Reducing Negative Social Stereotypes: An Examination of Predictive Empathy

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of two early and influential teachers:

my father David Sheagren and my grandmother Jennie Caliendo Johnson.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

“A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices.”

-- anonymous

Negative social stereotyping has been part of the human experience for as long as history has been recorded. The term “stereotype” originated as a synonym for a metal printer’s plate that would produce thousands of copies of any given picture. In 1922, author and public affairs commentator Walter Lippmann used the term stereotype to refer to perceptions about various racial, national or social groups. The term indicated that members of a particular group all had identical characteristics and traits.

Most psychologists agree that people to categorize objects, people or events in order to simplify incoming stimuli. Categorization is a cognitive tool that people use to process information. Allport (1954, 1958) in his classic volume on the nature of prejudice, argued that stereotyping is part of a normal cognitive process. Stimuli are organized into a simple form in order to make processing easier. Allport believed that
people over-categorize. They attribute positive or negative value to things based on categories or groups.

While stereotypes have been conceptualized as exaggerated beliefs, (Allport, 1958) rigid impressions (Katz & Braley, 1935); and preconceived notions (Baron & Byrne, 1977), the end result is that people perceive an individual solely on the basis of that individual’s membership to a particular group. Thus, one of the dangers of stereotyping is that the individual ceases to be seen as distinct from the group. Individual attributes remain unperceived in favor of a set of generalized attributes that may either degrade the person in the case of negative stereotyping, or glorify them in the case of positive stereotyping.

**Purpose**

Because of the potential for degradation of the individual in the case of negative stereotyping, the present study will examine possible methods of reducing negative social stereotypes. Because of the overwhelming amount of negative attitudes reported toward homosexuals, this group was chosen as the target test group for examining the reduction of negative social stereotypes. Specifically, we will be examining attitudes toward male homosexuals.

It will be determined if putting oneself in the shoes of another (i.e. imagining oneself in another’s position) or anticipating what another will feel in their current situation (i.e. predicting another’s responses) is effective in reducing stereotypes toward this group. We will also examine nature of the persuasive message and its effectiveness in
reducing stereotypes (i.e. providing only the positive opinion versus providing the stereotypes as well as the positive opinion). Additionally, we will examine gender differences in negative stereotyping of male homosexuals, and data to support the contact hypothesis (contact with outgroup members tends to increase positive attitudes toward that outgroup).

There will be three observational conditions: Watch Mannerisms, Imagine-self, or Predictive Empathy, and two persuasive message conditions: Acknowledge the Negative, or No Acknowledgment of the Negative. It will be possible for significant positive findings to be applied in the future. The current study’s procedures used videotapes so that it might be replicated in situations where contact with other groups would not be available.

**Ingroup-Outgroup Distinctions**

Social identity theory, social dominance theory, and ingroup-outgroup distinctions all suggest reasons why attitudinal value judgments are made about “other” groups, which may clarify why negative attitudes are held toward homosexuals. Tajfel’s social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978, 1981; Tajfel & Forgas, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) noted that stereotyping and prejudice stem from the categorization process. Social stimuli are organized into categories and groups. Tajfel and Turner (1979) observed that a sense of identity is closely linked with the various group memberships and that this has implications for intergroup behavior. A fair amount of research stresses how identity may be improved by derogating others.
Crocker and Luhtanen (1990) asserted that prejudice may represent an attempt to enhance ethnic identity. Motivation for positive esteem may lead to inter-group discrimination (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). Because (a) people are motivated to attain positive self-esteem, (b) their self-concepts depend in part on their membership in a social group, and (c) group evaluations are inherently comparative, it is not difficult to see how individuals may elevate their own group while being critical of all things "other." Many researchers have argued that low self-esteem individuals deprecate others in order to enhance their feelings about themselves (Allport, 1954; Ehrlich, 1974; Lippman, 1922; Sherwood, 1981; & Willis, 1981). If one asserts that a different sexual orientation is "bad" then their's must be "good" or "right."

Others have examined socially dominant and subordinate groups as a source for prejudice. Sidanius' (1991) social dominance theory maintains that all humans are inherently hierarchical and that this social hierarchy is a survival strategy adopted by all species of primates. This theory also states that social dominance will manifest itself in terms of racism and ethnocentrism. According to social dominance theory, social comparison drives individual acts of discrimination and enhances the self-esteem of the discriminator. Discrimination against homosexuals may be an attempt to enhance the esteem and the sense of dominance experienced by the discriminator. In addition to the social dominance theory of stereotyping, others have examined ingroup preference and outgroup hostility as a source of stereotyping.
Historically, powerful ingroup-outgroup preferences have led to such human behavioral disasters as genocide. One need not look far to see how this phenomenon continues. Even in 1996 there are episodes of “ethnic cleansing.” This devaluing of the individual based on group membership is evidenced in anti-Semitism, Apartheid, gay-bashing, civil strife, Holy Wars, national boundary conflicts, racism, sexism, and slavery.

Linville, Salovey and Fischer (1986) proposed a hypothesis relating to category differentiation: People will tend to have more highly differentiated representations of members of “ingroups” than of “outgroups.” Stated another way, my group members are more different from one another, your group members are more similar to one another. Miller and Brewer (1986) and Pettigrew (1979) noted these characteristics between ingroups and outgroups. They also recognized that preferring one’s own ingroup and expressing hostility toward outgroups are logical responses considering the power of ingroup affinity.

Katz and Braley’s (1933) procedure for studying cognitive aspects of inter-group attitudes supported the notion of more differentiated representations of members of “ingroups” than of “outgroups.” Their experiment examined an index of stereotypes for 10 different ethnic groups. They measured the degree of certainty subjects reported about these stereotypes. It appeared that most individuals felt competent guessing about the characteristics of almost any given ethnic group. Even when information about a particular ethnic group was very limited, subjects persisted in making generalizations
about the group. Besides research done on ingroup-outgroup preferences, studies have also been conducted examining the stereotypes people held about outgroups.

**Attitudes Toward Homosexuals**

Most research done on stereotyping has primarily focused on social problems such as gender and ethnic-racial stereotypes, however many other groups are affected by stereotyping. One of the groups often a target of negative social stereotyping and consequent prejudice is homosexuals. A fair amount of research has examined the rejection of homosexuals as outgroups and demonstrated that it can range from verbal to physical.

Herek (1988) described “homophobia” as personal and institutional prejudice against lesbians and gay men. Prejudice against lesbians and gay men is well documented. A 1986 survey conducted at Yale University revealed that many lesbians, gay men, and bisexual people on campus live in fear and secretiveness because they have been victims of harassment. The survey revealed that as many as 92% of lesbians and gay men have reported incidents of verbal abuse or threats, and as many as 24% have reported being victims of physical attacks solely on the basis of their sexual orientation. Feldman, Hasse, and Westphal (1991) reported that harassment and violent victimization of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual persons continue on the Yale University campus. Replications on other campuses have yielded remarkably similar results.

