

Why We Speak Up: The Effect of Preconceived Cause of Sexual Orientation on Heterosexual Engagement in the Homosexual Movement for Social Equality

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ABSTRACT

Despite the increasing societal acceptance of homosexual individuals, the perception of homosexuality by heterosexual individuals is polluted by personal bias. My study observed the interaction between 422 heterosexuals and the homosexual community. First, my subjects self reported their beliefs on the determinant of sexual orientation (genetic or lifestyle). Next, they took the Activism Orientation (AO) and Sexual Prejudice (SP) Scales as a baseline measure of their relationship with members homosexual community. Subjects were randomly assigned to listen to an interview of two fictional homosexual individuals that spoke of life experience which either supported or contradicted the subjects' self reported beliefs. Additionally, subjects were assigned to a high or low empathy condition toward the interviewee. After listening to the interview, subjects were given the choice to allocate \$0 - \$8,000 in support of a pro - LGBT charity. Subjects then retook the AO and SP scales to measure for significant changes in perception of homosexuals after the fictional scenario. Results indicated a significant decrease in the AO of subjects that viewed interviews that contradicted their beliefs. Additionally, subjects assigned to the low empathy condition donated significantly larger amounts. The present study has two main implications: Heterosexual individuals' generalize their advocacy toward the LGBT community based on the actions of a singular homosexual. Furthermore, many activists naturally approach issues regarding social justice from a place of empathy, it is more sustainable to approach social justice movements from a logical perspective to allow for more meaningful and long term participation in a social justice movement.

Introduction

The Social Ostracization of Homosexual Individuals

According to the Seminal Minority Stress Theory, homosexual identifying youth face unique stressors both social and psychological which contribute to higher rates of mental illness in homosexual youth populations (Meyer, 2003). Homosexual youth are often faced with bullying and harassment from their peers, a lack of social support from their parents and teachers and an overall societal stigma surrounding homosexuality. A 2016 study found that 85% of homosexual students aged 13 to 21 were verbally harassed in the past year, 27% were physically harassed (i.e., pushed or shoved), 13% were physically assaulted, 49% were harassed via digital media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, text messaging), and 60% were sexually harassed (Kosciw et. al, 2016). A similar phenomenon is observed of homosexual adults, many of whom grew up during a time of widespread homophobia and condemnation of homosexual individuals, the prolonged effects of which can leave them vulnerable to social isolation at any point in their lives (Fredrik-Goldsen, 2018). Furthermore, a 2011 report done by the National Homosexual Health and Aging Center found that older homosexual identifying adults demonstrate higher rates

of mental distress, chronic disease and disability, compared to their heterosexual counterparts of a similar age range (Frederiksen Goldsen, 2011). These phenomena can largely be attributed to a significant lack of social support for homosexual individuals throughout the course of history (Morin, 1984). Today's homosexual youth face similar challenges from the "Don't Say Gay Bill" and a lack of social support for homosexual individuals. While we have certainly made progress, the stigma and societal inequalities faced by homosexual individuals regardless of their age point to a significant but not insurmountable challenge: widespread homophobia and a lack of a social support network for homosexual individuals.

The Role of Empathy in Social Activism

Despite the lingering inequities in our society, human nature is instilled with a fundamental desire to help the less fortunate. From religious teachings, schools, parents, and our experiences as members of a larger community, we learn that our kindness to a person in need is vital to the facilitation of a congruous social atmosphere. A 1974 study narrowed down the three factors that inspire helping behaviors. Firstly, the social rewards and costs of helping versus not helping others. Secondly, internalized rewards and costs such as self gratification or guilt. Finally, empathy and the vicarious experience of other's emotions (Staub, 1974). Our ability to empathize with individuals with different life experiences allows us to fight inequities in aspects of society in which we may not otherwise have recognized discrimination. A 2002 study done on the perception of individuals addicted to hard drugs found that participants who were induced to empathize while listening to an interview with a convicted heroin addict later reported more positive attitudes toward individuals addicted to hard drugs overall compared to the group that was not induced to feel empathy (Batson, et. al, 2002). These results imply that by empathizing with a stigmatized group such as the homosexual community, not only can straight individuals broaden their understanding of the unique struggles faced by this community, they can also translate their positive emotional responses into prosocial activism.

