religion, media, and familial communities may become prevalent at college and

result in an inability to accept and understand issues involving homosexuality.

Combining this foundational literature with current research on attitudes of college

students toward LGB individuals will provide the initial framework to examine the

perceptions of Black college students (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; D'Augelli & Rose,

1990; Lance, 2002; Mitchell, 2006; Negy & Eisenman, 2005; Pettijohn & Walzer, 2008;

Reed, 2002; Schellenberg et al., 1999; Whitley, 2001).

     In the upcoming sections, I will present a review of studies and sociological

literature on attitudes of college students toward LGB people, based upon previously

mentioned influential social and personal demographic factors. I will offer data on Black

and White college students in order to provide a foundational understanding for the need

and purpose of this study.

Sociological and Demographic Factors Influencing Attitudes of College Students toward Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals

     The prejudice reduction studies reviewed earlier highlight the influence of social

and personal demographic factors on the ability of individuals to reduce their prejudicial

thoughts toward homosexuality on college campuses. Factors including participation in

diversity initiatives and certain student groups on campus offers the opportunity for

students to explore their attitudes, thoughts and feelings about homosexuality effectively

in an environment conducive to engaging others around areas of difference, chances for

self-reflection and the ability to challenge their own biases and beliefs. Opportunities to examine from the perspective of social and personal demographic factors (including but not limited to race, sex, gender roles, and religion) provide college students with the space and chance to evaluate their attitudes, feelings, thoughts, opinions and perceptions toward LGB students. In the studies that follow social and personal demographic factors are utilized in collaboration with the factor of race to begin to identify the Black college student perspective.

Lewis (2003) conducted a meta analysis study of 31 national surveys from 1973-2002 to determine whether Black and Whites differ in attitudes toward homosexual relations, civil liberties and gay employment rights. In many of these studies, racial differences are based on samples of small numbers of Black participants and not specifically college students (Lewis, 2003). By not intentionallyfocusing on the factor of race, appropriate sample sizes may not have been obtained and topics of the instrument/interconnectivity of other social and demographic social identities and factors may not be applicable to the Black community and participants in the study. Insights into the attitudes of Black college students continue to grow with each of these studies conducted. As Lewis (2003) illustrates in his meta-analysis some of the studies offer differing opinions on the differences of Black and White attitudes toward LGB individuals, as well as differing opinions on the impact of social and personal demographic factors (i.e. religion). Jenkins et al. (2009) found in their study that religion affected attitudes of Black college students both positively and negatively, based on the intersections of other social and personal demographic factors such as gender, class or education level, in addition to the changing climate around social issues on college

campuses. The participants of the Jenkins et al. study were solely college students which could be another possible contributing factor to the difference in the reporting attitudes of the Black students versus those from previous studies. According to the research presented on prejudice reduction, college environments provide more opportunities for students to interact across differences and develop more tolerant views and attitudes (Kardia, 1996).

Discussing social and personal demographic factors: sex, gender, religion, class, education, and age on attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals of college students, provides the opportunity to examine how these factors impact attitudes of Whites and other communities of color both differently and similarly. There are notable differences that exist between these communities that are evident within society based upon the impact of certain social and personal demographic factors including but not limited to region of the country, parental influence, family structure and more. It is not feasible to account for all possible social and demographic influences on opinions and perceptions. Secondly, social and personal demographic factors are not exclusive of one another and the influence exerted on opinions and perceptions are shaped by the intersection of social identities and circumstances at any given point in time. Therefore, this review of studies and sociological literature will center on the perspectives of Black college students where applicable and include research, studies and literature on the greater Black community population, which includes the perspective from a wide age range including that of the traditional college age student (C. Harris, 1988, Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Loiacano, 1989).

Biological Sex Influences on Attitudes toward LGB

Most of the current research related to the impact of biological sex on attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, stems from the Attitude Toward Lesbians and Gay Scale (ATLGS) developed by Herek in 1984 (Schroder, 2004). Herek developed a 20-item scale that included 10 items regarding attitudes toward lesbians and another 10 toward gay men, using a 9-point, Likert-type scale with anchors of strongly disagree and strongly agree. The ATLGS has demonstrated reliability and validity and has been used on numerous occasions to assess the climate for lesbians and gay men in a number of environments, mainly college and university campuses (Smith & Gordon, 2005). This quantitative analysis tool produced some of the earliest data on attitudes toward gays and lesbians, providing a framework for evaluating and accounting for differences based on biological sex of respondents. Herek (1988) found that men have more negative attitudes than women.

Jenkins et al. (2009) conducted a survey using a nonrandom convenience sampling design involving 20 academic courses at a public Midwestern university of 551 Black and White respondents (19% and 81% respectively) who took an 18-item survey covering attitudes toward gays and lesbians and homosexuality. Results from the study suggest that male respondents were significantly more negative in their views of gay and lesbian persons, were less willing to extend rights to gays and were less willing to socialize with gay people than women (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Jenkins et al., 2009; Schellenberg et al., 1999). Other studies reveal that acceptance of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals also vary as a function of gender identification (E. Brown, 2005; Whitley, 2001). For example, the attitude of a female is usually negative toward lesbians who do not align their gender with their biological sex (transgender). This may be women that do

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not conform to the stereotypes of traditional standards for women (i.e. make-up, hair style, clothing, speech patterns, etc.) (E. Brown, 2005). Attitudes of heterosexual men toward gay men is reported to be the most negative, more so than heterosexual men toward lesbians, heterosexual women toward gay men and heterosexual women toward lesbians (Herek, 1988, 2000, 2004; Kite & Whitley, 1998; Schellenberg et al., 1999). Furthermore, studies suggest that negative attitudes are influenced by social constructions of traditional gender roles, gender expression, sexual role attitudes, and masculinity (E. Brown, 2005; Herek, 1988; Whitley, 2001). The next section will examine gender roles and masculinity as influencing social and personal demographic factors on negative attitudes in further detail.

Gender Roles and Masculinity Influences on Attitudes toward LGB

Men and women are socialized according to messages they receive about what it means to be a man or woman in society (Harro, 2000). These socialized roles create a template for what men and women subscribe to consciously and subconsciously, reinforcing ideas that have become widely accepted as traditional roles for men and women (E. Brown, 2005). For example, men tend to be reared to feel the need to be in more dominant roles and professionally follow more traditionally male dominated fields of study like science, engineering, and business, whereas women are often encouraged to be more submissive and are often tracked into more liberal arts field of studies (i.e., education) or be expected to fill the role of caretaker in the home (Kite & Whitley, 1998; Pehna-Lopes, 2006; Whitley, 2001).

These socialized behaviors are a part of the heterosexual gender belief system (heterosexism) perspective that is common in Bern's gender schema theory (Whitley,

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2001). According to this theory, individuals who are highly gender schematic have strong

gender-role identification, leading them to strongly align with roles that are gender

conforming. An aspect of the gender role belief system is that some people typically

associate homosexuality with a violation of male role norms and not of female norms.

For example, men should be masculine, strong, and be attracted to women only, while

women are able to transcend some of the traditional women roles of housework and even

engage in same-sex actions as long as it remains for the male benefit. This association

leads to a belief that homosexuality is more about gay men than about lesbians (Herek,

1988; Lemelle & Battle, 2004; McCready, 2004; Whitley, 2001). Thus, anyone who may

challenge the normalcy of male and female gender roles becomes a focal point of

negative attitudes for people who believe and live by societal established 'norms' of

behavior for men and women (McCready, 2004). Whitley (1987) suggests that gender

role beliefs are closely linked to attitudes toward homosexuality, for lesbians and gay

men, in that the more LGB individuals conform to the prescribed gender role associated

with their biological sex, the more accepted they will be by peers and society.

For men, this takes shape in the perpetuation of masculinity (Theodore & Basow,

2000). Masculinity is a set of socio-cultural cues and beliefs that men must perpetuate

and live up to in order to maintain a male dominated society (sexism) and prove their

manhood (Black & Stevenson, 1984; Kimmel, 1997; Herek, 2004; Lemelle & Battle,

2004; Theodore & Basow, 2000). Among Black men specifically, masculinity tends to

focus on hyper-masculinity and athletic ability which influences messages within the

community around familial responsibilities, community structure, definitions of respect,

ultimately perpetuating the idea that there are specific characteristics and qualities to

adhere to in order to be considered a man (Collins, 2005). This plays out in how Black men interact with other Black men as well as women in the community, leading to sociological impacts on family structures, fathering children and the need to be viewed as tough. Which, in turn, contribute to the creation of homophobic attitudes and behaviors among young men, who are trying to live up to masculine defined characteristics, constructing the view as to what is acceptable male behavior (E. Brown, 2005; Kimmel, 1997; Loiacano, 1989; McBride, 2005; Negy & Eisenman, 2005). Therefore anyone who does not fit the 'prescribed guidelines' supported by hyper-masculinity are often treated and viewed as being less of a man or even gay, prone to face instances of discrimination (E. Brown, 2005). Male heterosexuals in this situation, tend to revert back to areas of hyper-masculinity as previously discussed or find another male to bully in order to 'prove' they are real men (E. Brown, 2005). Women heterosexuals typically find other activities or ways to interact with others or express themselves to ensure that people will not mistake them for a lesbian (Pharr, 1997), playing into the notion that LGB people or those perceived as such are threatening to the values of manhood and gay men specifically threaten the idea of patriarchal dominance (Davies, 2004; Pharr, 1997).

For members of the Black community, traditional gender roles and ideas of masculinity have taken shape throughout the course of history and continue to be perpetuated even today. Major sociological and historical events that impacted the development of roles for Black men and women include but are not limited to chattel slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and the United States government war on drugs (Clarke, 1995; Cohen, 1996; Collins, 2005; Ward, 2005; Western & Pettit, 2002). Each of these historical and sociological events shaped Black gender and sexual identities in the

Black community and society. The conditions of chattel slavery formed practices, actions and behaviors that shaped the messages related to sexuality, gender roles and promiscuity for Black people that continued for generations into today (Collins, 2005). The buying and selling of slaves, the control over their work, and the demoralizing atrocities that took place, all set a tone for the actions and behaviors that were expected of Black people. Slave owners forced practices of promiscuity upon slaves to build up their work force to till the land, in addition sold off and broke up families in order to maintain control thus influencing Black people to internalize a message of heterosexual practices of promiscuity (Collins, 2005). These messages continued to flourish and take shape throughout history for a majority of Black people.

In a fight for equal rights, against oppression based upon skin color in the United States, the Civil Rights Movement was spearheaded by ministers and congregations. Religion was already an influential factor in many Black families and many messages surrounding gender roles and masculinity that reinforced messages of family, responsibility and unification being communicated to the greater public. The Black church often used its platform to reinforce ideals and messages of what it meant to be faithful and condemn actions and behaviors of their members as a way to play into the societal norms of acceptable behaviors (Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2003; Douglas, 1999; Staples, 2006). Many behaviors revolved around promiscuity and homosexuality both of which implement an establishment of a heterosexually privileged society focused on raising families. Even after the Civil Rights Movement many Black churches continue to reinforce heterosexual and sexist ideals, by condemning teenage women for becoming pregnant out of wed-lock, without addressing the young men for their part, contributing

to the acceptance of Black male promiscuity and ultimately masculinity (Kimmel, 1997; Thomas, 1996). Another example of sexist messages in specific denominations is that women are not able to serve in leadership roles, their wardrobe is regulated and dictated as to what is acceptable and some congregations reinforce the notion of a woman's place in the family and her specific roles (Collins, 2005).

Another reinforcement of masculinity, sexuality and power dynamics is seen within the prison system. During the US war on drugs and continuing today, incarceration rates are on the rise with estimates of approximately 41% of inmates in 2008 of African or Black descent (Bureau of Justice Statistics, n.d.). Such a disproportionate percentage within the prison population in the US ultimately creates another Black community confined within prison walls across America. Within this community there are numerous instances of same sex practices as well as the recreation of a power structure among many prisoners that comes with benefits of having sexual partners (Schwartz, 2004).

The historical and societal events mentioned above play an influential role in the overall development for Black college students, consciously and unconsciously. Students are continually exploring their sense of self, while struggling to reconcile burgeoning beliefs and feelings with those they 'feel' obligated to embody because of familial, community and societal messages. To date, a gap in the literature persists on the correlations of gender roles and attitudes toward homosexuality, and more specifically on the attitudes of Blacks. The data gathered, from the broader Black community population and not just college students, suggests that Black men tend to have more negative attitudes toward gay men than Black women who tend to be more accepting of gay men

(Herek, 1988; Lemelle & Battle, 2004). Data supports the need to challenge socialized gender roles and beliefs in order to address the negative attitudes permeating society (E. Brown, 2005). The Black college students in Jenkins et al., (2009), identified no difference between the attitudes of men and women with regard to homosexuality. One possible explanation for this is Black college students enrolling in institutions of higher education begin to challenge attitudes of traditional gender roles. This is because they are taking part in diversity initiatives and engaging in dialogue with other college students around difference, formally and informally. The shift in perspective could result in more positive views of gay men and lesbians. There is not enough data on gender role influence on attitudes of Black college students toward homosexuality; therefore, this presents a gap in the literature that could be addressed for future consideration. Traditional gender roles typically correlate positively to more conservative perspectives like religion and politics (Jenkins et al., 2009); therefore, the next section of this paper will examine the influence of religion as a social and demographic factor influence on attitudes toward homosexuality.

Religion Influences on Attitudes toward LGB

Religion is viewed as a major influence across cultural lines and frequently presents a divide among participants when asked about their attitudes and beliefs toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (Schulte & Battle, 2004; Sullivan, 2003; Ward, 2005). Some conservative religions are often connected to strong beliefs that typically reinforce homophobic values. According to the General Social Survey (GSS), there is a correlation between religious attendance and negative attitudes, thoughts, and feelings about sexual orientation among those in the Black community (Davis & Smith, 2009; Green & Boyd-

Franklin, 1996; Helminiak, 2008; Schulte & Battle, 2004). This is usually because

churches tend to view homosexuality as a sin and an abomination by God, regardless of

whether individuals identify with any denomination of Christianity or the Muslim faith;

thus, lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals are often stigmatized (Bleich & Taylor-Clark,

2005; Duran, 1993; Jamal, 2001; Miller, 2007). The Black community is the most highly

"churched" community in the United States (Fullilove & Fullilove, 1999). Meaning they

attend services frequently, and the church is often the center of activity for the

community (Bleich & Taylor-Clark, 2005; Staples, 2006; Sullivan, 2003). The intimate

relationship between religious leaders, faith-based institutions, and a national movement

for equality (e.g., Civil Rights) demonstrates the importance and influence of the Black

church within the Black community (Ward, 2005). Collins (2005) states that many

churches support the Bible's stance on homosexuality by insisting that it causes the

following: (1) the loss of male role models as a consequence of the breakdown of the

Black family structure, trends that in turn foster weak men, some of whom turn to

homosexuality; (2) a loss of traditional religious values encourage homosexuality among

those who have turned away from the church; (3) emasculation of Black men by White

oppression; and (4) a sinister plot by White racists as a form of population genocide,

suggesting that Black men and lesbians cannot have children. Johnson (2001) suggests

that faith and religion play a pivotal role in the lives of many Black people and is very

influential in the actions of young people as they strive for educational endeavors.

Therefore, the influence of the Black church on Black college students results in the

perpetuation of socially constructed ideas of masculinity and homophobia (Green &

Boyd-Franklin, 1996; Ward, 2005). Young men reared in the church hear specific

messages about becoming a man and fulfilling the role of what it means to be a good

husband, father, and the bread winner (I. Harris, Torres, & Allender, 1994, Schulte,

2002). Young women are reared to raise families, support men physically, emotionally,

sometimes financially, and ultimately be a care giver (Anderson, 1995; Penha-Lopes,

2006). These messages play into the gender role constructions previously mentioned that

lead to a predominately heteronormative perspective and can impact the development of

lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals as they begin to discover their same-sex feelings and

attractions (E. Brown, 2005).

Jenkins et al., (2009) suggests that Black college students rate the importance of

religion in their lives very high and attend religious services more frequently than White

students. This result however did not relate to Black students possessing more negative

attitudes than White students toward lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. This does not

correlate to prior studies done within the Black community (Herek & Capitanio, 1995;

Lewis, 2003; Ward, 2005). Lewis (2003) and Ward (2005) found that frequency of

religious attendance was linked to disapproval of homosexuality and less support for gay

rights. Jenkins et al., (2009) explain that being in college provides opportunities for

interaction and learning about people different from themselves, which could influence

positive or more favorable attitudes toward LGB individuals (Allport, 1979; Engberg et

al., 2007; Hurtado et al., 1999). However some studies present data that supports college

students (both Black and White) maintain negative attitudes about gays and lesbians

while in college (Dell & Mitchell, 1992; Schulte & Battle, 2004). Another explanation

could be the role of the church in the community and the types of messages being

delivered. Churches are taking on the role of protecting and serving the oppressed,

therefore some individuals today are more accepting of those being politically and socially discriminated against. Today more churches across multiple denominations are opening their doors to the LGB community and marketing themselves as affirming congregations (Tavernise, 2011). This contradiction presents a need for further inquiry to examine qualitatively the effect of religious attendance on attitudes of Black college students toward homosexuality. Furthermore, a frequent limitation in the research is the lack of acknowledging the plethora of denominations. Examination of the difference of attitudes among such denominations is warranted.