Herek (1989) reported that a statewide survey in New York of 2,823 junior and senior high school students reported greater hostility (including threats of violence)
toward homosexual persons than they did toward racial or ethnic minorities. Finn and McNeil (1987), in a report to the National Institute of Justice, noted that “homosexuals are probably the most frequent victims of hate violence” (p. 2). People tend to experience and express more negativity and hostility toward homosexuals than toward other minority outgroups.

The literature on heterosexual attitudes toward homosexuals also suggests a gender difference. Herek (1988) found a consistent gender difference in three studies at six different universities. Heterosexual males demonstrated a tendency to express more hostile attitudes toward homosexual males than heterosexual females did. Additionally, a national telephone survey found that interpersonal contact with gay men was more likely to be reported by females (Herek, 1993). We will examine more literature on the gender differences concerning attitudes toward male homosexuals in later sections. Having discussed some of the origins of stereotyping and one of the groups that is a frequent target, we will now turn our attention to possible methods of reducing stereotypes.

**Stereotype Reduction**

Research on the reduction of stereotypes and prejudice has predominantly focused on equal status contact and cooperation. Amir (1969) hypothesized that under favorable conditions, liking increases while prejudice decreases when there is contact between groups who dislike one another. He also theorized that the groups must be of equal status or the minority group of higher status for this to be successful.
In addition to equal status, Amir stated that intimate, rewarding contact, shared goals, and cooperation between groups were necessary to increase liking and decrease prejudice. These conditions were achieved by Cook (1969). In his contact experiment, a significant positive alteration was made in racial attitudes between black and white women. Similarly, in the classic Robber's Cave study, Sherif et al. (1961) found that equal status contact and cooperation could significantly reduce rival group hostility among 11-year-old boys. Harrington (1988) examined how the conditions of contact affect attitudes. He found that personal contact had a favorable impact on high and equal status groups by reducing ingroup favoritism and a favorable impact on low status groups by reducing outgroup dislike. This study also demonstrated that positive interaction was correlated with reduced ethnocentric bias and perceived friendliness of the outgroup team member. Other types of contact studies have focused on the classroom as a location for testing stereotype reduction.

Experiments such as Weigel, Wiser and Cook's (1975) work using mixed ethnic groups in a classroom demonstrated that when students work interdependently, they exhibit greater respect toward members of other ethnic groups than did traditional classrooms where competition among students was encouraged. Aronson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes and Snapp (1978) devised the "jigsaw" classroom in which children of different ethnic groups worked on cooperative assignments in small groups. Classrooms using this technique showed increased liking of outgroup members as well as a heightened
willingness to learn from other students. Recent studies also demonstrate that contact is associated with more positive attitudes toward male homosexuals.

In a national telephone survey conducted in the United States, personal contact with a gay man or lesbian was determined to be a powerful predictor of heterosexual attitudes toward gay men (Herek, 1993). This survey found that interpersonal contact was strongly associated with positive attitudes toward gay men. In fact, interpersonal contact predicted attitudes toward gay men better than any other demographic or social psychological variable included. These results were consistent with the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1976; Stephan, 1985).

International studies have also found results consistent with the contact hypothesis. Masson and Verkuyten (1993) studied Dutch adolescents and found that they held more positive attitudes toward ethnic-minority groups with whom they had significant contact. Studies in Germany found similar results with one of their ethnic minority populations (e.g. Turkish people). Subjects reported more positive attitudes toward minorities with increased contact frequency (Wagner & Machleit, 1986).

The sum of research to date supports the conclusion that favorable inter-group contact with equal status and cooperation results in a reduction of negative attitudes toward “other” group members. One of the issues that will be examined in the current study is the relationship between contact (with male homosexuals) and attitudes held toward them. However, it should be noted that “most current research does not allow determination of the causal direction of the relationship between contact and prejudice.”
People who hold negative attitudes toward a group may consequently have little contact with that group. In other words, it may not be possible to know if prejudice causes low contact levels or vice versa.

If we are to assume the favorable attitude change consistent with the contact hypothesis, how can this favorable attitude change be achieved when contact is absent? It is obvious that stereotypes and prejudices are often formed with little or no contact—effects of child rearing, interaction with same group members, mass media, and even chance conditioning may all play roles in its creation. What can be done to dismantle these negative stereotypes with little or no contact? One aspect of the contact literature not given a great deal of coverage is the extent to which empathy might be involved. The studies that have examined predictive empathy have found it effective in reducing negative stereotypes and increasing tolerance.

**Predictive Empathy**

Early research examining empathy found that subjects who imagined themselves in the position of another actually experienced more empathy than subjects who watched another without imagining how they would feel. Subjects who experienced empathy toward others were also *less* likely to derogate them and more likely to possess tolerance toward them. This relates to the current research as empathy becomes a method with potential to increase tolerance and reduce negative attitudes toward a target group.

I propose two types of empathy: 1) generic empathy in which the observer *imagines* themselves in the position of another, and 2) predictive empathy in which the
observer predicts another’s feelings or actions. In predictive empathy, people experience something from another’s perspective. Predictive empathy appears to be a successful mechanism for increasing tolerance and reducing negative social stereotypes.

Early experiments in predictive empathy involved subjects predicting the response of another to an attitude scale or personality inventory. Cronbach (1955) stated that the following conditions could result in an accurate prediction of another’s response:
1) sharing the same response bias as the other and assuming that others will respond similarly to oneself, 2) knowing the type of person the other is and accurately inferring how such people respond, or 3) actually being the same type of person as the other and assuming the other's responses are similar to one's own.

In his pioneer studies of empathy, Stotland (1958) defined empathy as an emotion that an observer experiences as a result of perceiving that another is experiencing or is about to experience an emotion. He referred to “predictive” empathy as an individual’s tendency to make an accurate prediction about the behavior of another person. It is different from “generic” empathy in that the observer does not have to experience the perceived emotion of the other in order to make the prediction. Predictive empathy involves perceiving the other’s emotions.

Preliminary studies in predictive empathy have demonstrated that subjects who imagined themselves in another’s position differed from those who simply watched another. Those who imagined produced more palmar sweating and reported more
tension while observing another in pain than those who simply watched another in pain without imagining how they would feel. Furthermore, there were no significant differences in physiological measures of subjects watching another in a pleasure state, a neutral state, or a pain state without imagining their own feelings or how the other felt (Stotland, 1969). This apparently indicates that merely “watching” another does not lead to empathy.

Other research has shown that subjects who watched another experiencing pain reported more negative attitudes toward that person. Lerner and Simmons (1966) found that after watching a tape of an innocent victim (actually a confederate) being given painful electric shocks, subjects consistently rated the victim’s attractiveness lower than their own self-ratings. The experimenters attributed this derogation of the victim to subjects’ alleged need to believe that bad things do not happen to good people, that people get what they deserve. This belief is known as “belief in a just world.” Aderman and Berkowitz (1970) addressed possible causes for subject’s derogating the victim.