The Mischaracterization of Self-Imposed Suffering

While intergroup prosociality is a fundamental attribute of group dynamics, there are certainly limits on the extent to which we help others. When individuals pose judgment on the actions and behaviors of others, it can significantly impact our willingness to extend our empathy to that individual in a time of need. The fundamental attribution error describes a bias whereby observers tend to overestimate personality or other intrinsic motivations and underestimate situational factors and other external forces that drive behavior (Tetlock, 1985). For example, a 2018 study done on societal perception of victims of revenge porn versus perpetrators of revenge porn found that subjects placed a higher blame on the female victim for sending explicit photos rather than the male perpetrator for distributing them (Scott, et. al, 2018). When we believe a person's own actions have contributed to their unfavorable position, we are less sympathetic to their plight. We may even go as far as blaming them for causing the situation they are afflicted by. In that sense, when heterosexual individuals believe that an homosexual individual chose their sexuality and subsequently caused their marginalized status through that lifestyle decision, they are often less empathetic towards their plight. At present there is no definite cause of sexual orientation. However, homosexual individuals are deserving of equitable treatment regardless of whether or not they chose to love someone of the same sex. A 2013 study done on heterosexual individual's perception of bisexual women found that heterosexual individuals recognized the existence of same sex female relationships despite their belief that bisexual women were only in same sex relationships because they are seeking attention. However, they did not believe in the long term sustainability of same sex relationships and devalued the life experiences of bisexual women (Alarie, Gaudet, 2013). Without life experience, it is difficult for heterosexual individuals to understand the difficulties individuals in same-sex relationships face. The belief that same sex couples chose to be gay for attention not only delegitimizes the challenges homosexual individuals face, it sets

a dangerous precedent for heterosexual individuals who are more susceptible to logical fallacies regarding homosexuality at large.

Sexual Prejudice

Misconceptions regarding the intentions of homosexual relationships and their subsequent lifestyle choices are often shaped by harmful stereotypes and biases held by heterosexual individuals. Sexual Prejudice is defined as a predisposition toward derogatory stereotyping of, passing judgment against, and negative emotional reactions to a social group based on sexual orientation (Chonnody, 2013). A 2009 study done on the perception of gay men and their masculinity by heterosexual men found that heterosexual men with high gender self esteem held more negative views toward homosexuality. Furthermore, this link was especially prevalent with heterosexual men intent on maintaining a psychological distance between themselves and gay men. The findings of the aforementioned study confer that men's negative attitudes toward homosexuality served as a defense against perceived threats to their masculinity. (Falomir-Pichastor, Mugny, 2009). Heterosexual individuals can often perceive homosexual individuals of the same sex as threats to their own sexual orientation and gender identity. This can often lead to higher sexual prejudice against homosexual individuals as a means of self preservation. In the present study the sexual prejudice scale will be used to assess both male and female subjects' baseline prejudices towards gay men and lesbian women as well as a measure of a change in their beliefs towards gay and lesbian members of the homosexual community.

The Importance of Allyship in Movements for Social Justice

The tendency to ignore situational factors that can place a lower status group in a disadvantageous position can have dire consequences, most notably in the context of heterosexual allyship to an homosexual individual in need. Allyship is vital to the sustainability of movements for equality. An ally can be defined as a person who is a member of the 'dominant' group or 'majority' group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate with and for, the oppressed population (Washington J, 1991). By changing their own behavior, allies make it increasingly socially acceptable for the outgroup to treat the ingroup with equity and dignity. A 1992 study suggested that rape-prevention programs focusing on all male peer groups could assist men to understand the commonalities of the male socialization experience and encourage them to challenge other men who express support for "rape myths." (Berkowitz, 1992). By creating a new social norm in which male allies (outgroup members) feel comfortable enough to call out the inappropriate behavior of other male outgroup members, they can subsequently create a safer environment for women (ingroup members and marginalized groups). This further emphasizes the importance of having allies in a more powerful position in society who are aware of not only their implicit biases but the influence they wield over other members of their social group who may be oblivious to their participation in larger systems of inequality. As such, heterosexual allies must keep in mind the power they have to influence the beliefs and actions of mainstream society toward the homosexual community.