Pop Culture: Media, Music, Movies and Literature Influences on Attitudes toward LGB

The change in culture and influences of pop culture on today's society continues to drastically shift and increase from year to year. In previous years, the ability to observe LGB individuals, in movies, music media and literature, was rare. If an LGB individual was depicted in any of these forms, it was typically done stereotypically, over generalized, or completely inaccurate or offensive (Bonds-Raacke, Cady, Schlegel, Harris & Firebaugh, 2007). Today LGB people can be seen in major industries across the country, in very prominent roles as well as in supporting behind the scenes roles. Each of these instances offers the opportunity for heterosexuals to interact with members from the LGB in a productive and respectful way, effectively dispelling myths and increasing tolerance for LGB people (Jenkins et al., 2009). Media attention has also helped to increase the visibility of LGB individuals (i.e. Melissa Etheridge, Jane Lynch and Ricky Martin) and more positive attitudes of people, resulting in reporting hate crimes on LGB people, political issues such as marriage, adoption and civil rights (Bonds-Raacke et al., 2007). Music has been an area of challenge for acceptance for LGB people, and continues

to maintain a more homophobic message from some of the industry's top performers: Lil Wayne, Eminem, Buju Banton and many other hard core rappers and reggae performers continue to include homophobic, violent messages and lyrics in their music (Friedrichs, n.d.). Homophobic messages are with music genres beyond r&b, rap or hip-hop; there are popular country musicians who sing anti-gay and heteronormative messages as well (i.e. Big & Rich, Brad Praisley). The impact of today's music lyrics are far reaching as media continues to become easily accessible with the internet and other media platforms. Homophobic lyrics continue to perpetuate the hatred and acceptance of violence against lesbians and gay men, but also include messages of sexism and the degrading of women (Friedrichs, n.d.; Tatchell, 2002).

The influence of media on heterosexuals' attitudes toward LGB individuals remains important and vastly understudied, as LGB people remain targets of considerable prejudice manifested in a wide variety of behaviors from verbal attacks to violent physical attacks (Bonds-Raacke et al., 2007). As media continues to expand on the internet and information and news is so readily accessible more related research will likely follow.

Other Related Social and Personal Demographic Factors Influences on Attitudes toward LGB

The last three social and personal demographic factors presented in this section will be: education, age, and socioeconomic class—each of which have different influences, when studied in relation to attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. Though these social and personal demographic factors can be examined separately, factors of education and age are often interconnected. In addition, with the shift in cultural ideological beliefs of the younger generation, attitudes are becoming more

positive, which correlates with research suggesting that with more education, students will experience an increase in positive attitudes (Engberg et al., 2007; Jenkins et al., 2009; Kardia, 1996; Schroeder, 2004). In addition, increased levels of education in general tend to be predictive of relatively positive attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994; Schellenberg et al., 1999). College is often seen as the time in which students develop their personal social identities and come to an understanding of differences among individuals (Pascarella & Terezini, 2005). In addition, institutions of higher education often provide an atmosphere and interactions that present new information to challenge beliefs and values previously held by students before coming to college (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Enberg et al., 2007; Schellenberg et al., 1999). For Black college students, education has suggested contradictory findings in two separate studies (Jenkins et al., 2009). A contributing factor could be attributed to the communities and education systems that students attend. Some students may develop a specific attitude based upon their upbringing and the school they may have attended, while other Black students had access to an institution that offered classes on inclusion, tolerance and acceptance. There is a large discrepancy in the education system for all students, but when the factors of class and education intersect another layer of complexity emerges. This will be examined further later on. Age is often linked to homophobia, with older people generally having more negative views (Whitley, 1987). Age was not found to be a predictor of attitudes toward homosexuality. For many traditional college aged students there is up to a 5 year discrepancy in age, thus there is usually minimal impact on attitudes toward homosexuality.

The last social and personal demographic factor of socioeconomic class can be a rather difficult factor to disentangle from race and institutional structures that aid in widening the economic gap in America (Western & Pettit, 2002). In relation to views about homosexuality, Anderson and Fetner (2008) found that individuals in working-class occupations usually possess less tolerant attitudes than those with middle-class occupations. This is, in part, due to the access and competition for resources from multiple oppressed groups. Furthermore, in the US social class affects many social attitudes—including homosexuality—even after adjusting for the factor of education (Svallfor, 2006). Therefore, being in college may not always have a positive impact on or be a predictor of a specific attitude toward homosexuality. Black and Latino communities are more likely to be of working class status as a result of institutional practices and the perpetuation of socio-cultural oppressive ideals that results in higher rates of incarceration and unemployment (Western & Pettit, 2002). Therefore, if low and working-class communities typically have less tolerant attitudes toward LGB individuals, and Blacks and Latinos are more likely to be classified as low or working class, then it can be reasoned that these communities are potentially more likely to have negative attitudes, perceptions, opinions and thoughts about LGB people. For college students coming from these communities into college where people from many backgrounds have opportunities to interact, attitudes may still remain stagnant toward LGB individuals (Anderson & Fetner, 2008). Due to the complexity of the intersections of social identities and personal demographics, it is important that factors of class and education be explored in relation to religion and gender when exploring attitudes toward homosexuality. Overall, for Black college students, age (by itself) has a smaller impact and influence on

creating and influencing negative attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, while education and socioeconomic class have a larger impact (Anderson & Fetner, 2008; Schellenberg et al., 1999). This is indicated by the few studies that present an analysis of these social and personal demographic factors. Lack of research in this area presents a problem as the results from the small number of studies are used to generalize to a larger population. In addition, not all studies that included a Black sample, analyzed results for these specific social and personal demographic factors, thus leaving the intersections among these three social and personal demographic factors understudied. Therefore, this researcher feels that further inquiry is needed on these social and personal demographic factors' influence on attitudes of Black college students.

Impact on Institutional and Socio-cultural Structures and Concepts

College more than a non-college environment offers opportunities for students to enroll in diversity courses and to interact informally with LGB students. These opportunities produce overall positive attitudes and reduce prejudice (Engberg et al., 2007; Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Kardia, 1996; Pettijohn & Walzer, 2008; Schellenberg et al., 1999). College education remains one of the most important predictors of tolerance with relation to homosexuality specifically. Black college students are more likely to have positive attitudes toward homosexuality than those not enrolled in institutions of higher education, because the college environment and experience offers multiple opportunities to engage in dialogue around difference and attend programs (Engberg et al., 2007; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994). Each of the social and personal demographic factors introduced throughout this chapter do not operate independently and are not the only influence on attitudes toward LGB individuals. Intersections of social

and personal demographic factors influence both institutional and socio-cultural

structures and concepts that could persuade individuals to manifest behaviors and actions

that contribute to and perpetuate negative attitudes toward homosexuality. Some of the

socio-cultural concepts include but are not limited to the Down Low[4] (Boykin, 2005; W.

Harris, 2003; King, 2004) and the myth of homosexuality being exclusive to White

people (Collins, 2005; Greene, 2000; Mitchell, 2000; Reid-Pharr & Rogers-Cooper,

2006). Institutionally, negative attitudes about homosexuality influence how society

views and deals with health care and HIV/AIDs (Bleich & Taylor-Clark, 2005; Boykin,

2005; Cohen, 1996; Croteau, 1992; Jordan, 2007; Miller, 2007; Peterson & Jones, 2009;

Phillips, 2005), the misguided and unrealistic perceptions of homosexuality within the

prison system (Schwartz, 2004; Western & Pettit, 2002) and how socialized gender

roles—what it means to be a man (masculinity) or woman (femininity) - are perpetuated

in the family, church, and community (Anderson, 1995; Blumenfeld, 1992; E. Brown,

2005; Clark, 2005; Clarke, 1995; Cohen, 1996; Loiacano, 1989). Each of these structures

or concepts contributes to the perpetuation of a system of oppression based on

homophobia and heterosexism that informs individuals and society as a whole how to

view, interact with, and behave toward LGB people. For the purpose of this study, it is

necessary to acknowledge contributing factors that might inform and influence the impact

of the key social and personal demographic factors on attitudes toward homosexuality

and vice versa.

     For example, one of the myths that is prevalent in the Black community is that

homosexuality is for White people only (Collins, 2005). This attitude creates an

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[4] Being on the Down Low (DL) is defined as men who have the ability to pass as masculine, heterosexual
individuals, maintaining a heterosexual identity and associated privileges while continuing to secretly meet
their sexual needs and desires by having sex with men (Boykin, 2005; King, 2004).

atmosphere for Black LGB individuals to feel ostracized in their own communities. Blacks who "choose" to participate in same-sex practices are considered less authentically Black for engaging in allegedly "White" practices (Cohen, 1996; Collins, 2005). This creates a split between Black and gay communities that forces Black lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals to decide whether they are "Black gays" or "gay Blacks." Black gays and lesbians remain primarily active in the Black community and have mostly Black male/female friends and lovers, while gay Blacks, on the other hand, identify with the gay community and frequently date and socialize with Whites and remain more open about their sexuality (Pastrana & Battle, 2008; Reid-Pharr & Roger-Cooper, 2006). The myth of being gay is a white issue, dates back to the time of slavery and the exploitation of Black slaves as tools of procreation to create a stronger work force. These heterosexual acts forced upon and regulated by slave owners, created internalized messages limiting the opportunities for Blacks to consider a more fluid sexuality (Collins, 2005). This led Blacks to believe that their sexuality is heterosexual in nature and no other options existed thus resulting in a 'whitened' view of homosexuality (Collins, 2005). Furthermore, this idea was accepted and perpetuated by churches, traditionalists and fundamentalists who believe in the notion that Blacks cannot be LGB, because it is considered a deviant behavior and not acceptable by religion (Collins, 2005), therefore creating an internal struggle for many Black lesbians and gay men, as they must decide which identity they will prioritize over the other. In some environments, the decision can be made for them, as many people cannot mask their racial and ethnic identities, however, they may be able to "pass" their sexuality off as adhering to the norm (Greene, 2000). Those individuals who express their sexual identities in forms that do not

or cannot conform to the norm often find themselves battling both their racial

communities and the larger gay community as they create their own niche where they can

express an integrated identity (E. Brown, 2005; Collins, 2005; McBride, 2005;

McCready, 2004). The battle the Black students face is within their own Black

community where they are ostracized because of the disapproval of their sexual

orientation. On the other hand, those embracing their sexual identity meet racism from

White gays in the community due to the racist actions that take place, whether it is the

use of particular language, lack of acknowledgement of issues LGB people of color face

or assumptions that are made. In addition to the blatant racist behaviors, there are the

ignorant behaviors and actions that take place, because often White gay men are

experiencing oppression often for the first time, thus forgetting that lesbians, gay men

and bisexuals of color experience racial discrimination in addition to the homophobia that

may be present. For Black college students specifically, this could be a very tough

process to navigate as Black LGB individuals at predominately White institutions meet

both racism and homophobia from their White and Black peers, respectively.

Furthermore, individuals at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) often

find themselves remaining in the "closet" because of the lack of support offered by their

Black peers and even the institutional culture itself (Love, 2009). Approximately 20% of

HBCUs have a LGB focused student group on campus, yet do not have LGB centers on

their campuses, typically due to the political climate at the institution between the Black

community, churches, and the need to appease donors. Morehouse College went so far as

to create a dress code outlining the clothes and accessories male students were able to

wear under the guise of 'creating a Morehouse male look', The impact of a dress code on

stated to be about behavior, but the code neglected to take into account those males who may not conform to traditional standards of male clothing and accessories, thus denying the existence of men who may not 'fit' into the gender/sex binary (Love, 2009). In addition, the HRC has developed a program to facilitate campus-wide debates on LGB issues and train students to build viable student-led LGB-friendly organizations on HBCU college campuses (HRC, n.d.). From the beginning in 2002, this group fought an uphill battle trying to locate and identify individuals to engage, as well as how to safely provide resources to students who are interested. Today the program has grown dramatically into an education, training and networking effort focusing on empowering, inspiring and educating LGB HBCU students and their allies (HRC, n.d.).

Discussion and Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed theoretical frameworks discussing the formation and development of prejudicial attitudes. Allport (1979) relates the formation of attitudes to environment and competition among social groups that result in the creation of prejudicial attitudes toward out-groups based on certain social characteristics. Almost 40 years later Herek would build upon Allport's work to make the compelling argument of prejudicial attitude formation related specifically to sexual orientation among college students (Herek & Berrill, 1992). Herek developed a functional theory of prejudice postulating that college students develop and harbor negative feelings either because they have a preconceived notion built up about a group of people or the reality of not wanting to explore their own repressed feelings, resulting in establishing a self sense of fear about homophobia (Herek & Berrill, 1992). As society continues to evolve, I would suggest that Herek's functional theory offers more tangible and plausible reasoning for the

perpetuation of homophobic attitudes among college students. As people become more aware of their own social identities and those of others there is a larger need for acceptance. With this movement a number of overt instances of violence, bullying and fear in the form of legislation related to homophobia remains present. Some instances of homophobia however have become institutionally and socio-culturally covert. Society is using fear and unreasonable tactics to attack members of particular social groups in order to maintain a structure of power through covert actions where stereotypes and social cues perpetuate homophobia. Herek's theory illustrates this point through value express functions where religious groups utilize political platforms to funnel millions of dollars into campaigns to ensure passage of bias laws into state legislative books (Cowan & Greenstreet, 2010). In addition, the social expressive or ego-defensive functions operate where individuals either purposefully identify LGB individuals or repress their own feelings of same-sex attractions (respectively) and act out violently, both verbally and physically to prove their dominance or heterosexuality (Herek & Berrill, 1992).

Other related literature reviewed were theories of prejudice reduction. Brewer (2000), Dovidio et al., (2000), Gurin et al., (2002), Kardia (1996), Oskamp (2000), Stephan and Stephan (2001) and other theorists of prejudice reduction all make compelling arguments for how an individual may go about shifting their prejudicial perspectives. Each of the theorists, have connections in their research to Allport's contact hypothesis (1979). Interaction with someone who holds different beliefs or characteristics offers the opportunity for an individual to reduce their preconceived prejudice attitudes, and find similarity between the two. Theories of prejudice reduction outline processes that bring together people from separate social groups (typically one advantaged and one

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targeted) to open discussion between the two groups. As the two groups dialogue there is the possibility of the advantaged group gaining education and becoming more aware of the experiences of the targeted group, hopefully, resulting in a reduction of negative attitudes (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). The priority of this literature review was to identify factors that influence and impact prejudicial attitudes and reduction as a guiding understanding, as I continue to explore the relationships between Black college students and LGB individuals.

Sociological influences of social and personal demographic factors are more influential than the socio-psychology frameworks presented. The studies reviewed in this chapter offered a number of perspectives that illustrated the types of attitudes Black college students and the larger community maintain toward LGB individuals when compared to their White counterparts. Males are reported to have more negative attitudes than women, and class, education and religion all impact these attitudes in different ways (Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Lemelle & Battle, 2004; Jenkins et al., 2009; Lewis, 2003; Schellenberg et al., 1999). Religion specifically produced results that did not correlate (Jenkins et al., 2009 & Lewis, 2003). One study indicated that religion has a significant influence resulting in negative attitudes, while the other study indicated little to no influence on attitudes. I believe that religion plays an important role in the Black community and in turn influences the attitudes of Black college students. However the studies reviewed do not offer a qualitative data perspective; therefore I ponder what the quantitative results are actually indicating. What about the myriad of details that could be provided to explain the attitudes of participants who indicate a religious affiliation? Details such as frequency of attendance, importance of religion, or even type of church

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(affirming LGB individuals or condemning them) have not been included in the quantitative inquiries. Only a student voice could begin to answer this question and provide insight to some of the quantitative study results that have been reviewed. It is for this reason that I continue to pursue research in this area, specifically exploring the student voice to try and identify if Black males still tend to hold more negative attitudes than women, or if class impacts attitudes toward LGB individuals as suggested by Anderson and Fetner (2008).