Aderman and Berkowitz (1970) suggestion was that the downgrading of the victim was a result of the “watch” instructions. They argued that the instructions directing subjects to closely observe the emotional state of the person (victim) and watch for cues to indicate the victim’s state of arousal were actually empathy-inhibiting instructions. In a subsequent study, Aderman, Brehm and Katz (1974) examined whether the “watch” instructions did, in fact, inhibit empathy.
Participants viewed a tape of a female victim receiving painful electric shocks during a learning test very much like that in the Lerner and Simmons (1966) experiment. Subjects received one of three instructional sets: 1) imagine-self: they were to imagine how they themselves would feel (this was thought to be an empathy inducing condition), 2) watch-her: they were to watch the recipient's physical movements closely (this was thought to be an empathy-inhibiting condition), or 3) the Lerner and Simmons (1966) instructions: they were to closely observe the emotional state of the person and watch for cues to indicate her state of arousal (this was also thought to be an empathy-inhibiting condition). As predicted, those who were instructed to watch derogated the victim. Also as predicted, the subjects in the imagine-self condition rated the victim as more attractive than themselves.

Other studies have linked empathy with sensitivity to the needs of others. Empathy appears to have properties such as increasing sensitivity which may be useful in reducing negative attitudes and rejection of others. Sibicky, Schroeder, and Dovidio (1995) tested whether more empathically concerned persons would be more sensitive to the long-term consequences of their intervention for recipients. Subjects were instructed either to observe the situation or imagine another's feelings and were then exposed to a person in immediate distress who requested assistance. Results confirmed that empathy enhances sensitivity to the needs of others, as well as increasing sensitivity to the potential consequences that one's intervention may have for the recipient.
Schachter and Singer's (1962) classic study utilizing the drug epinephrine illustrated another view of how people experience empathy. When proprioceptive sensations were induced by epinephrine and a subject did not have an identifiable source for the sensations, the subject typically felt “sad” or “happy” depending on how he or she perceived the emotional state of another person. In other words, when an individual experienced an unexplained state of arousal, they adopted the perceived emotion of another. Subjects who received uninterpreted stimuli used another person’s reactions to evaluate their own sensations.

This process can also work the opposite way in the case of empathy. An individual may perceive the emotional state of another first, then his/her own reactions are a byproduct of his/her perception of the other person. One may feel or react the same way that they perceive another is feeling or reacting. This adoption of another person’s feelings and reactions has implications for the current study. We will examine the differences between imagining oneself in the position of another and predicting the feelings of another. Specifically, subjects in the Predictive Empathy group may adopt the feelings of another in order to predict.

Very little research has examined methods for promoting tolerance. However, Aderman, Bryant, and Domelsmith (1978) sought to determine methods of reducing negative responses to dissimilar others by using prediction as a form of empathy. They assumed that people expect strangers to be similar to them and if the stranger is not similar, people experience an aversive reaction which leads to rejection of the stranger.
They proposed that tolerance toward the stranger would be increased if they could reduce this aversive reaction. They asserted that reducing the aversive reaction would also reduce the rejection of the dissimilar stranger.

The subjects in their experiment either copied down, or predicted the corresponding attitudes of a dissimilar stranger. Subjects who predicted the attitudes of the dissimilar stranger did indeed exhibit greater tolerance toward them. Subjects who copied down the attitudes of the dissimilar stranger strongly rejected them. Aderman, Bryant, and Domelsmith (1978) stated “studies like these offer some hope that prejudice will diminish when, through interracial association faulty perceptions of dissimilarity are corrected” (p.177).

Thus, it seems as though imagining oneself in another’s situation or imagining how another feels produces more empathy and more tolerance than simple watching another. Furthermore, predicting another’s attitudes or feelings might remove assumptions that they are dissimilar to oneself as well as reduce rejection and increase tolerance. According to the available literature, predictive empathy differs from the empathy in the imagining oneself in another’s position because the subject has to predict another’s response. The subject has to “get into the head” of another, rather than imagining their own feelings.

The current study employs a Watch mannerisms condition, an Imagine-self condition, and a Predictive Empathy condition. Based on past research and theory, a first major hypothesis is that subjects in the Imagine-self condition will exhibit more tolerance and report fewer negative social stereotypes than subjects in the Watch Mannerisms
condition. It is also expected that subjects in the Predictive Empathy condition will exhibit even greater tolerance, and fewer negative social stereotypes than the Imagine-self condition.

In addition to predictive empathy to reduce negative stereotypes, we will also examine whether acknowledging negative stereotypes (presenting subjects with two sides of an argument) is more effective in changing attitudes toward more tolerance.

**Acknowledge the Negative**

The amount of research produced with the intention of studying attitude change and persuasion is massive. One area which has received considerable attention is the effectiveness of one-sided versus two-sided communication. According to the literature on attitude change and persuasion, the two-sided communication (mentioning opposing arguments) appears to be more effective than a one-sided communication (mentioning only the desired position).

The current study will expose some subjects to negative stereotypes commonly held toward male homosexuals (acknowledging the negative) as well as positive information. This will give subjects a two-sided communication. We will expose some subjects to positive information only (no acknowledgment of the negative). This will give subjects a one-sided communication. The two types will be compared to determine if one is more persuasive than the other.

Many propaganda strategists have claimed that mentioning opposing ideas (a two-sided communication) rather than presenting only the favored position (a one-sided
communication) is detrimental to persuasion. When striving to gain the acceptance of any particular belief or policy, the strategists proposed that the conflict of mentioning opposing viewpoints (acknowledging the negative) would invite comparison, doubt, and hesitation.

However, Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield (1949) found that among audience members who were initially opposed to a communicator's position, a two-sided presentation (mentioning opposing as well as supporting arguments) produced greater opinion changes in the desired direction than did a one-sided presentation (mentioning only supporting arguments). The one-sided presentation was more effective only with the audience members who initially favored the communicator's position.

Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield's (1949) experiment was limited in that it measured only immediate changes in opinion. For this reason, Lumsdaine and Janis (1953) designed an experiment to compare the effects of the two forms of presentation after a portion of the audience was exposed to a second, counterpropaganda communication. Their results demonstrated that a convincing one-sided communication which includes only supporting arguments will sway many people's opinions in the desired direction unless they hear opposing arguments later. If they do hear opposing arguments later, people are frequently swayed back to the negative or opposing position. However, if they hear a two-sided communication first, the negative position is acknowledged and the positive position still emerges as the correct position. In other words, there is a comparison between the two positions and the argument asserts that one is better.
This study found that if audience members have been led to a positive conclusion in spite of the exposure to negative arguments and they later encountered a second, counter propaganda communication then they were less likely to be influenced by it. Stated another way, the listener is “desensitized” or “inoculated” against the opposing arguments and because of this maintained the positive position. Additionally, research has tested argument positioning to see if the order of presentation affects persuasion.