Activism Orientation

The extent to which heterosexual individuals identify as allies to members of the homosexual community is quantifiable by the Activism Orientation Scale (Corning, Myers, 2002). Activism Orientation can be characterized by conventional activist behaviors such as participating in the electoral process, putting up flyers, or wearing a button in support of a political cause. However, this can also include unconventional and even risky forms of protest in support of a particular cause. Such methods include physical confrontations with law enforcement, damaging public property, vandalism, and other actions risking fines and imprisonment. While the scale has a

broad application to a multitude of political causes such as elections or social justice movements, its general purpose is to quantify the extent to which an individual is willing to engage in a cause for which they have no personal life experience. In the present study, the activism orientation scale was used to assess heterosexual participants' baseline engagement levels for prosocial homosexual activism. Subjects responded to this questionnaire twice throughout the course of the study to assess changes in their future engagement in activist behaviors toward homosexual individuals based on changes in pre and post Activism Orientation Scores.

The Present Study

Previous research on the homosexual community has failed to identify the relationship between a heterosexual individual's previously held beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation and their willingness to help an homosexual individual in need. The present study aims to determine if a heterosexual individual believes that an homosexual individual's marginalized status is self imposed they are less likely to advocate for homosexual individuals as a cohort.

Research Questions

What is the effect of gender, perceived cause of sexual orientation and empathy on a heterosexual individual's propensity to engage in pro-homosexual activism?

Hypothesis

The present study consists of 3 hypotheses:

1. Subjects that view an interview with an homosexual individual that contradicts their preconceived beliefs about the cause of sexual orientation will have a significant difference in their pre and post activism orientation scores than subjects that viewed interviews of homosexual individuals that support their previously held beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation.
2. People assigned to the high empathy condition while viewing interviews of homosexual individuals will donate significantly more amounts in the fictional charity scenario compared to subjects assigned to the low empathy condition.
3. Subjects who view an interview of an homosexual individual of the same sex that contradicts their preconceived beliefs about the cause of sexual orientation will have significantly higher sexual prejudice compared to subjects of the opposite gender.

Methods

Pre-Approvals

The IRB at my school consisted of a PHD level school psychologist, a district chairperson for science, and a social studies teacher. The IRB deemed the current study as more than minimal risk due to the sensitive nature of the question that asked the subjects to report their opinions on human sexuality. It was determined that all subjects must provide informed consent and be told that they could exit the study at any time. Once official approval was granted by the IRB, the link to the online experiment was distributed via Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Participants

After receiving approval from my school's Institutional Review Board my survey was distributed on Amazon Mechanical Turk ([MTurk.com](https://www.mturk.com)), an online task distribution platform overseen by Amazon. Participants were compensated for their participation in the study with a \$0.25 payment following the completion of the study. A total of 422 eligible responses were collected in this study of which 50.2% were male and 49.5% were female. The subjects' ages ranged from 21 to 71. Furthermore 59.2% of subjects believed the cause of sexual orientation was a genetic predisposition while 40.8% believed sexual orientation was caused by Environmental Factors such as family upbringing, life experience or lifestyle choices. All subjects indicated their consent to participate in this study and no personal information was collected other than age, gender, race and their self-reported beliefs regarding the homosexual community.

Procedure

Upon opening the survey designed on [SurveyMonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com), subjects will be presented with the following:

Hello, my name is ----- and I am a Social Science Research student at the ----- located in ----- . Thank you for your interest in my research. I would like to study some of your opinions on straight allyship to the homosexual Movement for Social Equality.