There is evidence that homophobia still exists in society and within the Black community specifically. Music produced and messages being sent from church leaders include homophobic connotations, and bullying in schools is affecting children of all races and ethnicities and continues to take place as a result of the unsupportive climate of practicing acceptance of LGB children, students and people. The Down Low is further evidence that crosses all races and genders; however was first introduced to mainstream society via the Black community, yet is saturated with actions and behaviors associated with masculinity, power and homophobia (King, 2004). A strategic focus on reducing prejudicial attitudes could impact the presence of homophobia and may create a space where men and women feel more comfortable to express their true selves, instead of leading double lives. As it stands, the Down Low impacts public health issues, family structures and the perpetuation of masculinity in the Black community. In addition, there is a lack of education around issues of public health resulting in members operating on the Down Low to participate in sexual acts with little or no regard for safety, thus creating opportunities to transmit STIs (Bleich & Taylor-Clark, 2005; Boykin, 1996, 2005; King, 2004). The sociological impact of the Down Low and related issues on the

Black community has been tremendous and continues to ravage members of the community (Peterson & Jones, 2009). By combating homophobia and promoting the acceptance of all relationships as healthy, the chances of slowing the spread of STIs and the breaking up of families splitting because of Down Low behavior could greatly improve (Boykin, 2005).

A review of the literature reveals discrepancies in the results of the research studies focusing on sociological influences on the Black community. Much of the research ends with the social and personal demographic factors that influence attitudes without exploring further the impact of such factors on societal constructs and issues currently in place today. There is a clear need to explore attitudes of Black college students from a qualitative methods approach to identify intersections of social identities and offer students the opportunity to examine their attitudes and articulate the possibility of change in said attitudes. Currently, region of the country and specifying denominations of religion have yet to be explored within the context of this research as well. More importantly, the forum for students to discuss the possibility of reducing their attitudes has also not been addressed. Each of these gaps identified could impact and further delineate some of the research results previously introduced in the literature review. It is for this reason I propose to develop a qualitative method approach to research and study Black college students attitudes toward LGB college students. In the next chapter I will outline the methods of an exploratory research survey to examine the perceptions, feelings, thoughts and opinions of Black college students.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary goal of this research was to explore the underrepresented perspective of Black college students toward lesbian, gay men, and bisexual college students. Since this population is often underrepresented in studies, the researcher took an exploration approach to the research proposed. Exploratory research serves one of the most common purposes of social research and is conducted to provide a better understanding on a topic and identify possible subsequent or a more extensive study to further explain the topic (Babbie, 1999). An online qualitative, cross-sectional, survey consisting of both open and close-ended questions was used for this study. The results provided insight into a unique group of potential allies among a college student community that is often overlooked. The online survey was used for this study due to the sensitive nature of the topic and questions for some individuals. Utilizing this method provided participants the opportunity to contribute to the study and maintain their anonymity and remove any hesitancy about revealing their personal attitudes in a traditional face-to-face interview. Open-ended questions were utilized for the online survey to elicit responses from participants within their cultural and social experiences instead of from the researcher's learned experiences (Neuman, 2000). In addition, open-ended questions encourage more in-depth stories and information from participants in their own words (Creswell, 2002). New evidence reveals that people tend to provided more thorough responses to open-ended questions in web surveys than they do on paper (Dillman, 2007). Another advantage of an online survey is capitalizing on the trend of students using email, text and instant messenger chats to communicate, thus offering them a familiar format in

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which to participate in the study. Furthermore, a self-administered online questionnaire offers greater anonymity than a face-to-face interview and provides the participant with an opportunity to be more honest in their responses (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). A few close-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to capture perceptions of participants about current societal issues that affect gay men, lesbians and bisexuals.

A cross-sectional survey design is the most popular form of design used in education (Creswell, 2002). There are several types of cross-sectional survey designs. I collected data at one point in time from multiple participants across a great distance to examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices (Creswell, 2002). The design was specifically chosen for this study to try and remove any subtle influences that the race and sexual orientation of the researcher may have on the participants in the study.

Data Collection
For this study, the intention was to identify as many Black college students as possible to represent the multiplicity of communities and ethnicities that span the African Diaspora as possible. Additionally, to avoid institutional barriers that might hinder the release of access to emails and personal information of Black students on their campus, I needed to find a way to reach the Black college student population. To accomplish this task I utilized homogenous sampling and snowball sampling methods. Homogeneous sampling involves identifying individuals based on membership in a group possessing particular defining characteristics (Creswell, 2002). Snowball sampling is used when no sampling frame is available to identify potential participants to collect data from participants for the study by encouraging initial participants to identify other individuals who meet the criteria to become part of the sample (Creswell, 2002). The use of snowball

sampling is often appropriate when researching with members of populations difficult to identify or asking for information that participants may want to maintain their anonymity (Babbie, 1999).

The one way I could think of collecting data using snowball sampling was to utilize administrators on campuses as a gateway to contact the Black college student population. After I decided on the method to make contact with Black college students, I utilized the designed instrument to conduct a pilot study in October 2010 to identify potential issues that may arise in collecting data, asking questions or other parts of the methodology. The specifics of the procedure will be discussed later on in this chapter. A small sample (n=38) was obtained over the course of three weeks, from two of the five institutions that were contacted via a personal connection with administrators and faculty at those institutions. From the sample one (1) response was removed due to the survey not being completed and two (2) were removed because the individuals did not meet the initial criteria of identifying as Black/African American college student, leaving me with 35 participants for my pilot study. With the response rate of using five institutions, I figured that by sending the survey instrument out to approximately 200 institutions would yield a manageable if not larger set of responses. Therefore I went forward with my current methods of data collection after adjusting for changes that needed to be made to some of the questions in the instrument.

The pilot study was an encouraging litmus for the potential of collecting data utilizing this method. I learned that there were questions that needed to be reformatted to illicit more detailed responses and that some institutions would require at minimum an email confirmation of IRB status for the research study. Another benefit to conducting a

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pilot was the opportunity to provide respondents with the ability to maintain their anonymity, which is ideal when completing research on a sensitive topic such as personal feelings, attitudes, perceptions and opinions about LGB individuals. Lastly, by using an online instrument, initial recipients were invited to forward the link to other Black college friends on their campus, other campuses and in their online social networks at their discretion. One drawback to this process was not being able to track how many students actually forwarded the link on, or completed the survey because they received it from another student.

Participants

The focus of this study was to examine the attitudes of Black college students toward LGB students. A key criterion for participating in this study was for participants to identify as Black/African American, Afro-Caribbean, African ethnicity, mixed race with African ancestry or any part of the African Diaspora. Participants were of any age and enrolled as a student at a college or university. Participants had different majors and years while in school.

Procedure

As previously mentioned a pilot study was conducted providing insight into how to best approach inviting administrators to disseminate the survey. An email invitation was sent to a group of student affairs professionals and graduate students affiliated within higher education and more specifically multicultural affairs departments to invite participants to complete the Black College Students Perceptions and Opinions Survey (BCSPOS). I used the electronic listing of the Association of Black Culture Centers (ABCC) which maintains a membership of approximately 200 to develop my group of

participant invites. I created three (3) 'batches' of individuals representing institutions

from the ABCC membership listserv. For each 'batch' of individuals a separate, but

identical SurveyMonkey™ survey was created with three (3) distinct links to the same

survey. The first email invite was sent out to the first list of individuals created from the

ABCC membership. The second group and the third group of individuals received an

invite to participate in the survey shortly afterwards at staggered times, based upon the

number of respondents to the previous invites. After all responses were collected 36

viable responses were collected from the first batch of emails and 11 and 7 were collected

from the second and third batches respectively. To encourage participation I offered

participants an incentive to enter a lottery drawing for one (1) of four (4) $50 Visa gift

cards as a way of thanking them for their time to complete the survey. The drawing was

designed as a separate survey after completing the BCSPOS that required participants to

click on the link and be taken to another survey where they entered their name and email

which was not linked to the answers provided in the BCSPOS. The drawing for the gift

cards was done at the close of the survey and winners were notified and asked to submit

their mailing address so the gift card could be mailed and all other participants were

notified that winners had been selected.

The email invitation explained the purpose of the study (Appendix B) and

requested professionals and administrators to forward the invitation of the survey to

Black college students on their campuses to participate in the study. The professionals

and administrators were asked to forward the invitation containing the link to the survey

via email to the students personally or through a distribution list set up on their campuses.

This ensured that any student taking part in the survey maintained their anonymity from

the researcher. Additional formats to reach out to students included a post via a Facebook notes page that was specifically sent to colleagues and personal contacts to request their assistance in identifying Black college students on their campuses to participate in the study. The link on the Facebook notes page contained a link to the survey identical to the first batch sent out over email, which may have contributed to the initial 36 responses, however there is no way to research this. Students who may have received the link to the survey via this method were still able and eligible to enter the raffle drawing and their answers could not be discerned from respondents who completed the survey through the email link.

Student affairs professionals and graduate students passed out the survey information to their students as a method of collecting data for this study. Not everyone who received the email invitation forwarded the research study request on to their students and those that did could not have ensured that students completed the survey. Students who receive survey links and decide to fill out the survey are typically students who could be considered interested in the outcome of this survey, hold their own stake in wanting to participate in the study, wanted to chance to win the $50 gift card raffle, or were highly encouraged by someone on their campus to complete the survey. Whatever the reason(s) for completing the survey the students that shared their opinions created an interesting cross section of individuals nationwide that offers the opportunity for the research to explore a group of Black college students perceptions, feelings, and opinions toward LGB college students. Based upon the pilot study that was conducted I expected to receive a large number of responses from the approximately 200 invites that were sent out.

Once administrators on the listservs received the email request to forward the invitation, students at colleges and universities across the United States and in countries affiliated with the listservs were anonymously invited to take part in the study via a short email informational letter that explained the purpose of the research and included a link to the online questionnaire on SurveyMonkey.com™ (Appendix C). The survey remained open and available online for approximately 4 weeks to provide enough time for the email invitation link to circulate among college campuses and provide enough time for students to complete the survey in full, being cognizant of the end of spring semester and approaching final exams. The data was downloaded through SurveyMonkey™ and exported to a Microsoft excel spreadsheet, to begin analysis at the conclusion of the survey. I removed all surveys of participants who do not meet the criteria of enrolled college student and Black/African descent. In addition, all survey responses that did not have all the questions completed were also removed.

Instrument – Black College Student Perception and Opinion Survey (BCSPOS)

Unlike traditional methods of qualitative research using interview techniques, this instrument was designed for dissemination over the internet, in hopes to collect diverse responses from multiple sites across the United States. The survey for this study was formatted and designed using SurveyMonkey™. Participants were asked to complete the online survey that included 14 social and demographic close-ended questions, 8 perception and opinion close and open-ended questions, and 9 experience and contemporary issue close and open-ended questions. Overall the BCSPOS should have taken about 12-15 minutes to complete (Appendix D).

The BCSPOS questions related to social and personal demographic information included 14 questions to obtain general social and personal demographic information from participants that included opportunities to name their social identities (Appendix D). The social and personal demographic factors in this section were included based upon prior research on attitudes and the influence and impact of such social and personal demographic factors on attitudes toward LGB individuals (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Lewis, 2003; Loiaciano, 1989; Schulte, 2002; Steffens, 2005; Whitley, 2001).

The next portion of BCSPOS was the perceptions and opinions about LGB individuals. Eight (8) open and close-ended questions offered the opportunity for participants to engage in reflection around their feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and opinions toward LGB college students and to identify how their feelings could be influenced by people, events and environments in their lives. These questions on the BCSPOS were designed specifically based on the prejudice reduction literature, that suggests certain interactions and situations can be identified as a catalyst for change in attitudes (Kardia, 1996). In addition, based on literature that states Blacks tend to have negative attitudes (Lewis, 2003; Lociaano 1989; Schulte, 2002) these questions were designed to explore further in the students own words, what their opinions, perceptions and feelings are and offer them an opportunity to examine and reflect upon why.

The last section of the BCSPOS consisted of nine (9) open and close-ended questions focusing on experiences and contemporary LGB related issues and situations. These questions asked participants to identify their feelings and opinions toward current relevant situations and issues (i.e. the legalization of same-sex marriage, choosing a

college roommate or employment non-discrimination laws) as well as their participation in or attendance at groups and events that had a LGB focus. Asking these questions revolved around the concepts provided by Allport's (1979) contact hypothesis indicating that interaction remains a major influence to reducing prejudice and influencing more positive attitudes. Focusing on possible interactions at college offered a chance for the researcher to compare and analyze the collected data about the relevance of attitudes and potential contact with LGB individuals.

This instrument was specifically designed to gather a wide range of data about feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and attitudes toward LGB individuals. Although conducting face-to-face interviews would have afforded the opportunity to ask probing questions and further explore answers that were provided; the possibility of receiving what would be assumed to be more socially desired answers could have been greater, as interviewees are often less likely to offer negative responses about such socially sensitive information (Ajzen, 2002; Fiske, 1998). The trade-off using the online survey approach included the possibility of receiving answers that lack sufficient detail for me to use in analysis or provide answers that would benefit from probing questions. Limitations to this study are discussed later on in this chapter.

Data Analysis
Data analysis for this study was done through an inductive process of coding categories and themes identified from the data (Creswell, 2002). Analysis consisted of organizing data categorically, based on the patterns and themes from the perspective of the participants to understand and explain these patterns and themes (Creswell, 2007). Conducting an online survey with the option of downloading responses into a Microsoft

excel file, provided an alternative to using a qualitative analysis program. I read through the data multiple times to become acquainted with the responses of the surveys and preceded to sort and color code answers to search for common terminology and themes within the data using inferences and basic reasoning rather than statistics (Creswell, 2007). Analysis of close-ended question responses was reported as numerical data to present the results collected. After close-ended responses are sorted, an analysis of the short answers and perception and opinion questions was done and grouped by social and personal demographic factors, thus creating multiple sub-coding opportunities within the collected data.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Trustworthiness in this study was established through two methods. The first of these was through credibility. In order to establish trustworthiness through credibility and dependability, I identified peers to examine the themes, codes and data that had been sorted to ensure that the information was accurate, presented correctly and represented the data collected (Seale, 1999). Second, I used data transformation, which is the process of quantifying qualitative data, for example 25 female students reported having a particular response to the question on same-sex marriage, in order to create and compare codes, factors, and themes from the study. This enabled me the opportunity to bring to life both the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the survey (Creswell, 2002). As mentioned in Chapter 1, researcher bias cannot be completely removed from a study; however, the social identities and experiences that I brought to the study as the researcher must be acknowledged and recognized as I proceeded with the study. By clarifying and owning my bias, there is less chance for me to influence or impact the responses provided

by participants (Creswell, 2002). In addition, including the words, thoughts, and feelings of the participants to explore the data set, codes, and themes offered another chance for the researcher to remain impartial throughout the analysis of responses. Each of these strategies aided in validating the authenticity of the study and its purpose.

The Institutional Research Board guidelines were consulted and followed to ensure that ethical considerations remained at the forefront throughout the study. Potential risks to participants were limited due to the online survey structure and any personal communication about the study was done via email. Potential risks to the participants could include being triggered thinking about a time they may have knowing harassed or bullied someone, or been bullied themselves. Another risk is that participants could have taken this survey on their campus and assumptions could have been made about their sexual orientation or impact how they responded to the questionnaire from that point on, if not stopping the survey altogether. A third potential risk, was that someone who is questioning their sexuality may reflect upon their own struggles and questions as they take this survey and be triggered emotionally.

Confidentiality of participants was not an issue as the survey was designed to be anonymous and participants were able to self-select to quit taking the survey at any point. If they decided not to complete the survey their answers were disposed of and their results were not included in the analysis.

Limitations

The first limitation was that this online, self-administered survey solicited answers from individuals without the opportunity to probe further. Some answers provided by participants included just enough detailed information to identify a theme or

code, on the other hand, there were some answers that could have provided richer and more nuanced understanding had a face-to-face interview taken place. Second, three (3) surveys were started and not finished by participants for unknown reasons. This resulted in potential answers and insightful information being lost by having to eliminate what answers they did provide because they did not complete the survey.

For some respondents, there was the chance that socially desirable answers were provided (Ajzen, 2002). On the other hand, some responders provided answers that lacked detail. This speaks to the implicit and explicit attitudes that often impact research being done on attitudes, which could have posed more of a limitation or hindrance if this study were conducted by focus groups or face to face interviews (Ajzen, 2002; Dillman, 2007).

Another limitation discovered during the course of this research was the inability to provide a reminder to or encourage participation from students directly. Due to the procedure of submitting the invitation to a professional at an institution to pass on the survey, there was no way to directly contact students to remind them to complete the survey. In addition, there was no guarantee that the email with the invitation even reached the inbox of the identified student affairs professional, as it may have gone directly to a trash or spam folder in their email. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, I recognize that the time of the year in the spring semester when this survey was sent was not ideal, and may have reached campuses at a time, when students were preparing for exams, and other larger end of the semester projects therefore impacting their desire to complete the survey.

Lastly, as the researcher, I recognized that the online survey relied heavily upon students being able to (1) actually complete the survey when they receive the link and (2) reflect and identify their own attitudes toward LGB individuals. Some participants were very adept at identifying and naming their attitudes in either a positive or negative manner, however some participants did not know how to articulate their perceptions, feelings and opinions, whether they were positive or negative.