Insko (1962) sought to measure primacy and recency effects of the one and two-sided communications found no difference in order of presentation. The study established that a two-sided communication favoring the opposition presented before or after a one-sided communication was more persuasive than the one-sided communication. Other research inspired by the Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield (1949) study such as Chu’s (1967) experiment explored subjects’ familiarity with different sides of an argument.

Subjects who were initially unfavorable to a particular argument were more effectively persuaded by a two-sided communication than a one-sided communication if they were familiar with the pros and cons of the argument from the start. Chu’s experiment illustrated that in order for the two-sided communication to be more persuasive than the one-sided, two conditions must be met: 1) subjects must have been exposed to both sides of the argument beforehand, and 2) subjects must have initially opposed the persuasive argument.

Brehm (1966) proposed that prior exposure to two sides of an argument or opposition to the persuasive argument was not necessary for a two-sided communication
to be more effective than a one-sided. He proposed that when a person feels pressure to adopt a particular position or attitude their sense of personal freedom of choice is threatened and they will experience a state called “psychological reactance.” When this occurs, people tend to reclaim their personal freedom by resisting the persuasive appeal or by choosing an opposite position - both of which combat the threat.

Since Brehm assumed that a one-sided communication would induce more pressure to choose a certain position, it would also be a greater threat to one’s personal freedom and consequently produce greater psychological reactance than a two-sided communication. This theory also postulated that a two-sided communication would be more effective if the subjects were simply aware that there were two sides to the issue even if they were unaware of the content of either side. Jones and Brehm (1970) demonstrated that when an audience is aware that there are two sides to an issue whether or not they hold an initial attitude toward the persuasive message, a two-sided communication is more effective than a one-sided communication.

The current study assumes that most people are, at the very least, exposed to the stereotypes of their culture. They are more likely to receive “counterpropaganda” information and to be aware of negative arguments or stereotypes than not. Based on the prior literature on the persuasiveness of a two-sided communication relative to a one-sided communication, a second major hypothesis is that “acknowledging the negative” (i.e., mentioning the other side of the argument) will produce greater change toward the desired
position than will the neutral "no acknowledgment" of negative stereotypes. We will now turn our attention to the group toward whom negative attitudes will be measured.

**Male Homosexuals**

In the introduction, we discussed why homosexuals were chosen as a test group. Many people report open hostility toward this group. We will now discuss the rationale for the gender difference predicted in Hypothesis #3.

Several research studies performed in the last decade suggest that heterosexual men experience greater discomfort with homosexual men than with homosexual women. Similarly, heterosexual women appear to experience greater discomfort with homosexual women than with homosexual men. For instance, Kite and Deaux (1987) assessed beliefs about the personal characteristics of male and female homosexuals and heterosexuals. They were interested in examining the extent to which people's stereotypes of homosexuals were consistent with the inversion model proposed by Freud (1905) and others. This inversion model postulated that homosexuals are more similar to the opposite-sex heterosexual than to the same-sex heterosexual.

Results supported the expectations of an implicit inversion theory. Subjects rated male homosexuals similar to female heterosexuals, and female homosexuals similar to male heterosexuals. Here, masculinity and femininity are viewed as opposites—a bipolar model of gender stereotyping.
In another experiment examining heterosexual attitudes toward homosexuals, Gentry (1987) examined social distance toward male and female homosexuals. Results showed that comfort around homosexuals was positively correlated with having a homosexual friend. Subjects also reported greater discomfort toward same-sex homosexuals than toward opposite-sex homosexuals. Additional research has linked homophobia with other types of prejudice.

Ficarrotto (1990) found an association between a sexual conservatism theory of homophobia and a more general theory of intergroup prejudice. Sexual conservatism was measured by an affective dimension of erotophilia-erotophobia. Social prejudice was measured by racist and sexist belief systems. Results demonstrated that people who scored high in one typically scored high in the other. Also, each were strong predictors of antihomosexual sentiment. These results seem to suggest that social prejudice is highly and positively correlated with homophobia.

In light of these facts, the videotape used as treatment in the present study features a male homosexual. Because this character is a male, a third major hypothesis is that male subjects will hold stronger stereotypes toward male homosexuals than female subjects will hold. Finally, the last prediction involves contact and its effect on negative stereotyping and social distance.


**Contact**

A fair amount of research has shown that interpersonal contact with an outgroup tends to lead to more favorable attitudes toward that outgroup. The experiments of Cook (1969), Sherif et al. (1961), Sikes and Snapp (1978), and Weigel, Wiser and Cook (1975) reviewed in the introduction investigate equal status contact and shared goals as a means to increase liking and decrease prejudice. Gentry’s experiment found that people who had a homosexual friend were more likely to experience comfort around other homosexuals. Another hypothesis tested in the present study is that merely having contact with “other” group members may positively affect attitudes toward that group.

Therefore, a fourth major hypothesis is that the number of male homosexuals previously met by subjects will have a positive correlation with subjects attitudes toward that group. Additionally, it is predicted that the higher the number of male homosexuals met, the lower the reported social distance toward them. This hypothesis predicts that the greater number of people met from this group will translate into greater positive attitudes toward that group.

**Summary**

So far, we have reviewed the origins of stereotyping, and discussed that homosexuals are a group toward whom people hold many negative social stereotypes. We also have explored the fact that contact with outgroup members can be an effective method to reduce negative attitudes toward the outgoup. We discussed the potential of
predictive empathy and two-sided communications (acknowledging the negative) as a means of reducing negative stereotypes when actual contact is not possible. Finally, we discussed potential gender differences in stereotypes toward male homosexuals.

The first major hypothesis is that subjects in the predictive empathy condition will report weaker stereotypes than those in the watch condition or the imagine-self condition. The literature on predictive empathy concludes that the process of imagining one's own feelings while in the situation of another and the process of imagining how another feels in any given situation actually produce more empathy and more tolerance than simply watching or being exposed to another. Previous literature also concludes that predicting another's attitudes and feelings might disprove assumptions that the other person is dissimilar to oneself. Because we know that perceiving someone as different from us increases rejection and decreases tolerance, disproving the assumptions that another is dissimilar to us through the use of predictive empathy should reduce rejection and increase tolerance more than simply imagining how the other feels. We will also examine how presenting subjects with negative stereotypes (acknowledging the negative) affects persuasion.

A second major hypothesis is that subjects exposed to negative stereotypes (a two-sided communication) will be more effectively persuaded by the videotape treatment than those for whom negative stereotypes are not acknowledged. The literature on the persuasiveness of a two-sided communication unequivocally demonstrates that giving both sides of an argument is generally more effective in changing attitudes than is giving only
one side of the argument. This holds true if the person is aware that there are two sides to an argument (even if they do not know details of either side) or if they are later exposed to the other side -- one of these factors is usually the case in attitudes about social information. A one-sided communication often produces “psychological reactance” where a person feels pressure to adopt a particular position and frequently resists the persuasive appeal or chooses the opposite position in defiance. The two-sided communication has the additional benefit of allowing people to feel that they have a choice in their decision-making and consequently makes the persuasive appeal in the two-sided more attractive.