Please Note: Only Straight, Cisgender Individuals Are Eligible to Take This Survey.

If you agree to participate, you will first be asked to answer a few demographic questions as well as questions regarding your opinion on the cause of sexual orientation (genetic, environmental, lifestyle factors, etc.). You will also complete the Activism Orientation Scale (Corning, Myers, 2002) and the Sexual Prejudice Scale (Chonody, 2013). Finally, you will be given a fictional scenario in which you are the president of a charity which has the opportunity to allocate a portion of its annual funds to an homosexual charity that is on the brink of financial ruin. You will also be asked to listen to interviews with individuals who the charity has helped.

All of the information will be kept confidential, and your contact information will be coded by a third party assistant so the confidentiality of your survey responses will remain anonymous. All subject data will be stored on a password-protected computer. Although your IP address will not be stored in the survey results, there is always the possibility of tampering with an outside source when using the Internet for collecting information. While the confidentiality of your responses will be protected once the data is downloaded from the Internet, there is always the possibility of hacking or other security breaches that could threaten the confidentiality of your responses.

Additionally, because the questions deal with personal information, some questions may make the respondent feel uncomfortable. If you wish to quit the study you may stop at any time. If you have further questions about this study or would like verification of this study's legitimacy, you may send an email to ----- and my research teacher will contact you. Participation in this study will result in a \$0.25 benefit to respondents and will grant the researcher information needed to complete the study.

Following the consent agreement participants were instructed to fill out the Activism Orientation Scale (appendix, G.5), which required their response to 35 statements regarding homosexual activism on a 4-point Likert Scale, ranging from "0-extremely unlikely" to "3- extremely likely."

The Activism Orientation Scale (Corning, Meyers, 2002) is a validated measure used to predict both current and future levels of engagement in a movement for social change. This 35-item measure was administered to participants as a baseline measure of their willingness to engage in prosocial homosexual activism and as a measure of their willingness to do so following their viewing of the interview clip. Responses were recorded on a 4-point Likert Scale, ranging from "0-extremely unlikely" to "3- extremely likely." The two domains of the

scale are reliable given their Cronbach's Alpha ratings: conventional activism ($\alpha = .96$) and high-risk activism ($\alpha = .91$). Permission to use this scale was obtained from the lead author, Alexandra Corning.

After completing the Activism Orientation Scale, subjects were instructed to complete the Sexual Prejudice Scale (Chonody, 2013) requiring their response to 30 statements regarding their beliefs about the homosexual community using a 6-point Likert Scale, ranging from "1-strongly disagree" to "6- strongly agree." The Sexual Prejudice Scale (Chonody, 2013) is a reliable psychometric scale that was used to determine subjects' baseline prejudices and biases toward gay men and lesbian women as well as their biases toward the aforementioned groups after viewing a clip from an interview with an homosexual individual. This psychometric measure has 30 items to which participants responded using a 6-point Likert Scale with 1 being strongly disagree and 6 being strongly agree. This scale was designed to quantify bias toward gay men and lesbian women. Both domains of the scale are validated measures with Cronbach's Alpha ratings of ($\alpha = .94$) for the gay men scale and ($\alpha = .95$) for the lesbian women scale. The Cronbach's Alpha ratings for the six subscales were as follows: gay men stereotyping, ($\alpha = .75$); gay men affective-valuation, ($\alpha = .91$); gay men social equality beliefs, ($\alpha = .90$); lesbian stereotyping, ($\alpha = .84$); lesbian affective-valuation, ($\alpha = .93$); lesbian social equality beliefs, ($\alpha = .88$). Permission to use this scale was obtained from the author, Jill Chonody.