Summary

Overall a group of student responses were collected for analysis and their perceptions and opinions offer a unique and important perspective yet to be explored. With any research there are limitations that might prevent data collection and in this chapter we discussed potential barriers to this study, including time of year, snowball sampling methods and lack of ability to follow up with students with reminders or probing questions. Regardless the data collected presents a group of Black college students that provide their own self-reflective insight and perceptions about LGB college students. The results of these answers will be looked at in detail in the next chapter as a group of Black college students with potential to be considered allies to the LGB community.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

As mentioned my goal was to find out Black college students attitudes toward LGB college students. Prior research prepared me for responses from participants that would be less than favorable about LGB people. Instead I found exciting and purposeful responses and a specific group of Black college students who share promising or hopeful perspectives about their own perceptions and opinions about LGB college students. The views and opinions that this potential group of allies has toward LGB college students will be explored in this chapter. First, an overview of the social and demographic responses to the survey will be presented. Secondly, an overview of the student responses of feelings and opinions about current LGB issues and college-related situations will be shared. Third, a guided analysis of the participants' responses to the open-ended questions will explore thoughts and perceptions about LGB individuals based on the theoretical frameworks of Allport (1979) and Herek (1992) discussed in Chapter 2. Lastly, an analysis of the survey data from the social and personal demographic factors perspective will be provided.

Social and Personal Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Social and Personal Demographic information was collected via an online survey of the participants to identify the members of this specific group of students. Questions related to personal connections and contact with LGB identified individuals is also included to identify potential correlations of contact with positive perceptions, opinions and feelings as explained by Allport's (1979) contact hypothesis theory. An overview of the data collected will include approximately 77 respondents. As anticipated a number of

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responses could not be used in this study for the following reasons, one (1) self-identified as White, Caucasian or of European descent, twelve (12) students who self-identified as gay, lesbian, queer or same gender loving, and ten (10) students who did not answer any of the open-ended questions. Fifty-four (54) self-identified Black, heterosexual respondents make up the group of participants for this study. In the personal demographics section of the survey, study participants were asked to self-identify ethnicity (as all respondents had self identified their race as Black by Western standards), sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic class, age, year in school and religion.

Students self-identified in a number of different ethnic groups within the African Diaspora including African American; Caribbean (Jamaican, Dominican, Haitian, Turks & Caicos, Bahamas, Belize, Grenada and Barbados); Multiracial/multi-ethnic (African American and Native American, White, Latino/a and Caribbean); and African (Ethiopian and Nigerian). Seven of the 54 students were not born in the United States, four of which have been in the United States for 11 or more years, the remaining three students have been in the United States for less than four years. A breakdown of the demographic information of the participants is included in Table 1.

Table 1: Participants Social and Personal Demographic Information (n=54)

Ethnicity			
African American	30% (16)	Caribbean	33% (18)
Multiracial/multi-ethnic	33% (18)	African	4% (2)
Gender			
Female	67% (36)	Male	33% (18)
Year in School			
1st year	24% (13)	Sophomore	19% (10)
Junior	22% (12)	Senior	26% (14)
5th year undergrad	7% (4)	Grad	2% (1)
Type of Institution		4yr Public	76% (41)
		4yr Private	22% (12)
		Other	2% (1)

Size of Institution*		Private (1,001-2,999 students)	2% (1)
		Private (3,000-9,999 students)	4% (2)
		Private (10,000-20,000 students)	4% (2)
		Private (20,000+ students)	13% (7)
		Public (3,000-9,999 students)	7% (4)
		Public (10,000-20,000students)	35% (19)
		Public (20,000+ students)	33% (18)
Location of Institution by Region (n=11 states)			
Midwest	22% (12)	South	2% (1)
Northeast	70% (38)	West	6% (3)
Attend a Faith based Institution		Yes	15% (8)
		No	52% (28)
		Did not respond	33% (18)
Identifies as a Religious Person**		Yes	80% (43)
		No	20% (11)
Agnostic/Atheist	13% (7)	Christian/Non-denom.	26% (14)
Baptist	17% (9)	Catholic	13% (7)
Methodist	7% (4)	Pentecostal	7% (4)
Protestant	4% (2)	Islamic	4% (2)
Religious Attendance at service			
Do Not attend	30% (16)	Certain holidays	28% (15)
1/month	7% (4)	1/week	20% (11)
2/month	11% (6)	More than 1/week	4% (2)
Member of a Black Church or Congregation		Yes	43% (23)
		No	57% (31)
Socio-economic Class			
Poor	9% (5)	Working Class	24% (13)
Middle	43% (23)	Upper Middle	19% (10)
Upper Class	6% (3)		
Has either a Friend or Relative that Identifies as LGB		Yes	89% (48)
		No	11% (6)
LGB Relative		Yes	37% (20)
		No	61% (33)
		No Response	2% (1)
Friend who Identifies as LGB		Yes	87% (47)
		No	13% (7)
Friend was Out before they became Friends.		Yes	28% (15)
		No	65% (35)
		No Response	7% (4)
Attended an LGB program/event		Yes	39% (21)
		No	61% (33)
Involved in Black group on campus		Yes	43% (23)
		No	57% (31)
Involved in LGB group on camps		Yes	17% (9)
		No	85% (46)

*Participants reporting these numbers may not know the size of their institutions therefore these percentages may not be a true representation.

**Five (5) participants did not identify as a religious person, yet marked a denomination when prompted. Two (2) participants marked more than one denomination. Percentages reported in the table include participants with multi-denominations and is based on all 54 respondents.

Students in the sample self-identified their gender into two groups. There were more female students (n=36) than male students (n=18). All 54 students included in this sample identified as heterosexual/straight, however nine of these students identified that they had a same sex experience that was defined as sexual touching or oral, vaginal or anal sex. There is potential that the 9 participants who self-identified a same sex experience could be considered to have biased the group responses as they typically held favorable perceptions and opinions throughout the survey. Forty-three percent of students in the sample self-identified their best estimated family income as being socio-economically middle class (Beeghley, 2004; Gilbert, 2002; Thompson & Hickey, 2005). Lower and working class family income estimates comprised a little over one-third of the sample and approximately 6% of the students represented the more affluent, upper class demographic. Furthermore, 85% of the respondents were traditionally college-aged (22 and under).

Eighty percent of the students self-identified as a religious person, or as someone who identifies with a particular religion including 13% who identified as Agnostic or Atheist. More specifically, of the 80%, the majority of the respondents identified with a Christian religion, the largest being Christian/Non-denominational, 26%; while Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Pentecostal and Protestant combined made up a little over half of the group with 17%, 13%, 7%, 7% and 4% respectively, and a small portion, 4%, identified as Islamic. Five (5) participants identify a particular denomination, however do not identify as a religious person, thus the reported numbers about religious identified

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participants cannot be accurately represented in percentages. This is also the case because two participants identify with more than one denomination and the results shared account for each of their religious affiliations separately. Responses represented in Table 1 take into account all 54 respondents when percentages were calculated. For the next set of results, the percentages were calculated from participants who self-identified as a religious person (n=43). Approximately 28% of respondents who self-identified with a particular religion reported attending services once a week or more. A portion of respondents, 21%, shared that they attend services once or twice a month; while 30% shared they attend mainly for certain holidays. The remaining respondents shared they did not attend services. Lastly, 49% of the respondents who self-identified as a religious person are members of a designated Black church and congregation.

Fifty-six percent of students identified as upper-division students—3rd year or junior standing and above—at the time they completed the survey. Approximately 43% were in their first two years of college, and the remaining students in the sample were graduate school students. The majority of students, 76%, self-identified as attending a public, 4-year college or university. Twenty-two percent (22%) of students attend private, 4-year institutions and 2% of participants marked other, but did not reveal what type of institution they attended. More than fourth-fifths of students attended schools with more than 10,000 students, and approximately less than one-tenth of the sample attended schools with fewer than 10,000 students. Additionally, approximately 15% of the students reported attending a faith-based institution, while the remaining students do not or did not know if their institution was classified as faith-based. Geographically, students in the sample attended school in 11 states. Approximately 70% of respondents attended

schools in the Northeast, 22% in the Midwest and 6% in the West and 2% in the South. The regional classifications are based on the US Census categories (US Census Bureau, n.d.).

Social demographic data was also gathered for this study. Respondents were asked about their involvement on campus, as well as their social connections to individuals who self-identify as LGB. Overall, approximately 43% participate in a Black focused student organization on campus, and 17% identified as participating in a LGB focused student organization. Additionally, 39% of the students indicated attending a program and/or event on campus that focused on the LGB community and related issues.

Participants were asked to identify their social connections to self-identified LGB individuals, of the entire participant group 89% have either a friend or relative who identifies as LGB. Approximately 87% of the students indicated having a friend who identifies as LGB and one-third (28%) of the 87% indicated that their friendships were started that person who was publicly out about their sexual orientation. The remaining students were unaware of their friend's sexual orientation at the start of their friendship. However, only 37% of respondents reported having a relative who identifies as LGB, of which three-fifths of these individuals were out to people in their family.

Study Participant Perspectives on Current Events and LGB Related Issues
For the purpose of this survey, the indicators related to the feelings, perceptions and opinions being asked about are grounded in the social psychological prejudicial attitude formation theories of Allport (1979) and Herek (1992). Each of the indicators from this portion of the survey focused on current societal LGB issues including employment and same-sex marriage, as well as college-related situations, such as college

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roommates, an individual coming out and acceptance of Black LGB students in a Black

cultural center on campus. Students were asked to indicate how supportive they would be

in relation to a number of situations that included the following: legalizing same-sex

marriage, LGB individuals serving in the military, equal employment opportunities for

LGB individuals, a friend or family member if they shared they were LGB. As illustrated

by Table 2, a large majority of the respondents indicated being very or somewhat

supportive of each of the situations and societal issues listed in the survey. A small

portion of 15% or less in relation to each question indicated as having neutral feelings

about each of the situation and societal issues. Only two situations had participants

reporting unsupportive positions. The first is legalizing same-sex marriage in which 6%

and 9% were somewhat and very unsupportive respectively. The second situation was

support of a family member sharing they are LGB reported 6% of participants being

somewhat unsupportive. These issues also reported the lowest signs of support from all

respondents as well with 69% for same-sex marriage and 79% for a family member

coming out.

Table 2: Respondents Opinions of Societal LGB issues

	Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Neutral	Somewhat Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive
Legalizing same-sex marriage?	60% (32)	9% (5)	15% (8)	6% (3)	9% (5)
NON-discrimination in employment based upon sexual orientation	94% (50)	6% (3)			
LGB individuals serving in the military?	79% (42)	11% (6)	9% (5)		
a friend shared with you that he or she is gay, lesbian, bisexual?	83% (44)	4% (2)	13% (7)		
a family member shared with you that	73% (39)	6% (3)	15% (8)	6% (3)	

he or she is gay, lesbian or bisexual?					

For college-related situations participants were asked if they would *remain* roommates with someone who came out to them as LGB, and if they would *choose* to room with someone who identified as LGB as illustrated by Table 3. Approximately 90% of participants shared that they would remain roommates with someone who came out to them. Indicating that their reasons for staying were based on a previous relationship with the individual, "They are the same person they were before I found out of their sexual orientation and if we got a long before, we will continue to get a long. . ." While others (approximately 15%) said they would remain roommates however, provided the caveat that as long as their roommate did not come on to them, or violate their personal space as indicated by the following student response:

> Of all the problems regarding roommates as long as the person was not attracted to me I would not have a problem, there are much larger issues at hand when it comes to roommate problems

The remaining one-tenth (n=5) of the students that indicated they would not remain roommates offered their opinions that they would feel uncomfortable and things would become awkward in the room. Some students indicated that it would change the dynamic and meaning of same sex roommates, "Because since they are attracted to the same sex it would be the same as having a guy and a girl sharing the same room (*my opinion*)"

Another student indicated her fear of association, "I wouldn't want for there to be a mistake about my sexual orientation." These types of reactions and perspectives are common because it allows individuals to express themselves in ways that help others see who they are and who they do not want to be associated with based on sexual orientation.

In some cases, this behavior is prevalent among instances of violent or verbal outbursts toward LGB people, by individuals who are trying to prove they are 'normal' and not like LGB people.

Table 3: Respondents Opinions of College-Related Situations

Accept a Black LGB student in the Black Cultural Center/Office and/or student group	Yes	100% (54)
	No	0% (0)
REMAIN roommates with someone who came out as LGB?	Yes	89% (48)
	No	11% (6)
CHOOSE to room with someone who identifies as LGB?	Yes	30% (16)
	No	70% (38)

On the other end of the spectrum, students were also asked about their decision to choose a roommate who identified as LGB. Approximately one-third, or 16 students indicated that they would choose a roommate who identified as LGB. Some of the students indicated they had no problem choosing to room with someone who identifies as LGB, it is more important that they are compatible roommates (i.e. respect property, cleanliness, etc):

> I don't have a problem with how an individual identifies in regards to their sexual identity. My goal is to find a roommate that is compatible with me. I would be more concerned about a roommates' cleanliness, respect of property, acknowledgment of quiet hours, etc. much more than how they identify. A good roommate is a good roommate, and as someone who has experienced bad roommates I would welcome the alternative no matter who they are.

Other respondents indicated they would choose to room with someone who identifies as LGB; however outlined a number of caveats around association or mistaken identity, as seen toward the end of the following student's response:

> When I choose roommates, I choose people who I know and find myself comfortable with. Therefore, if I know a female and we're good friends,

then I would choose her as roommate. As long as she's not trying to date me there's no problem.

Over three-fifths of the students responding indicated they would not choose to room with someone who identifies as LGB. One-third of these students indicated they would not want to choose a roommate based on any identity, but rather choosing a roommate is more about the personal connection, 'I would not intentionally choose an LGBT roommate any more than I would intentionally choose a straight roommate, a white roommate or a black roommate.'

The remaining students indicated a range of reasons for not choosing a LGB roommate if presented with the option, from overall discomfort in the room to being able to communicate and socially interact with a member of the LGB community. One student states:

I wouldn't want him to feel left out for the times when guys come over for the guys night and have "guy talk". It wouldn't be fair to the roommate because the other guys might not as open and welcoming as I am.

It is evident he claims to be open and welcoming but there are limits when it came to engaging with friends. The student's concern for his roommates comfort in the room may be genuine. However, there is also the possibility that the student is covering his true fear and inability to room with an LGB person, with the excuse that his friends may not be as open. The potential for response bias was prevalent for this question, because some participants may have explained away their choice of being roommates citing their friends, or not wanting to choose a roommate based upon social identities because they wanted to appear friendly/open. This is not clearly the case among the group of potential

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ally responders; nevertheless participants still maintained a positive perception toward LGB individuals.

In addition to being asked about sharing a room with someone who identifies as LGB, students were asked to respond on the survey about their willingness to accept Black LGB students in the Black cultural center (or equivalent) on their respective campuses. Prior research indicates that Blacks generally are more likely to hold negative rather than positive attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Jenkins et al., 2009; Lewis, 2003; Schulte & Battle, 2004). Therefore, asking this question offered the opportunity for respondents to reflect upon intersections of social identities (i.e. race and sexual orientation) that would require a sharing of resources among Black LGB and Black heterosexual students ensuring both groups have a voice in the cultural center (or equivalent) space on campus. Respondents to this question overwhelmingly indicated that they would accept a Black LGB identified student in the Black Cultural Center or Black cultural student organization. When asked to explain their reasoning for doing so, responses varied from general rights of students, to identity related reasoning and a few respondents were able to rationalize their acceptance and maintain their beliefs about homosexuality. One student stated "I accept all people, however that does not mean that I like the behavior", which illustrates the clear dissonance of how to accept someone without judging unfairly based upon perceived or real behaviors. Another respondent felt that "Their being gay has no influence on how effective they would be as a part of a group." Both responses were positive and supportive of Black LGB students seeking out resources in the Black Cultural Center. However, based on the qualifying language both responses also present a

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challenge for creating an inclusive community in a center. The first respondent may

remain distant physically and emotionally because of behaviors of a Black LGB person,

while the other respondent would be open to the LGB students participating as long as

they remain effective in the group. Either way participants would need to test their ability

to build rapport with a fellow Black LGB student in the cultural center to reveal their true

intentions in this situation, rather than just answering a question on a survey where their

anonymity is guaranteed. Lastly, a respondent stated:

> I don't understand why not? His/her/hir racial identity is still Black, the
> target population you are trying to reach. Why discriminate against them
> based off another identity? I think that gets into a slippery slope if we start
> doing that. What will be next? Will we only allow Black individuals who
> are Christian? Only American blacks?

Though the intention of each student respondent presents a positive argument for

accepting Black LGB students in cultural centers on campus, the impact that may result

differs greatly. The illustrated responses reflect a broader theme in the findings and speak

to potential dissonance that may arise within the space that could either create an

environment that is not accepting of differences related to an individual's sexual

orientation (i.e. not liking the behavior) or provide entry points to engage in developing

allies.