In addition to predictive empathy and acknowledging the negative, we will examine a gender difference.

A third major hypothesis is that male subjects will report stronger stereotypes toward male homosexuals than will female subjects. The literature concerning attitudes toward homosexuals finds evidence to support the implicit inversion theory -- subjects rate male homosexuals similar to female heterosexuals and female homosexuals similar to male heterosexuals. Subjects also appear to be more comfortable around opposite-sex homosexuals than same-sex homosexuals. There is also evidence to support the association between sexual conservatism, social prejudice and antihomosexual sentiment. Finally, we will examine the role of contact in stereotyping.

A fourth major hypothesis is that the more male homosexuals the subject has met, the lower the social distance and weaker negative stereotypes reported. The literature on contact with “other” group members clearly concludes that positive attitude change occurs
when there is rewarding contact and cooperation between members of different ethnic or racial groups. Working together, having shared goals, even possessing a friendship with a member of a different group increases liking and tolerance toward that group.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

Three hundred three (107 males and 196 female) undergraduate students at Loyola University of Chicago served as subjects. They were enrolled in Psychology 101 and volunteered for the study to receive partial credit toward a course requirement. Some of the data for particular variables are absent due to incomplete responses from certain subjects. Upon discovering an effect of all three treatment groups in the statistical analysis, questionnaire data was collected from 42 additional subjects to serve as a “true” control group. They consisted of Loyola University undergraduate psychology students. This produced a total of 344 subjects (117 male, 223 female, and 4 unreported gender).

Design

The study represents a 3 (Watch Mannerisms, Imagined-self, or Predictive Empathy observational set) x 2 (Acknowledgment of Negative or No Acknowledgment of Negative) x 3 (pretest/posttest and posttest only) full factorial design. Subjects were
randomly assigned to one of three observational sets, randomly assigned to one of two acknowledge negative conditions, and randomly assigned to pretest-posttest or posttest only group. There were between 16 and 32 subjects in each of the 12 cells in the experimental design.

**TABLE 1**

**Overview of the Design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ackn. Negative</th>
<th>Watch Mannerisms Condition</th>
<th>Imagine-Self Condition</th>
<th>Predictive Empathy Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>N=21</td>
<td>N=16</td>
<td>N=26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest-Posttest</td>
<td>N=28</td>
<td>N=31</td>
<td>N=16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Ackn. Negative</th>
<th>Posttest Only</th>
<th>N=32</th>
<th>N=25</th>
<th>N=32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest-Posttest</td>
<td>N=22</td>
<td>N=27</td>
<td>N=26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest-Posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following major hypotheses are predicted:

Hypothesis #1: It was hypothesized that subjects in the Imagine-self group will report fewer negative stereotypes toward male homosexuals than subjects in the Watch Mannerisms group, and subjects in the Predictive Empathy group will report weaker negative stereotypes than the Imagine-self group. Subjects in the Watch Mannerisms condition were told to watch the mannerisms of the man in the videotape. They watched head movements, body movements and any gestures. Subjects in the Imagine-self condition were be told to imagine themselves in the position of the man in the videotape. They imagined what they would or feel or do in particular situations. Subjects in the Predictive Empathy group were told to predict the feelings and actions of the man in the videotape.

Hypothesis #2: Subjects in the “acknowledge the negative” condition (who will be exposed to the negative stereotypes) will exhibit greater attitude change toward the desired position than subjects in the “no acknowledge negative” (who will only be exposed to one side).

Hypothesis #3: It was also expected that male subjects will hold stronger negative stereotypes toward male homosexuals than would female subjects.

Hypothesis #4: It is expected that more male homosexuals subjects report having met, the lower the social distance and the weaker negative stereotypes subjects will report.
**Pilot Testing**

A pilot study was conducted in order to obtain a baseline of negative attitudes toward male homosexuals. These commonly held stereotypes were used in the acknowledge negative condition in the final questionnaire. Undergraduate psychology students at Loyola University were asked to list descriptive words that accurately portrayed members of the group. The seven most frequently listed descriptors were used as stereotypes.

Sensitive, flaming, friendly, abnormal, neat, feminine and treated unfairly were most common for male homosexuals. Some of descriptors were used in the acknowledge negative condition (sensitive, flaming, friendly, abnormal, neat) and all seven listed were used in the final attitude questionnaire.

**Materials**

A videotape segment and a testing packet were used in this study. The videotape examined the facts and myths of homosexuality. An extensive interview with a renown homosexual speaker/journalist reports an open account of his life experience. This videotape represents some of the generalizations and discrimination often faced by male homosexuals. The videotape segment was specifically chosen in part because it contained information assumed to be counterattitudinal to the negative stereotypes.

The testing packet for the “posttest only” group contained the following information in order: (1) an informed consent sheet; (2) a page containing a photocopy of
a fabricated newspaper article containing either negative or neutral information about
males homosexuals; (3) an instruction sheet directing subjects to either watch the
mannerisms of the people in the videotape (Watch condition), imagine themselves in the
same situation as the people in the videotape (Imagine-self condition or try to predict
what people in the videotape will say or do next (Predictive Empathy condition); (4) a
blank page on which to write their subsequent observations, feelings or predictions; and
(5) a two-page questionnaire containing a social distance scale, a Likert-type survey of
attitudes, and manipulation checks. The pretest-posttest group packet contained the same
information with the addition of another two-page questionnaire (between the informed
consent sheet and the newspaper article) as a pretest. The pretest questionnaire was
identical to the posttest questionnaire except it did not have manipulation checks (which
asked about the Watch, Imagine, or Predict instructions).

**Procedure**

Each session began with the experimenter informing the subjects that they were
not to look ahead or to advance in the packet until specifically requested to do so.
Subjects were allotted two minutes to complete each page.

First, subjects were asked to read and sign the informed consent sheet.
(Participants of the pretest-posttest group were then asked to advance and complete the
first two-page questionnaire.) Second, subjects were asked to read the newspaper article.
(See Figures 1 and 2). Third, subjects were asked to read their experimental instructions.
(See Appendices A, B, and C). At this point subjects were given an opportunity to ask
any questions. Fourth, subjects were asked to advance to the blank page on which to write their responses.

The experimenter then began the videotape. At four different points, the pause button was initiated and the experimenter asked a question. (See Appendices D and E). Subjects were given one and a half minutes to write the appropriate response as follows: the Watch Mannerisms group recorded the mannerisms they observed; the Imagine-self group recorded their personal feelings; and the Predictive Empathy group recorded the feelings of the person in the videotape.

Finally, subjects were directed to advance in their packet and to complete the final questionnaire in its entirety. (See Figure 3). This part of the procedure was not under time limit. Subjects were thanked and asked to follow signs on their way out informing them where to place consent forms and all other materials from their packet. (These were separated to ensure that names would not be associated with data.) Subjects were also asked to take a written debriefing statement as they left.