Next, subjects self-reported their beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation as either a genetic predisposition or environmental factors (ex: family upbringing, life experience, lifestyle choices, etc. Subsequently, subjects were instructed to read a fictional charity scenario to assess the extent to which they would be willing to meaningfully engage with the homosexual community:

Suppose you are the President of a charity organization. In 2021 your organization spent \$20,000 in total toward the benefit of the following causes:

- Funding research for cures to childhood bone cancer
- Helping low-income individuals with type-1 diabetes afford insulin
- Wildlife conservation efforts in the Amazon Rainforest
- Food donations for a local homeless shelter

You have been given the opportunity to allocate up to \$8,000 of your annual budget to an homosexual charity on the brink of financial ruin called the homosexual network. The founder, Sandra Gordon was kicked out by her father at 16 after she came out as a lesbian to him. As a teenager she supported herself through college by working a minimum wage job at a local coffee shop. Now that Sandra is in her 30s, she has started a youth advocacy group called the homosexual Network which provides food, shelter, and housing for homosexual teens that have been disowned by their families. She frequently attends conferences at which she tells her life story, highlighting the fact that she was disowned by her family for her identity. Recently, one of her speeches went viral which resulted in Sandra's father being ridiculed and shunned by local community members and even receiving death threats online. After years of no contact, Sandra's father sued her for slander (the action or crime of making a false spoken statement damaging to a person's reputation). It has recently come to your attention that this lawsuit filed by Sandra's father has put Sandra in thousands of dollars of debt due to paying expensive legal fees and has subsequently put her charity "the Homosexual Network" at risk of shutting down which could leave several homosexual teens at risk of homelessness.

After reading the charity scenario, subjects were told they would listen to a recording of an interview done with an homosexual individual that Sandra had helped through her charity.

Prior to watching the interview, subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental group of either a male or female interviewee (appendix G.1) (appendix G.2). Furthermore participants were randomly assigned to listen to an interview that either supported or contradicted their self-reported beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation (appendix G.3) (appendix G.4). Additionally, subjects were randomly assigned to a high empathy or low empathy group prior to listening to the survey, the instructions for which are below:

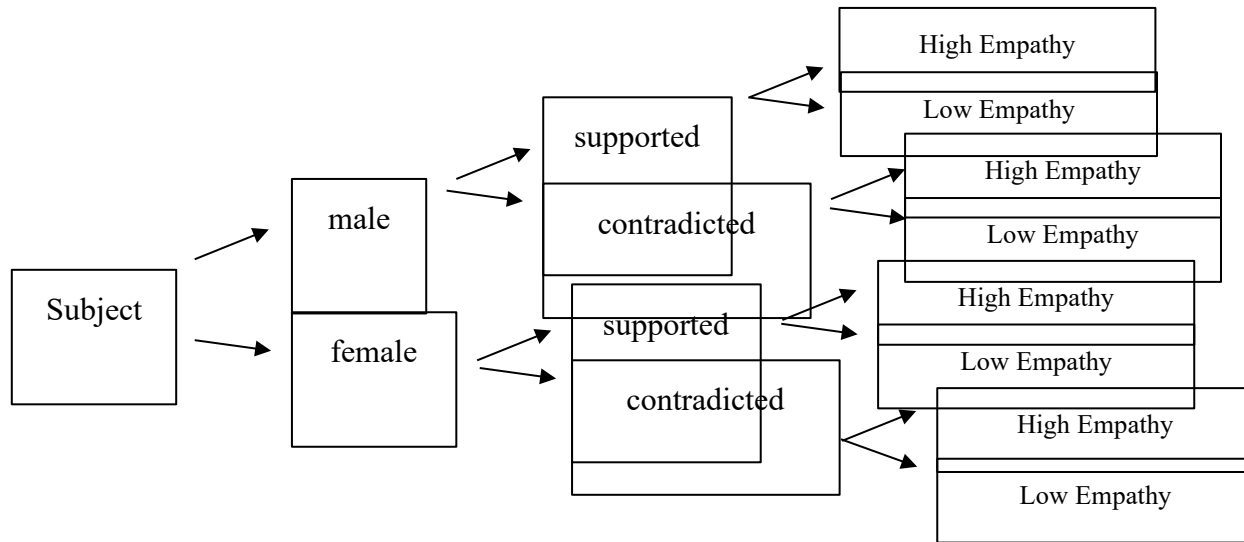


Figure 1.