The next section in this chapter explores the answers respondents provided to the

open-ended questions of the survey. Each of the questions asked respondents to reflect

upon their previous lived experiences, thoughts and situations that may have shaped and

influenced their current perceptions, feelings and opinions of LGB college students. The

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is an annual survey collecting data from

over 700 institutions nationwide first year and senior students about their personal views

on experiences involving engagement in college (National Survey of Student

Engagement, n.d). Current trends from NSSE indicates that approximately 54% of first

year students and even more seniors examine their own strengths and weaknesses related

to a topic or issue, and nearly 62% report trying to understand another person's

perspective on topics or issues. The following analysis builds upon and further explores

the ability of the 54 participants to reflect upon their own perceptions related specifically

to LGB college students.

Describe your feelings, perceptions, and opinions about LGB college students?

The first open-ended response question focused on the participants' feelings,

perceptions and opinions about LGB college students being mainly positive, mainly

negative or in between. A summary of themes and students' quotes are included in Table

4. Current research suggests that the broader Black community generally has more

negative than positive attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals when compared

to other individuals based upon the factor of race (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Davis

& Smith, 2009; Green & Boyd-Franklin, 1996; Jenkins et al., 2009; Lewis, 2003;

Lociacano, 1989; Loftus, 2001; Schulte & Battle, 2004). For this potential group of allies

specifically, more than half indicate they have positive attitudes toward LGB students.

Table 4: Feelings, Perceptions, and Opinions about LGB College Students

Theme	Sample Quote
Positive	"I would describe my feelings towards Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual college students (and LGB people in general) as positive because I don't see them different from any other person. Their sexual orientation should not define who they are as people."

Ambivalent/neutral – don't go out of way to support nor condemn LGB.	"I am in between. I do not go out of my way to support the gay community, but I also have no problem with gay people. I am indifferent."
In between feelings-like the person but not the actions	"I don't care if any one is Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual; i am always friendly to everyone regardless, but I would not become best friends with them because of my personal beliefs. I would say my feelings are mainly positive because even though I may not agree with the lifestyle, I do know people who are and I am always friendly and treat them like I would treat anyone else."
Negative-feelings that typically emote	"My feelings about LGB is that it's a sin but it shouldn't be considered a bigger sin than anything else."

Study participants indicated they did not view or judge people differently because of their sexuality and that being LGB has nothing to do with the type of person you are and should not determine how you are treated. One student stated:

All of my feelings and opinions toward the LGBTQI community are positive. I see sexuality as a characteristic that doesn't define who you are, and it doesn't make you less or more than a human. I was always taught that gay people are people, but since we live in a heteronormative society anything that isn't the "norm" is and will be attacked.

As the above student describes, all people should be treated equally, and one defining characteristic should not determine how someone is treated. Another student correlates their positive attitude, to common experiences with LGB students:

I have very positive feelings towards LGB college students. They are students who are just like me. They want to graduate from college. They want to have successful careers, and raise families. The only difference between me and them is their sexual orientation. I don't feel that a person's sexual orientation defines who they are. Their personality, values, and integrity defines who they are.

For some students, it is a person's character that matters more than their sexual orientation. The majority of students' attitudes are representative of these positive

remarks; another portion of students could not quite articulate their feelings about the LGB community. Approximately one-fifth of the respondents, remark that they have not given much thought about LGB students, and as such they would not go out of their way to support the community:

> I haven't given much thought to the LGBT community on campus. My perceptions towards people who identify with one or more of these letters are neither negative or positive. I am neither an ally nor do I condemn anybody associated with these letters.

Students with neutral/ambivalent opinions often did not feel concerned with LGB students and their experiences. Instead most students seem to focus more on the implications that because someone identifies as LGB their expressive behaviors must fit into certain stereotypes:

> I honestly don't care people are free to date and love who ever my only problem is certain demeanors or swaggers people associate with homosexuality like if your a gay guy you must act like a girl or vise versa.

Another student was neutral in their opinions about LGB people, by portraying a more tolerant viewpoint "I don't mind people being gay, lesbian, or bisexual; the thing is I'm not going to be that curious or try something like that." This statement of tolerance, leads to another set of questions about why it was important to make it clear that he would "not be curious or try something like that." This statement is once again reflective of the anticipatory experiential function of Herek's functional approach theory (Herek & Berrill, 1992). This is illustrated when the responder distances himself from behaviors of LGB people, when asked about his perceptions, feelings and opinions. Though some students remain tolerant, indifferent or ambivalent about their perceptions, feelings and opinions about LGB college students, a few students expressed that they were in between in their feelings and opinions. One student shared:

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> Feelings-I care a lot about all people and I know that everyone should be regarded as a human being, I am not in support of LGBTQ marriages/relationships. Perceptions-I don't really know how I perceive LGBTQ college students. They are not identifiable to me or I just can't tell until I am told and sometimes I don't believe it either, but I perceive them as strong people for all the things they have to put up with. Opinions- I am a Christian and although I do have friends and family that identify as LGBTQ I don't support their lifestyle. I love them as themselves I just do not agree with the life they want to lead, I accept that they are who they are, it's just conflicting with my beliefs. I believe that marriage should be between a man and woman. God did not intend for marriage to be with a man and man or a woman and a woman.

This student was very clear about her feelings, perceptions and opinions, however also wrestled with dissonance based on respect and care for people as humans with the *lifestyle,* actions and behaviors of individuals who 'choose' this wrong way of living and how they will be judged by God. Responses found in the 'in between' category often shared the common perspective of religion, personal beliefs and/or God being important in their lives and thus guide their perceptions and feelings about sexual orientation and LGB issues. Another perception and opinion that emerged from the in between category (and referenced in other categories) was the idea that the sexual orientation of LGB college students is an individual's personal choice or preference:

> I believe it is their choice, I personally do not agree with that lifestyle but it is a free country. My only problem is when people do not admit what they are and they try to keep it a secret, especially the MSM [*men who have sex with men]* population because then they are putting others health at risk.

From this statement, the participant is indicating that LGB college students consciously made a 'choice' about their sexual orientation. One student in particular shared the sentiment that being LGB was a choice, and further supported her feelings and

perceptions by also relying on her personal beliefs, and making it clear that it will be the job of another to judge LGB people and not hers:

> These individuals have chosen their lifestyle and I'm not in a position to judge them. While I do believe it's unlawful from a biblical perspective, I will not impose my perception on them. Whether or not they choose to change their way of life, is completely up to them.

Overall, the perceptions, feelings and opinions gathered from this survey were positive toward LGB college students. Those who held neutral and in between perceptions, still self-identified themselves as having mainly positive attitudes or would not go out of their way to be disrespectful or hostile to LGB individuals. Thirty respondents identify having positive perceptions, feelings and opinions and another 11 were not outspoken about their support but would not condemn someone who identifies as LGB. An overwhelming number of participants have the potential of being ally to the LGB community. Lastly, those students in the negative themed category relied on their personal religious beliefs to specifically inform their perceptions and feelings. Of the respondents approximately 22% from each category referenced sexual orientation as a personal choice individuals make to live their life. Though the language of *choice* and *sexual preference* were evident in each themed category, over 80% were in the in between, neutral and negative categories, illustrating clear support and understanding of the LGB community. Additionally, the use of said terms could be more reflective of lack of educational awareness, environmental upbringing or subconsciously lacking awareness. Once more education is obtained the use of such invalidating terms could potentially decrease among this group of allies. The next section will explore events or experiences that shape the feelings, perceptions and opinions that were just discussed in this chapter.

Events or experiences that have shaped or influenced feelings, perceptions, and opinions about LGB college students

Respondents were asked to reflect upon events and experiences in their lives that may have contributed to how their feelings, perceptions and opinions about LGB college students may have been shaped and influenced. A summary of themes and students' quotes is included as Table 5. As Allport (1979) suggests there are six social psychological approaches to the formation of prejudice. Each of the approaches refers to events, shared feelings, awareness and personal experiences that informs and shapes prejudicial attitudes of people (Allport, 1979). Each of the broad themed categories in Table 5 draws upon the socio-cultural, situational, historical and phenomenological emphasis approaches of Allport, recognizing these emphases are not independent of one another and can work in tandem (1979).

Table 5: Influences on feelings, perceptions and opinions about LGB college students

Theme	Sample Quote
Socio-Cultural – education, awareness, and society	'Recent events that have occurred, where LGB students have taken their own lives, have made my feelings and perceptions stronger.'
Situational and Historical – culture, religion, familial influences	'I was raised to respect and be understanding of people's differences.'
Phenomenological – Personal Interaction and experiences	'I had a friend in high school who was gay and he was one of the best people to be around. Having never personally encountered a gay person, I never thought that I would have a problem with one, but having a friend who was gay and not turning my back on him proved to me that I was right. I do not judge people based on their sexual orientation because that has nothing to do with their character and capabilities.'

Socio-cultural- Education, Awareness, and Society

The first category is reflective of Socio-Cultural influences and according to Allport (1979) this approach emphasizes the use of socio-cultural factors to help explain group feelings, opinions and perceptions. The majority of the participant responses categorized in this area referenced societal influences such as media, general awareness, and observations of the community around them that affected their perceptions, feelings and opinions about LGB people.

> It is hard to be an ally because I cannot directly relate to the experiences of people in the gay community, but I do understand that to be a part of a group that is marginalized by society is very difficult and it takes strong people to handle that [being lgb].

> I've been judged unfairly many times in my life based on superficial assumptions. Those judgments hurt me in many different ways and I find that it would be greatly hypocritical of me to judge someone for who they choose to love and who they identify themselves to be. I believe that a person's sexual orientation is but one aspect of a person's identity, it does not define entirely who a person is. If a person has something to contribute regardless of orientation then they are worth spending time with and learning from.

> Recent events have shown me that there are definitely a lot of people who aren't as accepting still around and that their opinions seem to hold too much weight in certain areas.

In each of the responses participants identify personal revelations, decisions and outside influences that have helped shape their perceptions, feelings and opinions about LGB students.

Situational and Historical- Culture, Religion, Familial Influences

The second category draws upon a combination of the situational and historical emphasis of Allport's approaches (1979). First, the situational approach consists of past patterns of interaction among groups of people and their community environment that influences the development of an individual. The historical emphasis draws upon past

events and experiences in a social context that reinforces pre-conceived notions of inferiority (Allport, 1979). Combining these two emphasis, allows for responses that refer to religion and familial culture influences to be explored further. Both of these influences typically have long standing affects on the development of perceptions and feelings about others and are often passed along through generations in a family through storytelling and cultural practices.

> I believe the parenting style in which my mother used to make me into the person that I am today has a greatly shaped and influenced the way I am towards LGB college students. I was raised to treat everyone with respect and treat others as I would like to be treated.

> In my opinion living in New York city and being exposed to all different kinds of people with different interests and lifestyles has made me accepting of all people, not just LGB students. . . Although, I have family members that are strongly against the LGB community, I hope to prove their thoughts wrong by not accepting their viewpoints.

Phenomenological – Personal Interaction and Experiences

The last category that was identified as influencing perceptions, feelings and opinions is Allport's phenomenological approach, which is the belief about a particular group that can be informed by a number of factors, including previous interactions or thoughts learned from ones surrounding environment. Responses that are based on personal interactions, processing of a specific interaction and how participants make meaning of the interaction are included in this category.

> I didn't form my opinion from college students. I am a non traditional full time student and I formed my opinion from life experience. Dealing with people from all social areas, the one "group" that craves attention and acceptance is the gay and lesbian group. When in fact, the people I am familiar with and even formed a relationship with make their sexuality their identity. A homosexual's actions is between them and God, not me. I have friends and family who are gay/lesbian etc. and I LOVE them with no conditions and, they have so much more to offer than their sexuality. I have mentioned this to one friend in particular and he didn't realize that being proud to be gay was his whole existence.

This student identified that their feelings, perceptions and opinions came from their own lived experiences. More specifically the participant spoke of acceptance and relationships with LGB individuals, but also began to explore issues with people who identify solely with their sexuality rather than the other aspects of their personal social identities. Other participants alluded to interactions with LGB friends as the 'positive' influence on their feelings, perceptions and opinions:

> I think my interactions with my LGBT friends and peers have shaped my positive perceptions and opinions of LGBT individuals and the community. I think creating meaningful relationships with LGBT individuals opens up my perspective.

> In high school on my track team one of my teammates was a gay half black half white male who became one of my best friends. He actually became more like a brother than anything else. If anyone tried to hurt him or look down on him for his sexual orientation I had his back and stood up for him.

> My sister is a lesbian and I have a lot of homosexual friends and I'm totally fine with their sexual preferences. LGB students are just normal people with different sexual preferences than other people.

Intersections of Categories

As evident in Allport's (1979) theoretical approaches of prejudicial attitude development to intersect with one another, the themed categories presented in this section operate similarly. A few of the responses shared through the survey data illustrate participants processing the origins of their perceptions and feelings, by drawing upon situations and experiences that have shaped their current opinions about LGB college students. Some of the following responses illustrate the intricacy in which responders processed, and made meaning of the experiences and events that have helped shape their feelings, perceptions and opinions. One student shared:

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I have a family member and friends that are gay. I grew up in a fairly conservative household that never discussed openly different sexual identities, but it was always understood that all persons living in the household were to be (or at least perform) heterosexuality. Honestly, I have some effeminate ways, but I don't see myself any lesser than any other heterosexual man I encounter. This understanding of myself, borne out of reaction to the environment in which I was raised, provided the context for which I could relate and even understanding their plight and differences.

Another student stated:

Growing up in an open household, acknowledging that I have relatives who are Lesbians and Gay influence my opinions. As well as seeing people as individuals instead of labeling them into a group.

It is clear from these statements and others collected, that influences on perceptions, feelings and opinions about LGB college students, come from multiple sources that shape the development of prejudicial attitudes. The examples provided show how personal interaction mixed with familial environment messages, or societal expectations of masculinity intersect and influence opinions and feelings. Additionally, according to the data from this group of participants an individual's story, society, media and even friendships influence and affect people differently; therefore resulting in different levels of acceptance, interaction and support of LGB college students. The next question from the survey explores changes in feelings, perceptions and opinions of respondents.

Changes in Feelings, Perceptions and Opinions about LGB College Students and Experiences that may have Influenced a Change

This question in the survey was designed to elicit responses to identify how participants may engage in the process of reducing their prejudices toward LGB college students where possible. As stated earlier, prejudice reduction is defined as a multifaceted process through which an individual identifies, evaluates, and shifts learned attitudes

about a particular item, person, or group of people (Stephan & Stephan, 2001). This process involves identifying and exploring ways in which prejudice can be reduced and discovering factors that are associated with such a transition in attitude based upon Allport's work.

For college students, contact with lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals is pivotal for attitude change (Kardia, 1996; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). In addition to intergroup contact, colleges and universities also offer a number of diversity initiatives for students to learn and understand about differences in the form of speakers, programs, and classes. Educational interventions are another way to reduce bias and develop positive intergroup attitudes (Engberg et al., 2007)

Figure 1: Percentage of Respondents Reporting Change

Approximately 30% of the individuals indicated a significant or somewhat change in their feelings, perceptions and opinions. Close to 54% respondents identified that their feelings, perceptions and opinions shifted in a more positive or respectful direction. One student shared, "I believe they have changed because when I was younger I was absolutely opposed to any LGB person, but as I got older I realize that is wrong and they choose to live their life how they want to." There were no respondents whose feelings

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and perceptions changed from positive to negative. The group of respondents who indicated no change/indifferent, may have previously held negative perceptions, opinions and feelings and currently maintain those same perspectives. There is no clear way to quantify the amount of change that took place for individuals in this survey. In addition, some individuals explored their reasons for changing and catalysts that may have aided them in their process of changing their perceptions. One student clearly processed her thoughts and opinions as follows:

> I feel being a college student in such a diverse world has changed my opinions greatly. My cultural background usually does not support these groups but being an adult I felt it important to educate myself.

Further exploration of potential reasons for a particular change in perceptions, feelings and opinions will be examined later in the chapter. Approximately 6% of respondents indicated that their feelings were positive to begin with and therefore they did not identify a change in their feelings, perceptions and opinions.

The next question in the survey asked respondents to identify potential influences upon why a change may or may not have taken place. A summary of themes and student quotes are included as Table 6. As the prejudice reduction literature suggests, intergroup contact, religion, educational opportunities and other social and personal demographic factors all influence the ability of college students to change their feelings, perceptions and opinions related to sexual diversity (Engberg, et al., 2007; Kardia, 1996; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000).

Table 6: Influences upon Changes in Feelings, Perceptions and Opinions

Theme	Sample Quote
Education & Awareness	Nothing caused me to change my perspective, however; I do believe that my perspective has grown because I know a lot more than I use to know.
Age	I think that when I was younger it didn't matter but when I met LGB people in high school I definitely embraced them and have stayed that way.
Ally/Friend/Personal Interaction	I think it was actually talking to them and getting to know how they think. They have similar views on issues that I have, and i realized we have a lot in common.
Religion & Culture	According to my religion, the Golden Rule tells us to treat everyone as I would want to be treated. To me, that is being treated fairly and with respect.
Society/media	I worked for Whitney M Young Health center as an HIV Test Counselor, and they were my co workers and clients.