To examine changes that might have occurred between pretest and posttest as a function of simply filling out the measures twice, a separate "untreated" control group (n=42) also was included. These randomly assigned subjects filled out the social distance and stereotype questionnaire as a pretest. Then one hour later, they filled out the second questionnaire as a posttest and were given a debriefing statement.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

In our report of the results, we will examine six different areas. These areas will include (1) correlation of stereotypes, (2) effectiveness of the observational set manipulation, (3) testing experimental hypothesis #1: observational group, (4) testing experimental hypothesis #2: acknowledge the negative, (5) testing experimental hypothesis #3: gender, and (6) testing experimental hypothesis #4: contact (how many met).

**Correlation of Stereotypes**

The first issue examined was whether the stereotypes correlated with one another. Preliminary reliability analysis revealed that one of the stereotypes did not correlate with the other stereotypes. For the male homosexual group, it was question #8g (treated fairly/unfairly).

Principal components analysis with varimax rotation revealed that the homosexual stereotypes seemed to split in two separate groups. Questions #8a (insensitive/sensitive), #8c (unfriendly/friendly), and #8e (sloppy/neat) were grouped together. This group was labeled “personal” because the stereotypes appear to reflect internal, personal
characteristics. Question #8b (not flaming/flaming), #8d (normal/abnormal) and #9f (masculine/feminine) also grouped together. This second group was labeled “presentation” because the stereotypes appear to reflect more external or presentational characteristics. For the pretest, all stereotypes resulted in a coefficient alpha of .55. Splitting them into two groups resulted in a coefficient alpha of .71 for “personal,” and .62 for “presentation,” both higher and more reliable.

For the posttest, using all stereotypes resulted in a coefficient alpha of .62. Splitting these items into two groups resulted in an alpha of .78 for “personal,” and .63 for “presentation.” Since question #8f (masculine/feminine) did not correlate as strongly with the other items in the “presentation” group, alphas were also determined for #8b (not flaming/flaming), d (normal/abnormal), and g (treated fairly/unfairly)(.60), and for question #8b (not flaming/flaming), and d (normal/abnormal) (.59), each of which produced a less reliable scale than the #8b, d, f combination for “presentation.” Therefore, it made more sense to examine two sets of traits since they are stronger separately than they are together. Alphas were also higher omitting homosexual stereotype question #8g than reversing it. Reversing the three homosexual stereotypes was also attempted. Final conclusions show that the highest and most reliable alphas result when question #8g was omitted, and homosexual stereotypes were separated into “personal” stereotypes, and
"presentation" stereotypes. Therefore, these two types of stereotypes will be the main dependent measures.

**Effectiveness of the Observational Set Manipulation**

Manipulation checks included in the questionnaire examined the degree to which subjects followed the instructions of their observational group. ANOVAs were performed to determine whether there were significant differences in the amounts of watching, imagining, and predicting among the observational groups. Confirming predictions, ANOVAs revealed significant main effects of observational set on imagining, ($F(2,301)=52.25$, $p<.001$), and on predicting, ($F(2,301)=66.67$, $p<.001$). Contrary to predictions, a significant main effect was not found for watching, ($F(2,301)=.25$, $p=.78$).

To interpret these main effects, Tukey-HSD procedure multiple range tests were performed. These multiple range tests revealed (a) subjects in the Imagine-self observational group imagined themselves in the situation to a greater extent than did the other two groups ($p<.05$); and (b) subjects in the Predictive Empathy observational group predicted what the person in the videotape would say or feel to a greater extent than did the other two groups ($p<.05$). With respect to the absence of a main effect for the Watch observational group, the possibility exists that people use the observation of mannerisms and physical gestures to read others in terms of imagining themselves in that position and in terms of predicting another's behavior.
Testing Experimental Hypothesis #1: Observational Group

Hypothesis #1 predicted that subjects in the Predictive Empathy group would report the weakest negative stereotypes, subjects in the Imagine-self group would report stronger negative stereotypes than the Predictive Empathy group, and the Watch group would report stronger negative stereotypes than each of them. Because a pattern was predicted a priori, a planned orthogonal contrast (1-tailed) test was performed. (See Table 2). Contrast #1 was the strongest prediction anticipating that subjects in the Predict group would experience greater stereotype reduction than those in the Imagine group. Contrast #2 was used as a fallback in the case that Contrast #1 was nonsignificant. No differences were predicted for the Control or the Watch group in either of the contrasts.

### TABLE 2

Planned Orthogonal Contrasts Imposed on the Stereotypes of the Observational Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Contrast #1</th>
<th>Contrast #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagine</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predict</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Imposing the preceding contrasts resulted in the following t values for “personal” stereotypes: \( t(186)=1.10, p=.274 \) for contrast #1, and \( t(186)=1.46, p=.146 \) for contrast #2. Imposing the preceding contrasts resulted in the following t values for “presentation” stereotypes: \( t(335)=-.213, p=.832 \) for contrast #1, and \( t(335)=-.164, p=.869 \) for contrast #2. These results failed to support Hypothesis #1.

Mixed effects repeated measures ANOVAs were performed to determine significant differences in time (from pretest to posttest) and between observational groups (i.e. Control, Watch, Imagine, Predict). When “personal” stereotypes were the dependent measure, no significant differences were found for observational set (\( F(3,183)=1.24, p=.297 \)), time (\( F(1,183)=2.58, p=.110 \)), or observational set by time (\( F(3,183)=1.46, p=.110 \)).

In contrast, when “presentation” stereotypes were the dependent measure, a main effect was found for time, (\( F(3,185)=22.70, p<.001 \)), and an interaction between observational set and time, (\( F(1,185)=4.61, p=.004 \)). However, no main effect was found for observational set (\( F(3,185)=.32, p=.814 \)). To follow up, pairwise t-tests were performed separately on “presentation” stereotypes within each group to determine which observational groups demonstrated the most stereotype reduction. Supporting Hypothesis #1, no significant reduction in stereotypes was found for either the Control group \( t(41)=2.02, p=.390 \), or the Watch group \( t(48)=2.02, p=.151 \). Also as expected, significant reduction in stereotypes was found in the Imagine-self group \( t(56)=2.00, p<.001 \) and the Predictive Empathy group \( t(40)=2.02, p<.001 \).
TABLE 3

Homosexual "Presentation" Stereotypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control (N=42)</th>
<th>Watch (N=49)</th>
<th>Imagine (N=57)</th>
<th>Predict (N=41)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>8.98 (2.12)</td>
<td>9.47 (2.97)</td>
<td>9.95 (2.46)</td>
<td>9.98 (2.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>9.02 (2.19)</td>
<td>9.12 (2.79)</td>
<td>8.96 (2.67)</td>
<td>8.78 (2.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Differences</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-0.98</td>
<td>-1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of Freedom</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t values</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-tailed Probability</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, a 1-tailed between groups t-test was performed on pretest-posttest different scores to determine whether the reduction of "presentation" stereotypes was significantly greater in the Predict group than it was in the Imagine-self group, as predicted in Hypothesis #1. Contrary to the hypothesis, the test did not result in statistical significance. The two groups did not differ in their degree of stereotype reduction over time $t(96)=2.00$, $p=.370$

To summarize, Hypothesis #1 was supported in that subjects in the Imagine-self group and the Predictive Empathy group did report fewer "presentation" stereotypes than the subjects in the Control or Watch groups. The expectation that subjects in the Predictive Empathy group would report weaker stereotypes than the Imagine-self group
was not statistically supported. Both groups showed an equal degree of stereotype reduction.