High Empathy Condition

After Sandra's speech gained media attention, a radio show did an interview with (Matthew/Kathy), a (man/woman) who Sandra helped through her charity when (he/she) was 17 years old. Please listen to an excerpt from the interview above. As you listen to the audio clip try to imagine how (Matthew's/Kathy's) journey with (his/her) sexuality felt and how it has affected (his/her) life. Try to feel the full impact of what (Matthew/Kathy) has been through and how (he/she) feels as a result.

Low Empathy Condition

After Sandra's speech gained media attention, a radio show did an interview with (Matthew/Kathy), a (man/woman) who Sandra helped through (his/her) charity when (he/she) was 17 years old. Please listen to an excerpt from the interview above. As you listen to the audio clip try to take an objective perspective toward what is described. Try not to get caught up in how (Matthew/Kathy) feels; just remain objective and detached.

Afterwards, participants listened to an excerpt from the interview and were given the opportunity to allocate anywhere between \$0 and \$8,000 toward the fictional charity they learned about. Subjects then took the Activism Orientation and Sexual Prejudice Scales again to measure for significant changes in Activism Orientation and Sexual Prejudice based on a hypothetical scenario in which subjects are given the chance to interact and advocate for a homosexual individual. Upon completion, participants were thanked for their contribution and given the opportunity to leave feedback.

Results

All statistical analysis for Activism Orientation and Imposter Phenomenon will be organized and analyzed using IBM's SPSS Version 24.0. For all analyses, the data collected required a p value <0.05 to identify statistically significant differences between the experimental and control populations.

Assignment of Experimental Condition

SurveyMonkey.com was used to assign participants to one of sixteen groups listed below:

Mann-Whitney U Test on Activism Orientation and Preconceived Cause of Sexual Orientation

Mann-Whitney U Tests were conducted to evaluate for significant differences between pre and post Activism Orientation Score and whether the interview subjects supported or contradicted participant's preconceived belief on the cause of sexual orientation. The overall results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Change in Activism Orientation

	N	Mean Rank
Support	233	227.9
Contradict	189	191.3

P = .002

Results found significant differences between the change in Activism Orientation scores of subjects that listened to interviews with homosexual individuals that contradicted their self reported beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation versus subjects that listened to interviews of homosexual individuals that supported their self reported beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation. These results indicate that when presented with an opinion that opposes their previously held beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation, subjects were significantly less likely to help homosexual individuals at large, compared to individuals that were exposed to homosexual individuals that confirmed their world view. These findings support Hypothesis 1.

Independent Samples T-Test on Donation Amount and Empathy Condition

Independent Samples T-Tests were conducted to measure for significant differences between the donation amount of the high empathy condition and the donation amount of the low empathy condition. The test yielded significant results, displayed below in Table 2.

Table 2. Donation Amount

	N	Mean	SD
High Empathy	226	\$4,154.87	\$2,364.15
Low Empathy	196	\$4,673.47	\$2,334.90

P = .02

Subjects assigned to the Low Empathy condition donated significantly higher amounts to an LGBT charity compared to the High Empathy condition. The findings of this test directly contradict Hypothesis 2. Subjects assigned to the Low Empathy condition were on average more likely to donate higher amounts to the

homosexual charity in need versus the High Empathy condition. This pattern was consistent regardless of whether the subject self-identified as an ally to the homosexual community.

Mann-Whitney U Test on Gender and Sexual Prejudice

A Mann-Whitney U Test was run to test for significant differences between the gender of the participant and interviewee and change in sexual prejudice score. No significant differences were found between the change in sexual prejudice scores of participants who viewed homosexual interviewees of the same sex versus participants that viewed homosexual interviewees of the opposite sex. This finding disproves Hypothesis 3.