As Engberg, et. al. (2007), Kardia (1996) and Hurtado et al., (1999) state, college environments offer a number of educational opportunities for people to learn about differences and interact with people who are different from themselves. A portion of respondents identified specific instances at college where they were faced with learning more about the LGB community and recognizing the importance of treating others with respect. These responses were categorized in the education and awareness theme. In addition, a general awareness emerged for respondents as they pursued a college education because of the programs that take place on campus, communities in which they reside, and the topics that are prevalent and discussed in class, such as one student indicated of his experience "college and its environment, social justice education, group dialogues about sex, gender, and sexuality. Working with an all male group, Phallacies" all played a role in increasing his level of awareness. This student spoke of his multiple

involvements on campus both in and out of the classroom that influenced his ability to change his perspectives. Other students referred to a specific class as well, for example, the following student states:

> Through mostly college workshops and friends who have spoken about their feelings about terms like "that's gay" or being seen and described as abnormal implicitly or explicitly has made me more aware and sensitized to these microaggressions around me and the power of speaking up

There is a sense of students making meaning of their feelings, perceptions and opinions, based upon their environments, classes and assignments. Some respondents were unable to articulate specifically that education was a factor in their ability to be more accepting or have positive attitudes related to LGB students. Most of these students instead offered the opinion that their feelings and perceptions came with time (age), as they continued to go to school, or developmentally grew older and experienced life. As age and education are often interconnected factors of development for individuals, some respondents related their change to their continual natural development as they got older and experienced more of the world. However, for these particular categories education and age were kept separate because of the development and experience that comes with age, versus the education attained within the classroom and other learning based activities and workshops. Some respondents were able to process how they viewed age affecting their ability to change their feelings and perceptions, one student specifically shared, "When I was younger, I didn't know what to think of them. However, as I got older, I grew to respect them."

Another influence on an individual's change in feelings and perceptions are instances of personal interaction and contact. The theme of ally/friend/interaction

emerged from a number of students referring to a friend, family member, or situation where a personal interaction took place that affected their views toward and opinions about LGB college students. Two students specifically referred to their personal interactions that influenced their feelings, perceptions and opinions, "Honestly, just by being around them I have learned to accept them a little more," while the other simply stated 'Personal experiences with these groups have been generally positive.'

Other responses in the ally/friend/interaction theme identify specific people and situations that influence their feelings, perceptions and opinions, as one student states 'Having a close friend be gay I didn't want him to feel like he couldn't be honest with me or I wouldn't love him and disown him like other people in his life.' This student was very intentional of changing their opinions and feelings because of the importance of the relationship with their friend, and the need to support this person. Another student made meaning of reasons for supporting and appreciating his LGB identified friends:

> I think as I continued to interact with my LGB friends, I came to appreciate that their sexual identity was just another piece of their overall identity. For example, my friend is not just "my gay friend", but a friend who has a racial identity, spiritual identity, social class, hobbies, interests, family role (brother, sister, uncle, etc). I believe being able to appreciate and honor the entire package an individual presents to us instead of compartmentalizing them is important. At the same time, not invalidating the LGB identity of an individual, but affirming it. Also, I think when you see things like "aversion therapy" does not work, you begin to see being LGB may not be a choice (from my understanding research shows that nature and nurture both play a role). Also, being exposed to ideas like Kinsey's fluidity of sexuality have opened my mind to challenging the polarized notions of strictly heterosexual or strictly homosexual.

Responses in this category are able to pinpoint and identify specific people and situations that influenced their initial thoughts and reactions to LGB college students. This theme had the most respondents as personal connections and interactions (contact as

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identified in prejudice reduction literature) typically influence an individual's ability to make sense of their feelings, perceptions and opinions. Religion and culture is the next theme related to the question of potential influences on change of perceptions, opinions and feelings. Respondents identified that both religion and familial environments influenced their change in and/or stance on LGB college students. Some respondents indicated that these socio-cultural factors are the reason they maintain their current feelings, perceptions and opinions, because that is what they believe, as other respondents indicated that their families and religions influenced their perceptions early on, but they are working to change their own perceptions and opinions. One student states:

> I was always accepting and neutral to LGB's. I would say I am more supportive of them now because since my departure from religious faith and my understanding of its radical hate towards LGB's I support them more. I link allot of hate and negativity towards Gays to perversions in religion. My understanding of radical faith made me more supportive.

Another student states:

> I don't know. For a while, I didn't think about it because it did not become an issue until college. Then when what the church teaches clashed with what others were saying, I started to dig deeper and then learned more about it.

> Both of these students identify religion as a place where their feelings, perceptions and opinions originated, and that through their own awareness and religion they need to do more searching to learn more within their own frame of religion or spirituality. The following student's story looks at the influence of culture within her family to explain her perceptions on LGB individuals.

> Well once I actually got into it with my ex-boyfriend's father about LGBTQ individuals. It pissed me off actually because there is someone in their family who is gay and they were just sitting up there talking about him. And it was frustrating because all their lives they use to spend time with this family member and have sleepovers and stuff and then all

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of sudden one day it just changed and then/now they're all grossed out or scared that this family member might want to do something to them, when that is definitely not the case. This actually happened again when one of my own family members came to visit and the younger brother of my ex was saying really terrible things and made it out to seem like my cousin liked him...or something, but whatever it was it pissed me off because people don't realize that just because some is LGBTQ does not mean they want you!!! Good grief. That is the most frustrating misconception. Even though I may not support LGBTQ, I don't [support] ignorance.

Even though the participant explains that she does not support LGB people, she struggles with her own feelings and thoughts to explore her experience and the need to be aware of ignorance. In addition, a change may have not taken place in this instance to be more supportive of LGB individuals, but for this individual the potential to become an ally could come with more opportunities for education and awareness. Though the change may be different for respondents, it is clear that factors of religion and cultural upbringings have a significant amount of influence over how students make sense of their feelings and perceptions about LGB students and related issues. The society and media theme emerged from responses that identified information and opinions consumed via numerous media outlets and interactions with society at large. This theme is closely aligned with the religion and culture category as most societal media outlets that are identified or followed, are typically related to the environment and people within a community, more specifically those that share common cultural threads. One respondent identified the actions and behaviors of black men specifically participating in 'down low' behavior:

> Well just looking at the statistics that there are a lot of black males who are on the "down low" and are spreading HIV. I think that it becomes dangerous when you are sexually intimate with males and females and no one really knows but yourself.

Another participant spoke of a current popular television show portraying the tribulations

of individuals who may be going through a coming out process and acceptance.

> When I saw an episode of Glee and one of the characters was being
> constantly harassed because he was gay. He finally just came out and said
> that he didn't want to be that way, he didn't want people to look at him and
> turn their nose up, and harass him because he was gay. I realized that
> sometimes they don't always want to be gay they just realize that they are
> and then they finally accept it. That episode touched me deeply because it
> makes people see that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals sometimes don't
> always want to be the way they are, and I think that it is so sad that people
> treat them the way they do.

The latter student used the television show to try and make sense of her belief that gay

people do not always want to be the way they are, yet still illustrates her ability to

empathize with how others treat LGB students. The next question examines further

respondents potential of possessing more positive attitudes toward LGB individuals.

Envisioning more Positive Feelings and Opinions toward LGB College Students

The last open-ended survey question asked participants if they would have the

ability to envision having more positive perceptions, feelings and opinions and if so why?

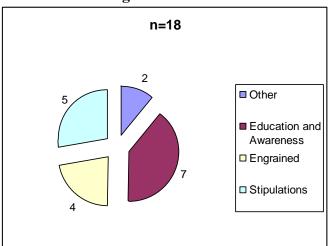A graphical representation of these responses is found in Figure 5.

Figure 2: Envision Having More Positive Attitudes

From the 18 responders that stated they could envision themselves having more positive perceptions, feelings and opinions, a few themes emerged as indicated by Figure 2. Approximately 28% of these individuals are still grappling with the dissonance of engrained perspectives from religion, family and personal perspectives, yet still consider the potential to hold more positive perceptions and opinions, as identified by one student statement:

> I think my religious background causes me to still have some negative feelings about LGB individuals. I think for me it is finding that balance of following "God's law" and loving all His children. I still don't know if society would say those two can coexist, but I believe they can.

Another 30% approximately indicated that education and awareness would play an important role in the re-envisioning of more positive perceptions toward LGB identified people. One student responded as follows: 'Ignorance is easier to justify my negative feelings however if I am educated properly my attitudes can change.' Lastly, a small portion of individuals indicated they could envision having positive feelings and opinions, however were quick to offer stipulations to this end. One student stated that she could have positive feelings and opinions for LGB people just not the MSM population specifically. Another student offered a contradicting statement to her ability to hold positive perceptions and feelings, by stating, 'If I had a negative perception towards LGB students, I would hold on to my opinion because I would feel entitled to it.' In addition, one female student respondent felt that she could hold more positive feelings and opinions 'If people would be more true to themselves and not be bisexual.' Each of these 'stipulations' that were offered leave the researcher to ask further questions, such as what do you mean by being more true to self?; does being bisexual mean that one is not true to themselves?; all because you are entitled to your opinion does it make your opinion right?

Suggestions for future research will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The next section of results will be a comparison analysis based on the social and personal demographic factors (i.e. biological sex, religion, socio-economic status, age, and education) as outlined in the literature review section in Chapter 2.

Social and Personal Demographic Factor Comparison Analysis

As mentioned in the literature review, Jenkins et. al. (2009) and Lewis (2003) examined the influence of social and personal demographic factors on the ability of Black college students' to reduce their prejudicial thoughts toward LGB people on college campuses. Findings from this research will be analyzed from similar social and demographic lens to add new literature and perspectives to the ongoing research currently being conducted on Black college students. The following social and personal demographic factors will be used in this analysis: biological sex, religion, socio-economic status, age, and education.

Biological Sex Influences on Feelings, Perceptions and Opinions

With regard to the influence of biological sex of the participants on feelings, perceptions and opinions toward LGB, women had more overall positive feelings and opinions than men (68% and 39% respectively). Approximately 40% of men identified having more ambivalent/neutral feelings while only 14% of women identified with these same feelings. Only 1 man and woman responded with having unsupportive attitudes, and approximately 14% of both men and women identified with having in between feelings, such as liking a particular person, but not necessarily their actions. In addition, over 80% of men and women respondents identified having a friend who identified as LGB. Forty-seven percent of men and 25% of women noted these friends were out before the

friendship started. Looking at support for gay employment rights, same-sex marriage,

LGB people serving in the military, support for a family member or friend coming out

responses by biological sex are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: Societal LGB issues and College-Related Situations by Biological Sex

		Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Neutral	Somewhat Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive
Legalizing same-sex marriage?	F	64% (23)	8% (3)	11% (4)	5% (2)	8% (3)
	M	50% (9)	11% (2)	22% (4)	5% (1)	17% (3)
NON-discrimination in employment based upon sexual orientation	F	100% (36)				
	M	83% (15)		17% (3)		
LGB individuals serving in the military?	F	84% (30)	8% (3)	8% (3)		
	M	72% (13)	17% (3)	11% (2)		
a friend shared with you that he or she is gay, lesbian, bisexual?	F	89% (32)	3% (1)	8% (3)		
	M	61% (11)	5% (1)	22% (4)		
a family member shared with you that he or she is gay, lesbian or bisexual?	F	84% (30)	8% (3)	8% (3)		
	M	56% (10)		28% (5)	17% (3)	

Table 7 illustrates that in all instances women participants are more supportive of these

societal issues related to the LGB community. In the areas of non-discrimination in

employment, a family member coming out and same-sex marriage men remain neutral

and unsupportive, where women are more supportive. These findings continue to support

prior research that suggests women tend to have positive attitudes, feelings and

perceptions toward LGB people more than men (Jenkins et al., 2009; Lewis, 2003). The

next factor analyzed is religion and its influence on feelings, perceptions and opinions toward LGB college students.

Religion Influences on Feelings, Perceptions and Opinions

With regard to the influence of religion on feelings, perceptions and opinions about LGB individuals, approximately 13% of the respondents who identified as following a particular religion indicated negative feelings, or disapproval of behaviors, but not the person. The remaining respondents who identified following a religion maintained positive feelings, perceptions, and opinions about LGB people. Many of these individuals referred to instances of not being judgmental or wanting to discriminate against someone. In addition, there are nuances within the responses that allude to respondents believing LGB people make a choice to participate in a particular lifestyle. Furthermore, other influences of religion upon perceptions and opinions stem from the perspective that as a religious person (mainly Christian) that it is not a person's place to judge another human being; therefore they treat people as people, though they may not agree with the lifestyle. This raises the question and presents nuances as to how someone establishes boundaries for interacting with people respectfully and differentiating between a person and their behavior. This will be discussed later on in Chapter 5.

When examining data from different religious backgrounds particularly Baptist, Christian, Catholic and Islam, there were no noticeable differences between each of the respondents based on their feelings, perceptions, and opinions about LGB. All of the responses that were identified as being negative, or in between (love the sinner, not the sin) were from one of these four religions. However, there were also overwhelmingly positive responses from individuals that identified as Baptist and Christian, while the

Islamic identified respondents tended to be ambivalent or negative. In addition, an Islamic identified participant who was ambivalent about his perceptions and opinions, made it clear that he would not knowingly befriend an LGB person.

As pointed out earlier in this chapter some respondents were able to have positive attitudes once they explored other religions or questioned what was being taught by their particular faith. However, there is no clear delineation that points to the true affect that religion has on perceptions, feelings and opinions of this group of potential allies toward LGB people. Not even frequency of attendance at a religious service clearly influenced the participants' perceptions and opinions. According to the data collected all of the respondents who identified having negative feelings about LGB people, only identified attending service mainly for certain holidays or once a week, while those who attended service more frequently and not at all held positive perceptions and opinions. Furthermore, looking at support of current LGB social-related issues mirrored responses of those who attended services, with few exceptions, further creating a need for more examination of such nuances. There is an influence that is evident from a religious perspective, but it differs for each respondent based upon their personal interactions, cultural upbringings and the impact of education (Jenkins et al., 2009). The next factors of socio-economic status, age, and education are explored simultaneously.

Other Related Social and personal demographic factors Influences on Feelings, Perceptions and Opinions about LGB

The last three factors of education, age, and socioeconomic class can be examined separately, however as discussed previously, factors of education and age are often interconnected. Research suggests that with more education, students will experience an increase of positive attitudes (Engberg et al., 2007; Jenkins et al., 2009; Kardia, 1996;

Schroeder, 2004). Increased levels of education in general tend to be predictive of relatively positive attitudes toward lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (Herek & Capitanio, 1995; Herek & Glunt, 1993; Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994; Schellenberg et al., 1999). In relation to socioeconomic class, it can be rather difficult to disentangle from race and institutional structures (i.e. education system) that aid in widening the economic gap in America (Western & Pettit, 2002). Therefore in this section, an attempt will be made to analyze the data from each of these factors and address the intersections and nuances in the next chapter's discussion section.

Since all respondents in this survey identify as college-level students education and age will be looked at as year in school. When examining the data from the year in school perspective, the findings do not follow the trends suggested by Jenkins et al., (2009) or Lewis, (2003), instead sophomores, seniors and 5th year undergraduate students tended to have negative and in between feelings, perceptions and opinions more than first year students and juniors who held mainly positive and neutral feelings. In addition, 7 participants with negative perceptions were not born in the United States, and came to start college therefore the influences of another education system could potential bias their perspectives. Prior research indicates that as students matriculate they gain more opportunities, to engage around areas of difference, and tend to become more accepting (Engberg et al., 2007; Jenkins et al., 2009; Kardia, 1996; Schroeder, 2004). This was not overwhelmingly the case in this study. When looking at support of LGB related issues, more participants who indicated unsupportive or neutral stances on same-sex marriage and LGB people serving in the military identified as sophomores and higher. When

looking at supporting a family member or friend coming out there was not a clear indication of influence of year in school.

Looking at the data from a socio-economic status perspective, no specific trends were found as well. According to research, Anderson and Fetner (2008) found that individuals in working-class occupations usually possess less tolerant attitudes than those with middle-class occupations. Participants in this study with mainly positive feelings and perceptions toward LGB people were found at all levels of the socio-economic status scale. The themed responses that were identified as mainly negative or in between were found among respondents who classified their household income as middle class. As far as support of LGB societal influences, based on the factor of socio-economic status, there was also no clear indication. At each socio-economic level there were unsupportive and neutral stances on same-sex marriage, LGB people serving in the military and supporting a family member or friend coming out. Approximately 83% of the respondents in the middle class income level ($30,001 – $75,000), indicated supporting a family member or friend coming out. Around the same percentage of respondents identified supporting non-discrimination in employment, LGB people serving in the military and same-sex marriage, with the latter being the most unsupportive in this socio-economic status category. Socio-economic status presents more questions and nuances to prior research on this topic that deserves further exploration.