**Testing Experimental Hypothesis #2: Acknowledge the Negative**

Hypothesis #2 predicted that subjects in the “acknowledge the negative” condition (a two-sided communication) will exhibit greater attitude change toward the desired position than the subjects in the “no acknowledge negative” condition (a one-sided communication). Violating the predictions of Hypothesis #2, the F statistics for the tests involving the Acknowledge Negative condition failed to reach significance. Analysis of variance for “personal” stereotypes resulted in the following: (F(1,293)=1.43, p=.233). Analysis of variance for “presentation” stereotypes resulted in the following: (F(1,294)=.49, p=.485). Thus, there is no evidence that acknowledging the negative contributed to the reduction of stereotypes.

**Testing Experimental Hypothesis #3: Gender**

Hypothesis #3 predicted that male subjects will hold stronger stereotypes toward male homosexuals than female subjects will hold toward male homosexuals. Contrary to this hypothesis, no gender differences were found for the “personal” stereotypes at either the pretest (F(1,177)=.29, p=.593) or the posttest (F(1,177)=2.92, p=.089).

Consistent with Hypothesis #1, however, ANOVA revealed a main effect for gender at the pretest when “presentation” stereotypes were the dependent measure, (F(1,179)=11.47, p=.001). As expected, male subjects (mean=10.32) came into the
experiment holding stronger “presentation” stereotypes than female subjects (mean=9.15).

Analysis of variance examining posttest scores also revealed a main effect for gender, \(F(1,336)=27.98, p<.001\). After treatment, regardless of observational set, male subjects (mean=9.70) held stronger “presentation” stereotypes than female subjects (mean=8.54).

**Testing Experimental Hypothesis #4: Contact (How Many Met)**

Hypothesis #4 predicted that the higher the number of male homosexuals subjects report having met in the past, the lower the social distance and the fewer negative stereotypes toward male homosexuals subjects will report. Because “how many met” was measured in terms an ordinal scale (i.e. 0, 1-4, 5-10 etc.) it was inappropriate to use a Pearson Correlation Coefficient to examine the relationship between “how many met” and stereotypes held. Instead, a planned orthogonal contrast (1-tailed test) was performed to test the prediction of an inverse linear relationship between “how many met” and strength of negative stereotypes. The independent variable was each level of the ordinal variable. The dependent variable was the stereotype. (See Table 4). Contrary to the hypothesis, the contrast did not reach statistical significance for “personal” stereotypes \(t(180)=1.33\), \(p=.187\), or for “presentation” stereotypes \(t(330)=-1.78\), \(p=.076\).
Additionally, a planned orthogonal contrast was performed to test the prediction that the more people from a group one has met, the lower the social distance reported toward that group. (See Table 4).

The statistical relationship between "how many met" and reported social distance supported Hypothesis #4, $t(325)=3.70, p<.001$. The social distance people report toward male homosexuals decreases as the number they have met goes up.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine which methods are most effective to reduce negative social stereotypes. This study has demonstrated that the treatment administered in the Watch Mannerisms, Imagine-Self, and Predictive Empathy groups all had some effect on stereotypes whereas the untreated Control group had no effect on stereotypes. One of the surprising findings was the fact that for homosexual "presentation" stereotypes, even the Watch group displayed some changes toward more tolerance. This seems to indicate that merely watching the videotape had an effect on subjects. Consistent with Hypothesis #1, imagining oneself in the position of another and predicting the behavior of another had a greater effect on reducing stereotypes than watching another. The expectation that predicting would reduce stereotypes more than imagining was not supported statistically.

Among the most startling findings in this study was the difference between "personal" homosexual stereotypes and "presentation" homosexual stereotypes. The "presentation" stereotypes consistently appeared in significant effects where "personal" stereotypes did not. "Presentation" stereotypes were also reduced more by treatment than
the "personal" stereotypes were. One possible reason for these effects may be that the "presentation" stereotypes best capture stereotypes toward male homosexuals. A second possible reason may be that people consider the "presentation" characteristics more of a choice. They may consider them to be external behaviors within and individual's control. "personal" characteristics may be perceived as internal, disposition characteristics not within and individual's control.

A third possible reason for these differences might be the homosexual videotape. It portrayed an apparently normal, non-flaming man. If this was the only exposure or one of the few exposures a subject has had to a homosexual man, subjects would only have contact with his "presentation" characteristics. The videotape was not able to portray his "personal" characteristics. The Watch group demonstrated that simply being exposed to the videotape may alter stereotypes. This establishes that the videotape alone serves as a treatment.

A provocative question left unanswered by the available data is why there was not a single significant effect in the Acknowledge Negative (two-sided communication) condition. This violated the prediction of Hypothesis #2. One possible interpretation could be that the short newspaper articles contained insufficient amount of information to address negative attitudes held by subjects. In reviewing the literature on one versus two-sided communication, the actual content and amount necessary to recognize opposing
ideas is vague. It is possible that a threshold might exist in order for acknowledging the negative to be effective and the treatment in this study did not meet it.

Another plausible interpretation for the lack of significant findings in this condition might be that the “negative” stereotypes mentioned in the newspaper articles did not adequately match negative stereotypes held by subjects. Directions for future research might include varying types and amounts of negative information. This would seem to be helpful in finding accurate matches and thresholds for acknowledging the negative to be an effective treatment.

A prediction that proved true was the gender difference in stereotypes held toward male homosexuals, supporting Hypothesis #3. Men do appear to hold more stereotypes toward male homosexuals than women do. A surprising finding was the gender differences existed for “presentation” stereotypes, but not for “personal” stereotypes. Again, the nature of the treatment might account for this. The character in the videotape may have portrayed his “presentation” characteristics more than his “personal” characteristics. The nature of the stereotypes might also account for this difference. The possibility exists that men and women judge the “personal” characteristics equally: (sensitive/insensitive, unfriendly/friendly, and sloppy/neat), but that men are more judgmental about the “presentation” characteristics: (not flaming/flaming, normal/abnormal, and masculine/feminine).