Discussion

The results of the current study underscore a dire threat to the sustainability of heterosexual advocacy for homosexual issues.

The present study employed the Activism Orientation Scale (Corning, Meyers, 2002) to assess baseline levels of engagement for heterosexual participants and measure for a significant change in activism toward the homosexual community after viewing a charity scenario acting in benefit of an homosexual individual. The first hypothesis for the present study aimed to measure for a significant decrease in the Activism Orientation Score of Participants who viewed interviews of homosexual individuals who spoke of life experiences that contradicted those specific participants self-reported beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation versus participants that viewed interviews of homosexual individuals that supported subjects beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation. Data analysis supported the first hypothesis which was indicated by significantly lower scores on the Activism Orientation Scale (*Mean Rank 191.3 < 227.9; P = .002*). Subjects who viewed an interviews of a homosexual individuals that contradicted their views on the cause of sexual orientation channeled their dislike of an opinion expressed by a singular homosexual individual and generalized it toward the homosexual community at large, this generalization being characterized by a significant drop in their Activism Orientation Scores. According to the Cultural Distaste Theory majority groups are more likely to discriminate against minority groups if they deem them as a threat to their identity, culture, and worldview (Dixon, Rosenbaum, 2004). The findings of a 2020 study done on religious bias toward Muslim defendants in jury sentencing found that Christian mock jurors were more likely to sentence Muslim defendants to harsher punishments than their Christian counterparts, simply because they viewed the Muslim defendants as a threat to their own religious beliefs (Miller, Clark, Alvarez, 2020). Similarly, when subjects were presented with a homosexual individual that contradicted their previously held beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation, their Activism Orientation Scores subsequently decreased. While subjects that did not self-identify as an ally to homosexual individuals were less likely to help homosexual individuals, the most unexpected takeaway was found for participants that did identify as an ally to homosexual individuals. Participants that had high baseline Activism Orientation Scores at the beginning of the study, when presented with an homosexual individual who contradicted their previously held beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation, had lower Activism Orientation Scores after listening to an interview that contradicted and thereby confronted their beliefs regarding the cause of sexual orientation. This finding indicates that one homosexual individual who has characteristics that differ from a person's expectation of what homosexual sexual person should be, can affect the way that heterosexual individuals treat the homosexual community as a whole. Furthermore, when subjects who initially believed the cause of sexual orientation is genetic were assigned to an interview in which the homosexual individual declared they could "chose to be straight for the sake of social conformity", subjects mischaracterized the homosexual individual in question as a victim of self-imposed suffering rather than a victim of internalized homophobia. This shift in perspective caused significant changes in the Activism Orientation Scores of genetically inclined participants, indicating that our perceived

cause of an individual's suffering significantly influences the extent to which we help them and other individuals in a similar position.

Additional results of this study directly contradicted hypothesis 2, which predicted that subjects in the High Empathy condition were more likely to donate higher monetary amounts than subjects in the Low Empathy condition. The findings of the present study suggest that subjects who were primed with a Low Empathy condition were more likely to allocate a higher monetary donation in the fictional charity scenario compared to subjects primed with a High Empathy condition (*Mean \$4,673.47 > \$4,154.87; P= .02*). While this may be counterintuitive, there are several practical applications of this finding in the real world. A 2009 study done on emotion elicited in jurors and the punitive nature of their sentencing found that when jurors were in a heightened state of emotionality throughout the case, they were more likely to issue a highly punitive sentence to the defendant (Salerno, Bottoms, 2009). Similarly, in the present study, subjects were more likely to donate higher sums when they were assigned to an experimental condition with a lower state of emotionality. The most encouraging aspect of this finding is that subjects who didn't identify as allies to the homosexual community were able to put aside their emotional connection to the issue at hand and allocate a significant sum of money to a homosexual charity in need, despite disagreeing with the homosexual individual in question. Furthermore, this finding was not observed in subjects that did not identify as allies assigned to the High Empathy condition. A 2017 study done on activist for racial equality in the United States found that emotional burnout, or an emotional weariness particularly felt by activists who have empathized with members of a marginalized community for extended periods of time, was a fundamental aspect of the dissolution of their long-term participation in advocacy (Gorski, 2017). The findings of the present study indicate that when individuals act from a place of logically driven social responsibility rather than emotionality, not only can they make more significant contributions to the homosexual movement for social equality, but they can also sustain long term activism within a particular social justice movement without experiencing activist burnout.