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter revealed potential Black college student ally participants in this study held mainly positive perceptions, feelings and opinions toward LGB students. In addition, respondents made meaning of their perceptions,

feelings and opinions through self-reflection and identified where and how their feelings about LGB may have developed. The potential for students to reflect upon their experiences and identify their own perceptions and feelings about LGB college students is untapped and provides space for a specific voice to be heard on college campuses in the form of allies. Participants in this study articulate their positive perceptions, feelings and opinions about LGB students opening the door for future students to do the same and become potential allies on their campuses. The final chapter will explore some of the nuances found within the findings and considerations for future research and implications of the research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Many college and universities have expressed a commitment to creating a diverse student population, with opportunities for involvement and education around issues of diversity and inclusion (Kardia, 1996). However, most of the work related to diversity at many campuses continues to focus on racial/ethnic diversity, and often times sexual orientation remains on the peripheral of conversations (Kardia, 1996). Socio-cultural trends illustrate that more people are coming out as gay, lesbian or bisexual at a younger age in society, creating a larger number of students growing up and going through school and entering college as openly as LGB (McCready, 2004; Sanlo, 1998). Research on higher education documented that students still experience instances of prejudice and discrimination personally, for example, being verbally insulted, threatened, or physically attacked while in school (Cannick, 2007; D'Augelli, 1989; D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Herek, 1988; Jenkins et al., 2009; Sanlo, 1998). As institutions recognize this trend, work needs to be done to create campus communities that are inclusive of all areas of diversity. Additionally, the need to highlight and focus on the intersections of diverse social identities remains important when looking at creating inclusive campus communities across racial/ethnic and LGB cultural lines, since in society there are still more individuals who hold negative attitudes than people with positive attitudes toward LGB individuals (Davis & Smith, 2009). Davis and Smith (2009) explored the current feelings, perceptions and opinions of Black college students about LGB individuals, in order to identify the potential of creating inclusive college environments for all social identities.

Research indicates that attitudes of Blacks are likely to be negative toward the acceptance of homosexuality more than any other racial group (Davis & Smith, 2009).

This study addressed the main question of *what are the perceptions and feelings of Black college students about lesbians, gay men, and bisexual college students?* In addition to exploring three overarching questions for deeper understanding: *Where do Black college students identify their perceptions and feelings about lesbians, gay men and bisexuals originated? Are there specific experiences that influence the perceptions and feelings of Black college students about lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals? How can Black college students be encouraged to have more positive perceptions and feelings about lesbians, gay men and bisexual college students?* These questions of inquiry were influenced by the body of literature stated in Chapter 2, more specifically the idea that Blacks mainly hold negative attitudes toward LGB people, as illustrated in media and through personal observations and experiences.

This chapter will summarize the major findings of this study and further analyze the data in relation to the existing body of literature and translate the findings and analysis into specific implications for institutional practice. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research endeavors that build on the results of this study.

Major Findings
In this study, there are three major findings that emerged from the responses of the participants. The exploration of perceptions, feelings and opinions toward LGB students, provided participants the opportunity to realize their potential to be an ally to this community. First, the data from the survey indicates that perceptions, feelings and opinions of the participants toward LGB individuals are mainly positive across social and

personal demographic factors and a portion of participants were able to attribute meaning to moments in their lives that influenced their positive feelings and perceptions. Second, contact with LGB individuals, remains the main catalyst for students to form and change their perceptions, feelings and opinions. Third, potential allies exist among Black college students as exhibited by the participants in this study, who are willing to engage in dialogue and think critically about activities and programs related to LGB issues.

Positive Perceptions, Opinions and Feelings toward Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals

Trends in prior research indicate that Blacks are more likely than their other racial counterparts to have negative attitudes toward LGB individuals (Davis & Smith, 2009). In addition, research on other social and personal demographic factors (D'Augelli and Rose, 1990; Herek, 1988; Jenkins et al., 2009; and Lewis, 2003) report that women are more accepting of LGB people than men and individuals from lower to working class backgrounds are usually less accepting of LGB people than those from middle to upperclass (Anderson and Fetner, 2008). Those who classify themselves as religious, tend to have mainly negative perceptions of LGB people (Schulte & Battle, 2004; Sullivan, 2003; Ward, 2005). More often than not, students who attend college are provided with opportunities to engage in course work and dialogues around difference that can lead to a change in how people with different social identities are viewed (M. Brown & Henriquez, 2008; Enberg et al., 2007; Schellenberg et al., 1999).

Results from this survey provide another perspective entirely when looking at LGB societal related issues both men and women hold mainly positive perceptions and opinions, with women participants holding slightly more positive feelings and perceptions than men. Religious involvement did not clearly influence the feelings and

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perceptions of all respondents; instead the influence of religion could not be separated from personal interactions, outside influences and education for most participants. Some participants did articulate moments of dissonance between holding strong religious beliefs and their personal experiences, as evident by students who shared their desire to 'go deeper and learn more to examine their feelings about LGB people.'

Even with the overall perceptions and feelings being mainly positive, one underlying theme that emerged from the data was the use of terms and perspectives that indicated being LGB was a preference or choice as illustrated by this example, 'I have no negative feelings about the LGB community. People like who they like and I have no objections with a person's choices.' Participants who indicated both positive and negative feelings, perceptions and opinions, utilized terms that suggested sexuality is a choice that people consciously make. Identifying sexual orientation as solely a choice is part of a larger on-going conversation in the United States today (Frank, 2008). It is unclear whether the approximately 23% of respondents that utilized choice or preference in their answers did so as a product of societal socialization through religion, culture and media, stereotypes, education or if it is just a true misuse of words. Either way the opportunity exists for future research into this emerging group of participants about their opinions when using the words sexual preference and choice rather than sexual orientation.

Overall, the data suggest that there is potential for ally development for the participants based on the positive perceptions, feelings and opinions evident in the data. Ally development requires specific engagement in awareness, education, skill building and action with the purpose of intentionally working to end oppression (Washington & Evans, 2000). The students within their positive reflections pinpointed and identified

specific experiences and people in their lives that influenced their awareness and current feelings about LGB people. The amount of positive responses should remain as a sign of the potential, unique opportunities for ally development that must be explored in greater detail. Participants in the study mentioned instances of supporting LGB people as well as willing to speak up on behalf of someone who identified as LGB. One student stated:

> My best friend whom I have known for over 9 years came out of the closet 5 years ago and I supported her through it all and would never stand for her being discriminated against. seeing the large amount of people that have killed themselves or turned to self mutilation in some way because of their sexual background has really gotten to me and pushed me to want to change peoples mind sets about things. . .

This student illustrates her desire to be supportive of her best friend and motivated to want to change people's minds. As she continues to be supportive of her friend there is the chance she will develop into an ally not just for her friends but for others in the LGB community. This participant's willingness to speak up on behavior of her friend reveals the potential for and existence of Black allies on campus. Working toward becoming an ally is tough and requires persistence to continue doing what is right for marginalized groups. Developing skills, gaining education, becoming aware and being action-oriented all require a level of commitment and looks different from person to person (Washington & Evans, 2000). The need to support a friend was one of the main reasons shared that motivated participants to exhibit potential of becoming an ally, even though the use of the term ally was never used by participants. Rather ally was implied though actions, the desire to care for friends and family and the overwhelmingly positive responses and thoughtful reflections in the data. Establishing and defining motivating factors, such as friendship, provides a foundation of developing potential allies on college campuses and will be discussed later on in the next section of implications for research. Correlations

between positive attitudes, ally oriented behaviors and the 89% of participants with a connection to an LGB identified person relates directly to the second finding in this study.

Impact of Contact with LGB People

Contact with LGB people was a influential in shaping or changing perceptions, feelings and opinions for approximately 65% of the respondents. This was evident by the number of respondents who not only mentioned individuals in their lives who identified as LGB but also by information voluntarily cited by participants in their responses as an important part of the development process of their perceptions, feelings and opinions. Participants attributed the origination of perceptions, feelings and opinions to a particular person or specific moment or event that stood out to them as influential on their thoughts about LGB people. Regardless of where their perceptions, feelings and opinions can be traced to the relationship between contact and attitudes toward LGB people remains a positive correlation for people to voluntarily engage in contact with LGB people (Kardia, 1996). Existing literature provides strong support for the conclusion that such contact plays a powerful role in promoting positive attitudes regarding areas of difference as well (Allport, 1979). Only 11% or 6 participants had not experienced contact based on the survey (either a family member or friend) with an LGB identified person to their knowledge. Participants in this 11% shared similar perceptions and feelings as those who indicated having a LGB identified family member or friend, which were not overwhelmingly positive but from their responses it is evident that they were processing their feelings, as one student shared:

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> I really do not think much about LGB students, to me they are students like
> everyone else. I think my view are in between because these people go through a
> lot, part of it for me is to treat them like I would any other person, with respect.

Furthermore, participants who identified having a LGB family member or friend indicated a potential to change their current perceptions because respect for the relationship with that person, but felt their upbringings and surrounding environment may not support such a change in their personal opinions.

The relationship between contact with LGB people and the perceptions, feelings and opinions of the potential ally participants, is complex and affected by the type and proximity of interaction that holds different meanings for different individuals. For participants who have limited direct contact with individuals who identify as LGB may be more reliant upon false information or popular opinions to create their thoughts about LGB people; resulting in a perpetuation of perspectives that reinforce negative beliefs and stereotypes and lower their inability to interact with LGB people and shift toward having positive feelings and perceptions. This was evident by one participant who stated "It [homosexuality] doesn't bother me. As long as they know that I am not gay, lesbian, or bisexual." Herek & Berrill, (1992), identifies this response as part of the anticipatory function of his approach theory. This function outlines how individuals often raise their own self-esteem to express themselves in a way which is more socially acceptable and yet still distance themselves from those they are not like and do not want to be associated with (Herek & Berrill, 1992). This was often portrayed as a follow up in a few of the responses made by participants that would indicate a positive feeling, and finish their statement or thoughts by defining their own social identity, distancing themselves from another person.

For some participants, having a best friend who identified as LGB was enough to create a positive attitude, while other respondents indicated family members who identified as LGB and were not included in family functions, and forgotten about altogether. The difference between the participants circumstances, illustrates how complex and situational contact with LGB people can be and how perceptions and opinions cannot be generalized. In most cases where the relationship becomes complicated is when participants indicated their religion or culture as reasons for rationalizing their perceptions and opinions about LGB people. Some participants rationalized their opinions, by stating a dislike for the behavior or not agreeing with the lifestyle based up on their personal beliefs, however made it clear that they would still be friendly to someone, because that is how they treat everyone regardless of their sexual orientation. This type of rationalization creates situations where explicit attitude reactions are prevalent. When dealing with explicit and implicit attitude reactions students may consciously make the decision to say the right things and behave accordingly in public to portray acceptance of LGB people; however, they may not truly hold those beliefs when surrounded by individuals they would deem safe. There is no way to truly know whether responses were potentially biased by implicit or explicit attitude reactions, however, if participants were providing more explicit attitude reactions the potential ability to transform their perceptions and opinions about LGB people could be limited.

Prejudice reduction literature illustrates that under certain conditions a significant influence on potential reduction can occur because of contact (Allport, 1979). In addition, attendance at college also affects students' attitudes about LGB people by providing conditions under which contact is more likely to result in positive attitudes (Kardia,

1996). Based on responses from participants, this could occur in at least two ways: First, contact that occurs through curricular or extra-curricular educational programming. Respondents indicated a change in their perceptions after taking a class that offered opportunities to work with the LGB population, or social issues in society. Other responses identified departments and groups on campus that offered programs, speakers and information that highlighted issues the LGB community faces. One student was able to find commonalities that gave him the chance to shift their perspective; and second, individuals (students, staff and faculty) who identify as LGB on campus, provide a more humanistic interaction that gives people the chance to engage in conversations differently, and dispel possible myths and stereotypes students may hold about LGB people. Another participant stated 'I think it was actually talking to them [LGB students] and getting to know how they think. They have similar views on issues that I have, and I realized we have a lot in common.' There is no guarantee that either of these situational contacts will provide people with an experience that will cause a significant shift in their perspective, however, there is potential, as illustrated by participants that such contacts will offer a different perspective and provide an opportunity for understanding and acceptance to occur.

Openness and Willingness to Engage

Contact, as previously mentioned, can create an atmosphere where prejudice reduction may occur. And within these contacts, there is not a guarantee that individuals within a particular environment are always willing to engage in the interactions. Participants in this study are taking advantage of opportunities to engage about social issues, and making meaning of their own perceptions about LGB people on campus as

indicated by 17% participating in an LGB group, 39% attending an LGB related event, 87% have cultivated a relationship with a friend who identifies as LGB, and 100% of participants would accept a Black LGB person in the cultural center on campus (see Tables 1-3).

Responses suggest participants are thinking critically about why they hold such beliefs about accepting LGB people as potential roommates, in cultural centers, and supporting equal rights. Some students articulated their desire to accept others based on the realization that oppressing others was not necessary and did more harm than good for that particular student. Other participants are in agreement that LGB people have a right to access resources on campus, and that sexuality should not dictate one's ability to join a group or do a job. There was a large focus from the participant responses on a person being a person and sexuality only being a part of their identity not solely their whole being. This perspective was also shared when individuals discussed the potential of choosing an LGB roommate. Approximately 24% of participants shared they would not choose a roommate solely on the premise of the race or sexual orientation of an individual. Other responses indicated that they either experienced living with a gay roommate already or would share a room with an LGB person if they were placed together by the university. Though this may counter what is typically experienced by residence life departments across the nation, participants in this study have shown a propensity to try and work out the relationship and situation at hand, creating an opportunity for intergroup dialogue, understanding and reinforcing the potential for allies among this group of participants. Being an ally is a difficult and complex role that can take on many meanings in different challenging situations (Evans & Washington, 2010).

As previously mentioned, to be an effective ally requires involvement and understanding of four basic levels of education, awareness, skills and action. Individuals engage in a unique journey at each level of ally development that does not always involve a clear beginning and end, but is a continual process of learning and growth. Participants' potential as allies in this study is related through stories of positive interaction and reflection with LGB people. One student states:

> I think I have always been good at accepting people for who they are. Being a racial minority, I struggle when people create their notion of me and my community without taking the time to get to know us. Since I dislike this, it would be hypocritical for me to treat others in the same way. I think I have developed increasingly positive perceptions and opinions about LGBT individuals while attending college. College allowed me the opportunity to interact with more LGBT individuals, because more were out. . .

In this example the student begins to reflect upon his awareness and acquisition of knowledge from college and personal interactions to make sense of feelings about LGB people. This participant did not directly identify himself as an ally, yet the potential to have deeper meaning making conversations and for this student to begin viewing himself as an ally is a possibility.

The majority of the data indicates support for LGB people, and many participants emphasize the whole person rather than their individual social identities when making decisions. Some respondents may have shared these viewpoints and perspectives because they have never been in this situation and believe this is how they would respond if faced with such decisions. Either way the responses gathered highlight the potential for Black college student allies toward LGB students is present for college campuses to further develop and explore.

An overwhelmingly number of participants indicated willingness and openness to engage with LGB people and related issues within their college community. Some of the behaviors presented as experiences of the participants indicated some ally type behaviors and moments of interaction that tended to not correlate with prior research done on college students. Prior research indicated that Black college students have mainly negative attitudes in comparison to other college students yet did not examine further for potential positive trends within the recorded data. With this group of participants sharing their stories and experiences it offers the opportunity for colleges and universities to explore their own campus communities to discover the potential for their own allies and redesign the image that is often portrayed of homophobia among college communities and specifically Black college students. This will be discussed in the next section of ways to implement the findings of this research.

Implications for Research

This research explored the potential of participants as Black college student allies and their perceptions, feelings and opinions of LGB college students, resulting in emerging themes that offer insights into ways in which this data can be used on college campuses. Responses indicated a number of students in favor of acceptance of LGB people in cultural centers on campus, therefore colleges must continue to increase their programming and education efforts around intersecting social identities to provide safe, inclusive and supportive environments for students with multiple social identities.

Another implication of the research is the need for current students, staff, faculty and administrators to have their own community/organization on campus where they can continue to explore perceptions, feelings, and opinions as potential allies to the larger

LGB community. Offering a support network on campus could encourage more individuals to join in the dialogue and process of self-identifying their perceptions, feelings and opinions rather than relying on the current ones they may possess, which could be influenced by societal, religious or familial influences. The opportunity for students to personally explore their feelings and opinions is paramount to the growth in numbers/strength of this emerging potential ally community.