Supporting Hypothesis #4, there was a significant negative relationship between number met and reported social distance toward male homosexuals. The higher the
number met, the lower social distance reported. This tendency represents a strong argument that exposure or contact lowers social distance. It would appear that people feel distant toward or desire distance from those for whom they hold negative attitudes. A intriguing question is, which came first? The very nature of social stereotypes suggests a categorization of another, often an over-simplification of an individual based on little or no information. Do people hold more stereotypes because they are distant and have less contact, or are they distant and have less contact because they hold stereotypes? Future research might explore this relationship further.

In conclusion, future research studying social stereotypes might examine "presentation" or non-disposition characteristics as they seem to have relationships and significance where "personal" or internal ones do not. "Presentation" stereotypes also appear to be more easily reduced by treatment. Applied research with intentions of reducing negative attitudes toward specific groups may benefit from studying this trend further.
ACKNOWLEDGE NEGATIVE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Homosexual rights groups concerned about attitudes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A spokesperson for the National Homosexual Rights Advocates stated Monday that homosexuals report being perceived as "abnormal" by the non-gay community. "We fear this perception will be a major obstacle to our achieving equality in the 90's," he said. "It is also commonly believed that we are all flaming, flamboyant and overt about our sexuality, mere misconceptions." He also stated that media portrayal of homosexuals often reflect society's generalizations that they are sensitive, neat, and friendly. The spokesperson summarized by mentioning that there is a long way to go before the homosexual community is afforded the same rights and treatment as the heterosexual community.
Mobilization of the gay community and the birth of the gay liberation movement began in June of 1969. In 1973 the National Gay and Lesbian Task force was founded in New York City. During 1973, there were almost eight hundred gay and lesbian organizations in the United States. By 1990 the number was several thousand. In 1994, 3,432 Americans age 18 to 59 were selected randomly nationwide for a sex survey. 2.8 percent of men and 1.4 percent of women reported being homosexual or bisexual.
FIGURE 3

SOCIAL DISTANCE AND STEREOTYPE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please circle one for each question:

1.) Please state your gender: Female Male

2.) Did you view a news article? Yes No

3.) Did the news article contain any negative information? Yes No

4.) To what extent did you watch the mannerisms of the people in the videotapes? (Circle one)
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   not at all very much

5.) To what extent did you try to imagine how you would feel if you were one of the people in the videotape? (Circle one)
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   not at all very much

6.) To what extent did you try to predict what the people in the videotapes would say or do? (Circle one)
   
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   not at all very much

There are many degrees of understanding or closeness that may exist between persons. Seven of these relationships are list below in order of closeness with the number 1 describing the closest relationship and the number 7 describing the most distant relationship.

7.) Please circle one number that best describes how you feel about male homosexuals.
   Would admit a male homosexual as follows:
1 = to close kinship by marriage
2 = to my group as personal friend
3 = to my street as neighbors
4 = to employment in my occupation
5 = to citizenship in my country
6 = as visitors only to my country
7 = would exclude from my country

8.) The following questions refer to the average or typical male homosexual. Male homosexuals are generally: (Circle only one X between each pair of adjectives.)

insecure x x x x x sensitive
not flaming x x x x x flaming
unfriendly x x x x x friendly
normal x x x x x abnormal
sloppy x x x x x neat
masculine x x x x x feminine
treated fairly x x x x x treated unfairly

How many people from this group have you met?
X X X X
0 1-4 5-9 10 or more

48
APPENDIX A

WATCH MANNERISMS INSTRUCTIONS

In a few moments you will be watching the actual demonstrations. They will be in the form of two short film segments. While you are doing so, please watch exactly what the characters do. You are to watch all of their body movements that you can see. Your job will be to watch their leg movements, arm movements, foot movements, head movements, hand movements. You are to watch their bearing and posture. You are to notice anything that they do, whatever it is. (While you are watching the characters, don’t try to imagine how they would feel or how you would feel. Just watch them very closely.)

At various points when I stop the videotape, please write down your observations on the blank sheet provided. You will have a minute or two to write during each pause. Please stop writing and continue watching when I turn the tape back on.

Since the success of the experiment depends on how well you carry out these instructions, please re-read them now.
APPENDIX B

IMAGINE-SELF INSTRUCTIONS

The actual demonstrations will begin in a moment. They will be in the form of two short film segments. At various points in the videotape, I will stop the tape and ask a question. I would like for you to think about how you might feel if you were this person. Imagine yourself in their shoes. Think about how you might react or what you would say in such a position or situation. Do not try to predict what the person in the videotape might feel or what they might say, but rather what you would.

After you reach a decision, write your answer on the blank sheet provided. You will have a minute or two to write during each pause. Please stop writing and continue watching when I turn the tape back on.

Since the success of this experiment depends on how well you carry out these instructions, please re-read them now.
APPENDIX C

PREDICTIVE EMPATHY INSTRUCTIONS

The actual demonstrations will begin in a moment. They will be in the form of two short film segments. At various points in the videotape, I will stop the tape and ask a question. I would like you to think of what the person in the videotape might say or how they might react.

After you have reached a decision, please write down your answer on the blank sheet provided. You will have a minute or two to write during each pause. Please stop writing and continue watching when I turn the tape back on. As we continue watching the videotape, the other person’s response will be exposed. If the answer you gave as a prediction does not correspond to the actual response, please think why this person did not respond the way you predicted. You really can’t be good or bad at this; and naturally on the first few questions you’ll have to do some guessing since you’ll know nothing about this other person. As we go along, try to use what information you have about this other person’s previous responses to form an impression of him or her.

Since the success of the experiment depends on how well you carry out these instructions, please re-read them now.
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONS ASKED DURING PAUSES: IMAGINE-SELF GROUP

Homosexual Videotape

1. How do you think you would feel about how it felt to suspect he was gay as a youngster?

2. If you were in that position, how do you think you would feel about your first homosexual experience?

3. If you were in his position and you began a relationship with a gay man, do you think your life would become easier? Do you think you would then accept yourself?

4. If you were in that position, would you believe the acceptance from your co-workers was sincere?
APPENDIX E

QUESTIONS ASKED DURING PAUSES: PREDICTIVE EMPATHY GROUP

Homosexual Videotape

1. What do you think he will say about how it felt to suspect he was gay as a youngster?
2. How do you think he felt about his first homosexual experience?
3. When he began a relationship with a gay man, did his life become easier? Did he then accept himself?
4. Did he believe the acceptance from his coworkers was sincere?
REFERENCES


Videotape.


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VITA

Jennie Sheagren received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 1988. While an undergraduate, she completed an 18-month counseling internship at the Champaign County Mental Health Center working with pregnant teenagers and young mothers. She has served as a panelist for public radio programming on psychological issues. From 1987-1990 she completed graduate coursework in psychology at Harvard University, DePaul University, and the University of Michigan with a focus on social psychology. In 1990 and 1991 Sheagren was part of a research team at Michigan State University studying earliest memories, family systems, and gender. She began her formal graduate study at Loyola University of Chicago in August 1991 with an emphasis in researching social issues in the Applied Social Psychology Program.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

12/21/96  
Date

Director’s Signature