The overall results of the present study conclude that when presented with beliefs about sexual orientation that contradict one's own, there is a significant decrease in Activism Orientation toward the homosexual community as a whole. No significant change was observed in participants exposed to opinions regarding sexual orientation which confirmed their own beliefs. Furthermore, when assigned to a low empathy condition subjects were able to put aside their biases and emotions and approach the issue at hand from a logical perspective, allowing for them to contribute to the movement in a more significant way than subjects randomly assigned to the High Empathy condition.

Implications

The present study has two main implications:

1. Heterosexual individuals are less likely to advocate for the homosexual community as a whole when faced with a singular homosexual individual that confronts their preconceived beliefs regarding that particular community.
2. While many activists naturally approach issues regarding social justice from a place of empathy, it is more sustainable to approach social justice movements with an additional logical perspective to allow for more understanding and meaningful long term participation in a social justice movement.

Limitations and Future Work

While the Sexual Prejudice Scale was able to quantify subjects' pre-experimental and post-experimental biases regarding the homosexual community, this psychometric measure was limiting in the sense that its two subscales: Sexual Prejudice for Gay Men and Sexual Prejudice for Lesbian Women only had questions pertaining

to two identities within the homosexual community. In order for my study to truly attest to the plight faced by this diverse and vast community an all-encompassing scale must be developed for transgender, bisexual, pansexual and asexual individuals.

Furthermore, the homosexual community is an underserved community in academia, particularly in the field of psychology, which made finding previous literature relevant to this subject extremely difficult. The acceptance of the homosexual community in mainstream society in recent years has allowed for some emerging research to bring light to issues queer individuals have faced for centuries. However, as social progress breaks down the barriers of prejudice from the past, academics must adjust accordingly.

Additionally, the present study only focused on the beliefs of heterosexual adults, however the generational and socio-political nature of the world in which the older generations have been raised vastly differ from the more accepting and ever-changing present social atmosphere. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic of sexual orientation as well as the questionnaires participants answered, the survey was not distributed to minors.

Future work may choose to study children under the age of eighteen to account for the wide range of social and political ideologies within the newer generations. Furthermore, additional research must be done on the influence of the potentially detrimental effects of heterosexual activist burnout on the psychological well-being homosexual activists and members of the homosexual community alike. With these additional perspectives, the interaction between heterosexual allies and homosexual individuals can be determined from a multitude of factors in addition to the ones included in the present study.

Conclusion

With regards to the Homosexual movement for social equality, the present study discovered the following:

- Heterosexual individuals become less likely to help the homosexual community as a whole when faced with a singular homosexual individual that confronts their previously held beliefs regarding that community.
- The behavior of a singular homosexual individual can significantly impact the extent to which heterosexual individuals advocate for that particular community.
- Heterosexual individuals who self identified as allies to homosexual individuals which indicates that our willingness to help those in need is heavily dependent on whether we perceive their condition to be self imposed (i.e. bad decision making, irresponsibility, righteousness).
- When assigned to a low empathy condition in the hypothetical charity scenario, heterosexual individuals contributed more donations to a charity for the homosexual community compared to individuals in the high empathy condition.
- Heterosexual individuals who did not self identify as allies were similarly generous in their financial contribution to an LGBT charity when assigned to the low empathy condition, indicating that a logical rather than emotional perspective can allow heterosexual individuals to overcome their prior prejudices.

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