One specific way to create a support network/group on campus is to create community building workshops on campus. These workshops would consist of information presented in safe zone program trainings, a program that is designed to teach individuals on campus to create a space within their office, department area, or residence hall room or lounge that is welcoming and affirming of LGB people. In addition to the general information normally presented, there would be more of a focus spent on ally development behaviors and attitudes. The findings in this study suggest that many of the students voiced their experiences and motivations for standing up for a friend or family member, without specifically using the term ally. Therefore, by creating these trainings there may be more knowledge and skills to share with potential Black allies on campus that will allow them to engage in self-awareness opportunities and dialogue that could work as a learning environment to continue building the confidence of students to step up to situations of injustice. Furthermore, this specific workshop could create a space or organization that offers support for Black allies to meet others like themselves on campus that may need guidance and mentoring to continue standing up for their friends, and exploring their desire to treat all students on campus with respect regardless of their sexuality.

Because students having multiple salient social identities, cultural offices, must make the effort to engage in conversations around the intersections of social identities including but not limited to LGB issues. Participants in this study indicated their experiences of thinking around acceptance of and engaging with LGB people on their campuses to discover commonalities and their own ability to support someone as an ally. Cultural centers need to play a pivotal role in setting the tone and pace for Black students on campus to engage in these conversations. Particularly at campuses where the Black community relies on the Cultural center as a space to build community, these spaces are more important than ever to offer opportunities for training and encouragement of working across intersections of social identity to create a welcoming space for all students who may need to access the resources available. In addition, the cultural centers should collaborate on efforts for training and learning such as the workshops spoke of previously in this section to compliment the programmatic opportunities of conversations around intersections of social identities.

Participants identified learning around LGB issues from attendance at programmatic and academic events/classes. Therefore departments on campus must do their part to create a supportive environment for participants to continue the dialogue and conversations that might lead to learning for all students involved, this could be accomplished by continuing to offer and investigate the potential to offer more interdisciplinary learning opportunities. Ethnic, LGB, gender and religious studies departments should collaborate with political science and sociology departments to create and implement classes, projects and events to take place on campus focusing on intersecting social identities. One participant commented:

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"I need to find my own balance of understanding of how religion and LGB issues . . . I don't know if society would say these two can co-exist, but I believe they can."

In addition, participants explored their own internal struggles to reconcile the dissonance between positive interactions they may have had and the beliefs they have been taught. Some participants were able to illustrate that learning opportunities were important to their development of positive perceptions, feelings and opinions. Academic departments working with cultural centers on campus on issues of intersecting social identities could provide great curricular/co-curricular programming that offers multiple holistic approaches to learning about this complex topic.

Another implication of this research is the need for cultural centers to explore collaboration efforts specifically with LGBT centers or organizations on campus. By pulling resources and offering interactive opportunities, students will be able to engage with individuals different from themselves and foster their own relationships about relevant social issues and topics that are impacting both communities. For college campuses where only one Multicultural office may exist, the need to examine the services offered and the staffing structure could also accomplish the same means.

Lastly, this research opens the door to a dialogue thought impossible to have. Participants clearly indicate a willingness to listen and learn that may influence a change in their perceptions, feelings and opinions. Many of the students talked about how they realized how much they have in common with or the personal relationships they have with LGB identified people. By engaging in this dialogue more opportunities for people to realize the importance of understanding of LGB societal issues, becomes possible to

create space for more potential Black college student allies to come forward and engage in building inclusive communities on campus.

Future Research

Over the last few decades, research on Black college student perceptions, feelings and opinions toward LGB students has been sparse. Trends have indicated that Black college students tend to have negative more than positive feelings. In addition, religion, class and gender also have differing affects on attitudes toward LGB people. Research from this study provides its own direction for future research on this unique group of potential Black college student allies.

First, we must continue to highlight and encourage these potential Black college student allies to speak out and tell their stories. The unique perspective that has been found in this study is only the beginning. Through this group tends to be overcast or are hard to pinpoint the need to explore ways to continue to capture their experiences and stories remains a priority. By focusing on the participants of this study the researcher learned the allies within the Black college student population self reflect their experiences which could be utilized to help other students begin their own self-exploratory journey into their own perceptions, feelings and opinions.

Second, when looking to further define the capacity and depth of this group through research in the future, would be to inquire about athletic status and be more intentional about fraternity or sorority involvement on campus. In addition, I would ask participants to describe a specific event or situation where participants may have spoken on behalf of or stood up for someone who identified as LGB. This latter question would

give insight into the possibility of action oriented allies and may reduce potential response bias that may occur from implicit and explicit reactions.

Another potential topic to explore within this research is the use of terms such as choice/sexual preference by individuals who self-identified having positive perceptions, feelings and opinions toward LGB students. This potential research could offer insight into whether terms are originating through education systems, communities, religious institutions or familial structures.

In addition, the need to explore questions and topics further could potentially be addressed by conducting face-to-face interviews with this potential ally population. By doing interviews, researchers could delve deeper into some of the language being used as part of this study and even probe participants to further reflect upon their own journey in greater detail to gain richer, more detailed stories and potentially limit clarify some of the thought processes and dissonance participants may be experiencing.

Lastly, there is a group of Black college students out there who might not consider themselves an ally to the LGB community. It would be advantageous to gain insight into the specific experiences, perceptions, feelings and opinions of these particular students. However, these students may not be willing to participate in a research study to share their stories or those who do participate could potentially offer up more social desirable answers they believe the researcher may want to hear, thus rendering such an inquiry ineffective. Even with such difficultly, by inquiring with students who choose to not self-identify as a LGB ally, the information gathered could reveal more about the potential of this population, and the interview itself may act as catalyst for self-reflection

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or an educational learning opportunity to get students to think about their own biases and preconceived perceptions about LGB college students.

Conclusion

My experience conducting research as a Black gay male about the potential Black college student allies' perceptions, feelings and opinions toward LGB college students was a source of insight and particularly encouraging for me. Specifically this study served as an examination of my personal experiences and the observations I make on college campuses daily as a college administrator. In addition, this research served as a reminder that collaboration is imperative across offices and departments to ensure students are supported holistically in their journey of identity development and college transition. This research study data serves as evidence of the potential for individuals to engage in dialogue about LGB related issues across experience, social identity and perspective and as college administrators we must meet this need directly.

Through this experience I have reinforced my thoughts about the ability to build inclusive communities with intersections of social identities in mind. My personal experience and interactions with colleagues and students illustrates that there are individuals willing to treat others with respect regardless of the social identities one may possess; the first step of engaging the conversation just needs to happen. College communities must commit to offering opportunities for intersections of social identities to be explored through dialogue and education. College administrators and students alike must examine their own personal biases to make sure they are not impeding such learning opportunities from taking place. Furthermore, students must recognize that there are

others willing to engage in the building of such inclusive communities and dialogue

about differences of opinions and perspectives, but someone must take the first step.

APPENDIX A

PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF HETEROSEXISM
(HEREK & BERRILL, 1992)

Name of Function	Description	Benefit to Individual
Evaluative functions:		
Experiential	Generalizes from past experiences with specific lesbians or gay men to create a coherent image of gay people in relation to one's own interests	Makes sense of past experiences and used them to guide behavior
Anticipatory	Anticipates benefits or punishments expected to be received directly from lesbians or gay men	In absence of direct experience with gay men or lesbians, influences future behavior so as to maximize rewards and minimize punishments
Expressive functions:		
Social Identity:		
Value-expressive	Lesbians or gay men symbolize an important value conflict	Increases self-esteem by affirming individual's view of self as a person who adheres to particular values
Social-expressive	Lesbians or gay men symbolize the in-group or out-group	Increases self-esteem by winning approval of others whose opinion is valued; increases sense of group solidarity.
Defensive	Lesbians or gay men symbolize unacceptable part of self	Reduces anxiety associated with a psychological conflict by denying and externalizing the unacceptable aspect of self and then attacking it.

NOTE: With the evaluative functions, benefit is contingent upon direct experiences with lesbians and gay men. With the expressive functions, benefit is contingent upon the consequences of expressing the attitude.

APPENDIX B

EMAIL COVER LETTER TO LISTSERV MEMBERS

Dear Colleague,

My name is Kyle Oldham and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and I am conducting a research study to examine the feelings, perceptions and opinions of Black college students toward gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. This research is intended to explore and contribute to the current nationwide discussions and trends among Black college students related to attitudes toward lesbian, gay and bisexual college students.

I am making contact with colleagues at colleges and universities to encourage their students to participate ANONYMOUSLY in an online survey for my dissertation research study. I am asking colleagues to forward this email to Black/African American college students and/or student organizations on their campus.

The survey will be available through **April 30th** and should only take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Participants will also have the opportunity to enter into a drawing for a $50 VISA gift card at the end of the survey.

Responses will be anonymous and no personal identifiable information will be collected. Participants may choose not to participate in this research, as well as stop answering questions at any point without penalty.

For further information or if any problems or concerns arise during the course of the study please contact Kyle Oldham at koldham@educ.umass.edu.

Please click on the following link to access the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Blkcollegestudent . The survey will be available through April 30, 2011.

Thank You,

Kyle Oldham
Doctoral Candidate, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Department of Student Development & Pupil and Personnel Services

APPENDIX C

EMAIL COVER LETTER TO STUDENT

Attention Student

Greetings! My name is Kyle Oldham and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and I am inviting you to participate in a research study ANONYMOUSLY. I am conducting a research study to examine the feelings, perceptions and opinions of Black college students toward gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. This research is intended to explore and contribute to the current nationwide discussions and trends among Black college students related to attitudes toward lesbian, gay and bisexual college students.

The survey will be available through **April 30th** and should only take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey you will also have the opportunity to enter into a drawing for a $50 VISA gift card.

Responses will be anonymous and no personal identifiable information will be collected. Participants may choose not to participate in this research, as well as stop answering questions at any point without penalty.

For further information or if any problems or concerns arise during the course of the study please contact Kyle Oldham at koldham@educ.umass.edu. All of your inquiries will be confidential.

Please click on the following link to access the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Blkcollegestudent . The survey will be available through April 30, 2011.

Thank You,

Kyle Oldham
Doctoral Candidate, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Department of Student Development & Pupil and Personnel Services

APPENDIX D

BLACK COLLEGE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AND OPINIONS

SURVEY

Dear Participant,

Greetings! My name is Kyle Oldham and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and I am inviting you to participate in a research study ANONYMOUSLY.

The purpose of this study is to understand the feelings, perceptions, and opinions of Black college students toward gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. This research is intended to explore and contribute to the current nationwide discussions and trends among Black college students related to attitudes toward lesbian, gay men, and bisexual college students.

I would appreciate your help in providing much needed information about the opinions of Black college students toward lesbian, gay and bisexual college students. Your name, institution, or any other personal information will not be connected to your responses in any way.

When responding to the questions, please reflect upon how your true feelings and opinions may have been influenced or shaped about lesbian, gay and bisexual college students. Your answers are important to guide the research; therefore, thoughtful and honest answers will be helpful and appreciated. There are NO WRONG responses.

The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. You are encouraged to answer all questions if you can, but you have the option to discontinue responding at any time. By completing the survey, you will be eligible to enter into a drawing for a chance to win a $50 gift card.

If you have questions regarding this study, or would like to discuss your answers further please contact me, Kyle Oldham at koldham@educ.umass.edu. All of your inquiries will be confidential. Thank you again for your help, I look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire.

Thank You!

Black College Student Perceptions and Opinions Survey
The first set of questions asks for some background information
Do you self-identify as a person of Black/African descent?
O Yes
O No
Please identify your racial/ethnic background. *(Check all that apply)*
- ☐ African American
- ☐ African (from country in Africa) *(list country below)*
- ☐ Asian (country of origin if known) *(list country below)*
- ☐ Cape Verdean
- ☐ Caribbean (country of origin if known) *(list country below)*
- ☐ Dominican
- ☐ Haitian
- ☐ Jamaican
- ☐ Latino/a (country of origin if known) *(list country below)*
- ☐ Mexican
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Puerto Rican
- ☐ Caucasian/White
- ☐ Other

Identify country from above (if applicable)

Were you born in the United States?
O Yes
O No

If No, how old were you when you came to the United States?

What is your sex?
O Female
O Male
O Other

What is your age?

Do you consider yourself a member of a religious denomination?
O Yes
O No

With which denomination(s) are you affiliated? (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ Agnostic
- ☐ Atheist
- ☐ Baptist
- ☐ Buddhism
- ☐ Catholicism
- ☐ Hinduism
- ☐ Islam
- ☐ Jehovah's Witness
- ☐ Judaism
- ☐ Lutheran
- ☐ Methodist
- ☐ Christian/Non-denominational
- ☐ Pentecostal
- ☐ Protestant
- ☐ Universalism
- ☐ Other (please specify below)

How often do you attend organized religious services?
O Once a week
O Twice a month
O Once a month
O Mainly for certain holidays (specific to your religion)
O Do not attend services
O Other Please Specify

Do you attend services at a historically Black church?
O Yes
O No

Are you involved in any predominately Black/African American campus or student groups?
O Yes
O No
Please describe and/or name these groups

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Have you ever attended a program or event that focused on the LGB community or issues?
O Yes
O No
Please describe or name the event.

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Are you involved in any predominately Lesbian Gay Bisexual or Ally* campus or student groups?
*Ally is defined as someone who is supportive of and accepts someone who identifies as lesbian, gay or bisexual.
O Yes
O No
Please describe and/or name the groups

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Please answer the following questions honestly and thoroughly.

How would you describe your feelings, perceptions, and opinions about Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) college students? Would you describe your feelings, perceptions and opinions as mainly positive, mainly negative or in between? Please explain why.

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In your opinion, what events or experiences have shaped or influenced your current feelings, perceptions, and opinions about LGB college students?

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Looking back, do you believe that your feelings, perceptions, and opinions about LGB individuals have always been the same or do you believe they have changed significantly?

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Can you describe what events or experiences caused you to change your perspective?

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If you have negative perceptions, feelings, and opinions toward LGB college students, can you envision ever having more positive attitudes?
O Yes
O No
Why or Why not?

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Please rate your position on the following issues. How supportive or unsupportive are you of:

	Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Neutral	Somewhat unsupportive	Very unsupportive
LGB individuals serving in the military	O	O	O	O	O
NON-discrimination in employment based upon sexual orientation	O	O	O	O	O
Legalizing same-sex marriage	O	O	O	O	O

Do you have a relative who identifies as lesbian, gay, or bisexual?
O Yes   O No
If so, how are you related to this individual?

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Has this person openly and publicly shared his/her sexual orientation?
O Yes   O No

Do you have a friend who identifies as lesbian, gay, or bisexual?
O Yes   O No
If yes, how long have you been friends?

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Had this person shared their sexual orientation with you before you became friends?
O Yes   O No

Please rate your position on the following issues. How supportive or unsupportive would you be if:

	Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Neutral	Somewhat Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive
a friend shared with you that he or she is gay, lesbian or bisexual?	O	O	O	O	O
a family member shared with you that he or she is gay, lesbian or bisexual?	O	O	O	O	O

Would you accept a Black lesbian, gay male, or bisexual student in the Black Cultural Center/Office and/or student group on campus?
O Yes
O No
Why or Why not?

In a residence hall setting, would you REMAIN roommates with someone who came out to you as gay, lesbian or bisexual?
O Yes
O No
Why or Why not?

In a residence hall setting, would you intentionally CHOOSE to be roommates with someone who identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual?
O Yes
O No
Why or Why not?

In what state is your college/university located?
State:
Select State

In which country is your institution located? *(If not the United States)*
Country:

What type of institution do you attend?

O Community college
O Private 2-year college (any size)
O Public 2-year college (any size)
O Private college/university (less than 1,000 students)
O Public college/university (less than 1,000 students)
O Private college/university (1,001-2,999 students)
O Public college/university (1,001-2,999 students)
O Private college/university (3,000-9,999 students)
O Public college/university (3,000-9,999 students)
O Private college/university (10,000-20,000 students)
O Public college/university (10,000-20,000 students)
O Private college/university (20,000+ students)
O Public college/university (20,000+ students)
O Other, please specify

Is your institution considered a Historically Black College or University?
O Yes
O No

Is your college or university faith-based (associated with the mission of a particular religion)?
O Yes
O No
O Unsure
If yes, please note the denomination below

Which of the following best describes your student status?
O First Year Student
O Sophomore
O Junior
O Senior
O 5th year Undergraduate
O Master's degree student
O Doctoral degree student

What is your best estimate of your family household income?

O $16,000 or under
O $16,001 - $30,000
O $30,001 – $75,000
O $75,001 - $125,000
O $125,001 or more

What is your own sexual orientation?
O Heterosexual/Straight
O Bisexual
O Gay
O Lesbian
O Other (please specify below)

[   ]

Have you ever had sexual contact (this could include sexual touching or oral, vaginal or anal sex) with someone of the same sex?
O Yes
O No

Thank You for participating in this survey!

If you are aware of other Black college students who would complete this survey, please forward the email you received containing the link to this survey to them. In order for this research to be successful, it is important to obtain information from a number of Black college students. Any help you can provide locating these students would be appreciated. Thank you.

To be eligible for the $50 gift card drawing, please copy and paste (or type) the following link in your web browser.
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Raffle_Drawing

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